



At age eight Carl Anderson made a decision that would ultimately have a tremendous impact on his career path: he learned to play the trombone. Anderson had hopes of joining the horn line in his older brother's rock band at the time, but an age difference of ten years made this goal virtually impossible. Big brother became a stockbroker and gave up the bar gig scene before Anderson even hit the legal drinking age. His disappointment was short-lived, however; by the time he reached high school Anderson experienced a musical epiphany that refueled his desire to perform. It began with a trip to the Copenhagen Jazz Festival.

“There was a phenomenal group that marched through the streets of Tivoli Gardens in bright yellow jump suits playing to a second line street beat,” Anderson says. “Shortly afterwards, my high school band director brought some Dixieland music, tossed it at me, and said I should put my own group together.” Anderson did, and he hasn't looked back since. He has played in a variety of traditional jazz bands since his initial role as bandleader. Anderson assembled, directed, and performed with the River City Ramblers while in high school, a group that remained together throughout most of his college years. After a stint as a sideman in the Fat Albert Barrelhouse Band, which performed weekly at Peoria's historic Hotel Pere Marquette in the mid 1990s, Anderson decided to strike out again on his own. In 1996 Carl Anderson & His New Orleans Jazz Band hit the local music scene and began to fill the void of Dixieland-influenced music.

Anderson selected the very best players he could find—he was careful to approach only those who truly shared his love for traditional jazz—to round out the group. Currently the band members diversely represent a tri-state area. Anderson, a Peoria, Illinois native, is often joined by Andrew Brady on trombone. Brady began playing with the band while still in high school, and although he now lives in Wisconsin, he continues to perform with the group whenever possible. Craig Bullis, clarinet, regularly travels from the neighboring state of Iowa; the distance doesn't phase him because he knows he's guaranteed a thrilling musical experience with every gig. Doug Myers (Peoria) plays trumpet and lends a keen ear to the melodic interplay between the other horn players. Lance Dieckow, also from Peoria, is rated as one of the top five banjo players in the country and has been performing professionally since age 9. The rhythm section consists of solid players such as the multi-talented Denny Schielein (Peoria) on piano and vocals; bassist Billy Sutton (Peoria), whose musical repertoire spans jazz, country, and rhythm and blues; and talented drummer Jeremy Clark, another Peoria native.

“Carl Anderson and his New Orleans Jazz Band played for us at the 2003 Central Illinois Jazz Festival. Our jazz fans were very impressed with the band's high energy and enthusiasm ... [they are] accomplished musicians!”

- Maggie Parker
President
Juvae Jazz Society

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Key performances at notable festivals and special events keep this enthusiastic ensemble's resume growing. The group has been featured at the Decatur Jazz Festival/Juvae Jazz and Illinois Central Jazz Societies, and regular performances at venues such as Jimmy's Bar and Grill, Tin Pan Alley Restaurant, the Peoria Country Club, and various wedding dates and private parties round out the band's working calendar.

All musicians of this caliber make a point to listen to other great performers, and Anderson's crew is no exception. Influences include classic groups such as the Dukes of Dixieland, but Anderson is quick to point out that modern-day artists, too, play an important role in the band's approach to making music.

"As far as bands go, my absolute favorite is the Titan Hot 7 with Bob Draga," Anderson notes. And although the group's style is modeled after traditional Dixieland fare, all the band members add a dose of contemporary individuality while performing. "I want my listeners to feel like they are at a party when we play," Anderson says. He adds that the band uses stage lights and a fog machine—somewhat unusual components of most such bands. Another unique aspect worth noting is the bandleader's youth—he's not yet 40—which is reassuring to many of the older fans of the Dixieland style. "I can't tell you how happy it makes the traditional jazz lovers when they see someone my age running a band like this," Anderson says. "It gives them hope that this style of music will continue to thrive."

And thrive it does. Carl Anderson & His New Orleans Jazz Band has already released a self-titled debut CD, and a second recording is in the planning stages. By bringing together entertaining aspects such as stage visuals and an occasional quirky lyric or two, as well as intricate melodies and collective improvisation, this group offers nothing less than a professionally delightful musical experience for anyone willing to take a moment to listen.

For additional information about Carl Anderson & His New Orleans Jazz Band, please contact Carl Anderson at (309) 243-7116 or carl@andersonjazz.com, or visit www.andersonjazz.com.



"The reason I drive so far [from Keokuk, IA] to play with this band is that it is so much fun. The quality of the band is excellent too—dixieland is just fun music."

- Craig Bullis
clarinet
