AstroJazz - A Novel Approach to Astrobiology Communication

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AstroJazz is a public education program that integrates live jazz music with the wonders of NASA space science and astrobiology. AstroJazz features original and standard jazz tunes with a cosmic twist. The show is a multi-sensory experience with good music, stunning imagery, and a touch of humor to awaken the cosmic curiosity of adults and children alike. AstroJazz debuted at the Fiske Planetarium on the University of Colorado campus in February 2005. It was well-received by a sizeable audience, ranging in age from 5 to 85. The vocalist (a professional astronomer-educator) and jazz trio performed again in support of Fiske’s 30th anniversary celebration in September 2005. More recently, AstroJazz played at the Western Alliance Conference of Planetariums in Lincoln, Nebraska (14 September 2006). Space Jazz is an off-shoot of AstroJazz for audiences of young children. This program debuted in August 2006 as part of the Science Sights & Sounds series hosted by the Broomfield Auditorium in Colorado.

About half of the 75-min AstroJazz program emphasizes ideas in astrobiology. Music is interspersed with gee-whiz insights. Astrobiology-related tunes include three originals: Look Up!, StarMan Blues, and Are We Alone (the latter set to images by space artist, Lynette Cook). We also perform lyrical parodies of jazz standards, such as Stardust a la SETI. There are two interludes in the program that engage the audience interactively. The concert program includes educational annotations for each song, with leads to a variety of websites for more information and resources.