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Cambridge is 'Happiest Place on Earth' when Bob Jackson entertains

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Recently, the Scottish Rite Auditorium was transformed into the "Happiest Place on Earth" when Cambridge native Bob Jackson brought his Walt Disney World show to Cambridge.

More than 400 people were entertained by his extraordinary piano skills and humorous comedic antics that had much of the audience up out of their seats being kids again during the nearly two-hour performance.

Jackson showed off his virtuosity and dexterity as his fingers flew over the ivories of the Baldwin piano on such favorites as Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer," "Bumblebee Boogie Woogie" and the Gershwin Classic "Rhapsody in Blue." Wearing his trademark high-waisted baggy red trousers, Mickey Mouse tie, red derby and Disney name tag identifying Cambridge, Ohio, as his home town, he entertained the crowd with many of his hand-clapping, foot stomping fun songs. Included in his repertoire were "SpongeBob SquarePants," "Doe a Deer," "American Pie," "Sarah, Sarah Sitting on the Shed House Door," "I Like Beer," "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" and an audience participation favorite, "The Hokey Pokey!"

He brought along his bugle and each time he blew reveille the audience responded by beating on their chest at a "King Kong." Also, he worked up quite a sweat during the show which prompted

him to remove his hat and wipe his thinning buzzed hair with a towel after which he repeatedly asked the question "Did I mess up my hair?" to which the audience enthusiastically responded, "No, Bob ... you look great!"

The audience joined in to sing "Happy Birthday" to Jackson's mother, who later proudly counted to 18 in her native background language of Hungarian to go along with her son's rendition of the "Roman Numeral Song."

Jackson brought classmates of the Cambridge High School Class of 1971 and other friends to the stage to join him on "YMCA." Also, approximately 35 members of the Cambridge High School Instrumental and Choral Department were in attendance for the concert and helped lead the audience participation songs including parading up and down the aisles of the theater during "When the Saints Go Marching In." Many of the young musicians had enjoyed his show at Disney's Port Orleans Resort during their spring 2009 trip. In addition to the local audience, reciprocity guests from the Zanesville and Lancaster Concert Associations, as well as a large number of "Yehaa Bob's" fans from northeast Ohio and southwestern Pennsylvania attended the concert and joined him on stage for pictures and autographs followed by an informal Meet and Greet at the Downtown Arena sports bar and family restaurant.

Jackson also performed two shows on Monday morning for the elementary students of the Cambridge City Schools. Each year the Cambridge Concert Association sponsors a student outreach concert, a portion of the school concert is paid for by the students bringing in \$2 and the Scottish Rite donating the use of their auditorium for the student performance.

He had students and teachers join him onstage participating in the songs and he combined the music with information about various musical terms/styles, rhythms and American music as it related to his repertoire. The students and teachers really enjoyed this energetic and educational concert.

The next offering by the Cambridge Concert Association will be "FiddleKicks" on Sunday Nov. 21 at 3 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Auditorium. The 11 dancers and live musicians bring Appalachian clogging to life with a "whoop and a holler." Season subscriptions are still available and can be purchased by contacting Steve DeMarco at 439-3754. Single tickets for this performance will be available at the door for \$15.

Area music students (grades 5-12) are encouraged to attend the concerts a no charge.