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Wanna learn Jazz: Dr. Aitken is here



Nepalese folk ensemble Kutumba (top) and Nepalese Hindustani classical musicians, trio Attma (below).
 Photo: Bikash Dware/TRN

By A Staff Reporter

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory (KJC) opened with an objective to give Nepalese music students an opportunity to join a professional music academic institution in November 2007 was inaugurated by one of the most acclaimed jazz educators of the world Dr. Gene Aitken, Monday.

Dr. Aitken would be teaching choirs, coaching ensembles, doing private lessons, conducting ten days workshop for more than 50 music school teachers, workshops for Nepali jazz educators of different music schools and conducting the first permanent Nepali Big Band in KJC founded by

Mariano E. Abello and Nirakar Yakthumba. KJC informed that the workshop would be conducted free and was open for all.

Nepalese folk ensemble Kutumba and Nepalese Hindustani classical musicians' trio Attma's performance added some musical spice to the event.

The inauguration ceremony also saw US Ambassador to Nepal Nancy J. Powell who shared some of her words on the occasion. Powell said that Jazz was an American art form that had now traveled around the world.

"Thirty years ago Jazz was a limited music, and now it has been seeing the world and is loved by all ages," she said. She shared that opening KJC would help expand jazz

music in Nepal.

Replying to *The Rising Nepal's* (TRN) query to know her likes in music she said that she was fond of classical music. "I love classical music and yes, jazz too. I listened to Kutumba, they are great and I also love listening to Ani (Ani Chhoying Dolma)," said an ebullient Powell who was looking forward for the success of KJC.

Dr. Aitken, the US Cultural Envoy while informing TRN about his teaching methodology said that he would sit, talk and listen to the musicians and find out their

level first. "I will listen to them and find out their level of understanding of music. We will have more music and singing so that those who can't grab the playing of music can get those in them through their ear and I hope that this way they will get better and better as the day passes," he said.

Aitken who has donated synthesizers, books, Mac computers and CDs to KJC is the receiver of the United States top jazz education honour-Jazz Educator of the Year-2007 by DownBeat magazine and he has conducted China's top military band, the Military Band of the People's Liberation Army of China in Beijing.

Director of KJC Abello who plays saxophone, flute, clarinet and Oboe said, "We

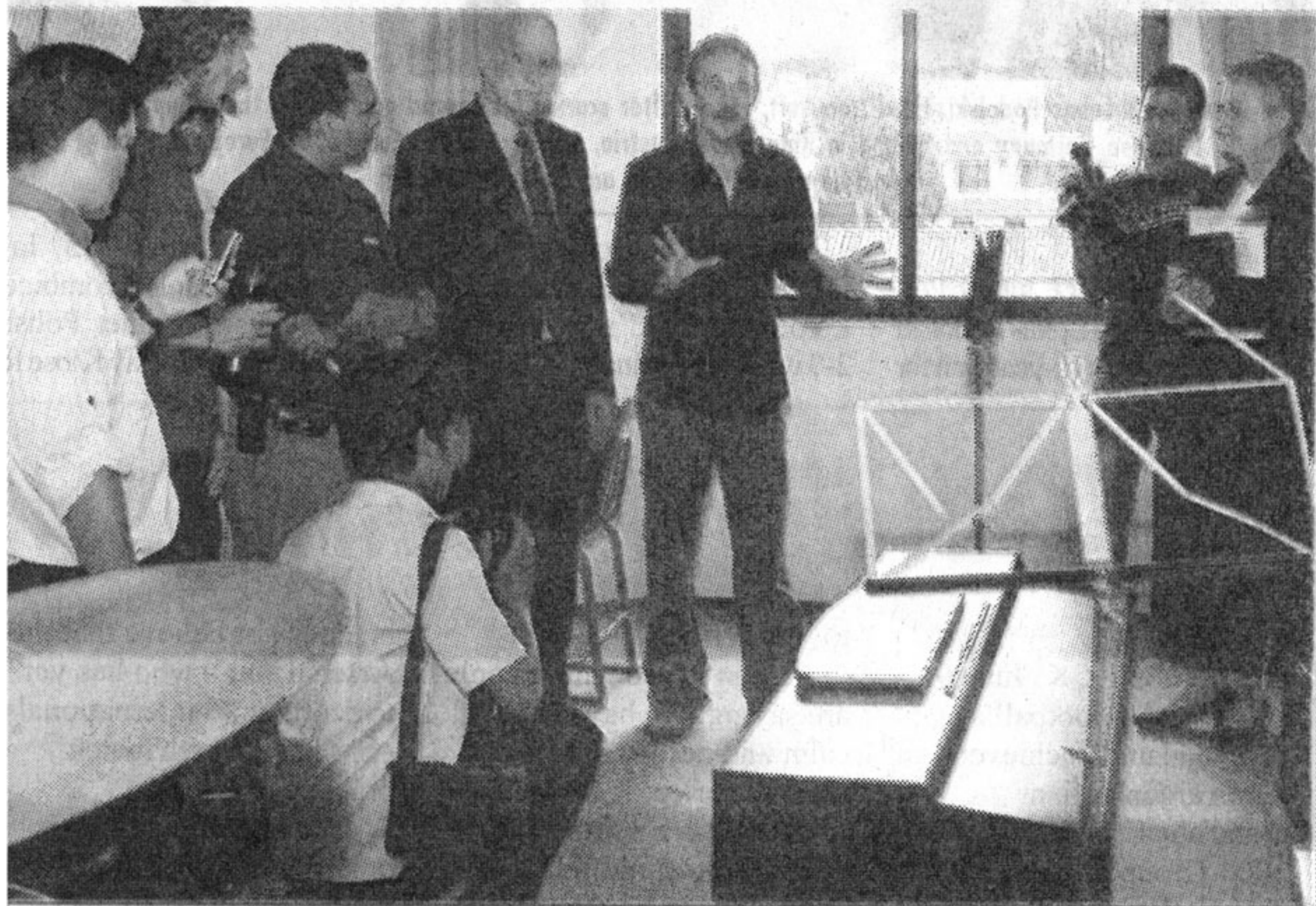
have finally inaugurated it. Now we will be creating so much of noise in this institute and we will try to reach as many music lovers as we can; we have 60 students now and I'm sure it will increase in the coming days. And after ten years from now, I think we'll be affiliated to a university."

Yakthumba also the bassist for the band 1974AD while addressing the gathering said, "This is an important day for all Nepalese musicians and educators. Now we have a place where we can actually learn, study and analyze music."

KJC located at Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur is an institution where the music students, musicians, music educators can learn, listen and talk music practicing and meeting with

national and international musicians.

For providing music education, KJC is preparing a music curriculum and are training music schoolteachers with an aim to have high quality music education. Since its inception, KJC has been taking the help of music educators from Canada, Curacao, Brazil, Spain, Norway, Holland and have had workshops with renowned artist such as Jeremy Worthwick-trombonist from Australia, Jorge Pardo with Vientos Flamencos from Spain and Chris Poulsen Trio from Australia. It has hosted first Jazz Festival dedicated to promote the Nepali jazz and fusion-Nepal Jatra and does concert series every month.



US Ambassador to Nepal Nancy J. Powell (far right) listens to Mariano E. Abello (3rd from right) explaining about music school and recording studio in an inaugural ceremony of Kathmandu jazz conservatory, Monday. Dr. Gene Aitken is standing just left to Abello. Photo: Bikash Dware/TRN