

Jet-setting lover of jazz helped bring festival

By MARGARET MILLER

For seven summers, Livonian Don Lupp has been taking his love of jazz to one of today's great fountains of the art — the Montreux International Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

This year, the head of Henry Ford Community College's music department will again head a jazz studies program at Montreux, an arts loving community that faces Geneva down a long lake.

But before the summer is over, Lupp will have played an important role in turning the tables and bringing Montreux to Detroit for the first Montreux Detroit International Jazz Festival scheduled over the Labor Day weekend.

The story of the first Montreux festival in this country and the city's hosting one of the world's most prestigious jazz events goes back to 1972 and involves a lot of people on both sides of the Atlantic.

For Don Lupp, you might say it began with a 1972 conversation between a Swiss consulate who happens to be a jazz buff and a Swiss airlines official.

Or you might go back farther, to his early years of growing up as a student of wind instruments and an admirer of jazz greats like Benny Goodman and Johnny Hodges.

BECAUSE OF his long interest in jazz, he listened attentively when he

heard from the airlines man that the Swiss consul thought it strange that people in this country didn't know about the famed Montreux festival.

Lupp certainly knew about the festival, a meeting of the best in bands that began during the 1950s as a weekend competition for the right to represent Europe at the classic Newport Jazz Festival. By the time he talked to the airlines man, it had become a big event in its own right.

"He wanted me to go for a package deal to take some students to the festival," Lupp said. "I wasn't interested in that."

But eventually the music teacher did put together a summer studies package for college students, and he took it to Montreux where he met with Michael Ferla, president of the Montreux festival and Raymond Jauss, a leading citizen of the Swiss city.

"I included in the program courses in English and ecology, because music seems to be always at the low end of the talent pole," said Lupp. "But as it turned out, the jazz studies program was the only part that survived."

JAZZ STUDIES have been going on at Montreux every summer since 1972, with hands from colleges around the country auditioning by sending tapes to Lupp at Henry Ford Community College.

Then they head for the Swiss city each July, working in jobs like

chauffeur the visiting hands and setting up for them and getting in some studies as well as the opportunity to hear some of the world's best jazz. Lupp is on hand each summer to direct the program. This summer the dates are July 4-20.

"As a musician in a two-year college I was especially interested in setting up this kind of program," he said. "There is the opportunity to have a jazz program in a two-year college which in other ways cannot compete with four-year music programs."

This year, while noting with some satisfaction that Wayne State University is just beginning to offer a degree in jazz study, Lupp is turning a lot of attention to the development that will put the eyes of the musical world on Detroit.

From Aug. 28 through Sept. 1, top jazz musicians from all over will converge on the motor city, putting on a myriad of concerts on the riverfront, in Hart Plaza and in Music Hall.

The announcement of the first North American edition of the Montreux festival was made early this year by Detroit Mayor Coleman Young with Jauss, Ferla and Robert McCabe, president of the Detroit Renaissance Foundation, joining him at historic Music Hall.

The festival will be sponsored by the Renaissance Foundation in cooperation with the Detroit Plaza Hotel, Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts

and the Detroit Council for the Arts.

WHILE PLANS for the weekend of stellar performances involve renowned professional musicians from all over the country and local stars on the jazz scene, Lupp's main involvement will be with student musicians when he comes home from Montreux in Switzerland to Montreux Detroit.

So far he has acceptances from a long list of college and university bands, University of Michigan, Michigan State, Wayne State, Purdue, Aquinas, Mott Community College in Flint, Ann Arbor Community College and, of course, his own Henry Ford Community College.

Some top high school aggregations are being invited, bands like Northwestern High's Jazz Ensemble led by Ernie Rogers.

And Lupp is working on schemes to get some star groups from other parts of the country here for the festival.

"The problem is transportation for schools like North Texas State, which is the first university in the country to start a jazz program," Lupp said.

"But I'd like to get that band here and also the ones from Miami University and Humbert College of Toronto. I'm trying to find out if there is someone who will pick up the airline tab."

Participating groups will make two appearances each in varying areas. HFCC's representative will be one of those playing for Big Band night on

Sunday. Tickets and schedules will be available in record and music stores.

LUPP, WHO began his university work in engineering, switched to music

and taught in Dearborn schools before joining the community college staff.

Music and engineering go well together, he said, adding that he builds a lot of his musical equipment.

Summer season announced

Three comedies and a Pulitzer Prize-winning musical are this summer's Michigan Repertory '80 season, according to Jean Galan, general manager of the Professional Theatre Program at the University of Michigan.

Running in repertory July 9 through Aug. 9, with a break for the Ann Arbor Street Fair, are "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Blithe Spirit," "La Ronde" and "Of Thee I Sing."

As in past summers, theatergoers will be invited to have a picnic supper in Felch Park, in front of the Power Center for the Performing Arts, prior to curtain.

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