Local

Breeden to take era with him

By DILLARD STONE

Battalion Staff le's been Breeden jazz musicians North Texas State University for

An era in NTSU music will end ug. 31, 1981, when Leon Breeden signs as music director. A large an with grey hair and black mousache, Breeden obviously leaves the rogram with a great deal of regret, isfaction and pride.

A short conversation with eeden revealed him to be enthustic, talkative and concerned abat his students and the program. Since 1959, Breeden figures he's en a part of the lives of thousands nusicians trained in the Dallaszed met Fort Worth area. He's seen the jazz ucation program at NTSU grow nd ask in prominence.

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that, ette He admits his bands have been

that, end He admits his bands have been ospective micized by jazz purists for a lack of the facth presence — but in his mind, critical to be application is secondary to educational accomplishment. off. If me, "We've brought jazz education to refuse here of importance. Jazz had to n do here here of importance. Jazz had to n do here n New Orleans," Breeden said hursday night. "People don't want ay by the her kids growing up to be jazz musiay by igniner kids growing up to be jazz musi-. What a times."

easier. His jazz education program at ant. I'm: NTSU has helped bridge that gap, he

"We've been criticized for not ving a style of our own," he said. We're not trying to develop a North xas Style — we're training these ds to do anything."

People say the NTSU band is too ciplined, he said, but he feels dise is essential in a jazz musician: e don't want to sound like a 3 a.m. htclub jam."

Despite Breeden's claims, the ad does have a sound of its own, e diversity of the music sources ithstanding. Add to that diversidirector who uses the band as a instead of as a showcase for indi-



Chip McNiell plays a tenor sax solo while Leon Breeden conducts the rest of the North Texas State University One O'Clock Lab Band.

vidual talent, and you've got a style as distinct as any major jazz band's. Breeden's philosophy is perfect — that of an educator trying to train his pupils in as many varied styles as they can handle

The One O'Clock Lab Band will play 150 arrangements this year. Many of them will be sight read.

"One time we even sight read a whole concert — ten numbers," Breeden said with pride. The tight, professional sound of the One O'Clock Lab Band belies the fact that its members are fulltime

Staff photo by George Dolar Breeden is in his 22nd and last year as NTSU

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Lab band cooks on its own

By DILLARD STONE

Battalion Staff Sometimes you have to wonder why Leon Breeden is even around. He must wonder sometimes, too.

Breeden conducts his band with ... well, respect is about the only word I can think of. He doesn't work like a typical band conductor, or even like a typical college bandmaster.

But then the North Texas State University One O'Clock Lab Band isn't a typical college band.

Breeden appears to be there only to start and end the band's numbers. A foot stomp, a click of the fingers. Horns up. Eyes on director. A count: "One, two. One, two, three ..." And off they

Breeden leisurely conducts a few bars, then steps back to let the band do its work. He treats the band as a unit, his students with respect.

In return he gets togetherness and precision from the one, spon-taneity and unstructured solos from the other.

It's a formula that's been working wonders since the late '60s. NTSU's showcase band continues to wow the world in the same way it wowed Texas A&M Thursday night.

It's a rare treat for a performer to find an audience which re-quests two encores — and it's even rarer to find performers who oblige.

Review

Those two elements meshed Thursday night. It was my second Lab Band concert, and I've still got to convince myself that these guys are students. Fulltime college students. In addition to being musicians.

This band is good.

Breeden's use of the entire band as a vehicle for training his students is the band's selling point: Instead of showcasing individuals, the band works as a unit. No performer merits recognition as outstanding; they're all good

individually - as a unit, they're outstanding.

The band is amazing in its versatility. Ballads, upbeat medlies, big-band melodies and modern renditions all fall easily within the band's reach.

Take the opening number: "Nanu-Nanu." Fast-paced, good stuff. Then the medium-speed "Mean What You Say." Then slow it all the way down with a beautiful ballad, highlighted by Chip McNiell's haunting tenor sax solo.

Charlie Parker wouldn't have recognized his "Donna Lee," but then probably nobody would The frenetic trombone have. slide work keyed an arrangement which, as Breeden said, "defies all description.

That probably describes the band best: as a college band, it does defy all description.

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students

ep up

George

"Many people who hear our band can't believe they're students," Breeden said.

Although the musicians change yearly, sometimes more frequently, the band's reputation continues to grow each year. Two Grammy nomi-nations, a White House performance and countless jazz music festivals af-

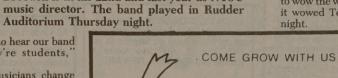
now a major supplier of musicians to jazz and other bands across the

tire, whoever assumes his position will inherit his legacy — one of the finest college jazz bands in America.

ter Breeden took the reins, NTSU is

But while Breeden will soon re-

Auditorium Thursday night.



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