

Improvising a Jazz Festival rescue

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The Oregonian

New supporters have emerged to rescue the Portland Jazz Festival.

As bailouts go, this one was modest in scope. But it was heartening to see the city of Portland and business leaders improvising a rescue for the Portland Jazz Festival. As so often happens when something is successful, credit goes to a large group. City Commissioner Nick Fish gets some of it, though, and so does travel business owner (and recent mayoral candidate) Sho Dozono, who both leaped in to keep the festival alive.

A \$50,000 donation by Alaska Airlines, promised for two years in a row, made all the difference. That secured the festival's future, as The Oregonian's Luciana Lopez reported [Tuesday](#). Also critical, a new group of community advisers is being formed for the event. Strengthening oversight and accountability, the festival will hire a permanent managing director who will specialize not in music but in business operations and fund-raising.

But quite a bit of credit for this rescue also goes to the existing festival backers, who didn't wait until the event was swamped in debt, bankrupt and beyond hope, to call the question.

Instead, they issued an SOS when the event could still be saved. A one-year rescue wasn't acceptable; everyone wanted a longer, stronger commitment. Still, the festival may have national significance in 2009, when it celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Blue Note record label.

Jazz aficionado (and former Oregonian associate editor) Wayne Thompson proved spot-on in his analysis that the festival's fortunes were far from irreversible. All that was needed was a little bit of shoe leather -- and some leadership around the dance floor.

Or, as Thompson put it, "We can do anything if we just put our hearts, our minds and our money to it." You can say that -- better yet, play it -- again. We can't think of a better theme for an incoming mayor, and champion of the arts, Sam Adams, to commit to memory.

---Editorial Board