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Strings of Color jumps hurdles to play here

The 25-piece orchestra of Dallas high school students, who perform free show Saturday afternoon at Dizzy's, didn't give up when their gig at the Oasis Music Awards (and Oasis itself) was cancelled

BY [GEORGE VARGA](#)
THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2011 AT 6:10 P.M.

Ron Planks and the 25 high school students in his Dallas-based **Strings of Color** orchestra feel understandably dizzy about their San Diego debut at **Dizzy's** Saturday, especially since it will be very different from what they'd envisioned.



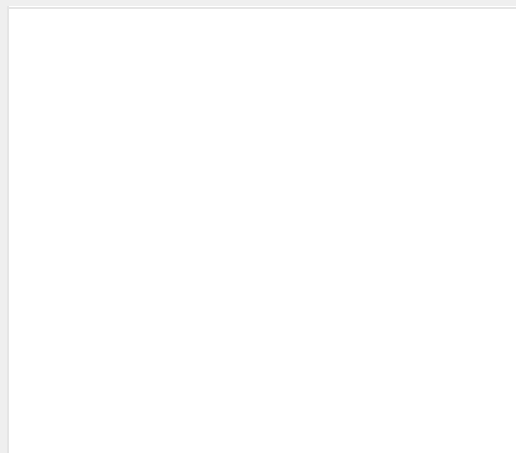
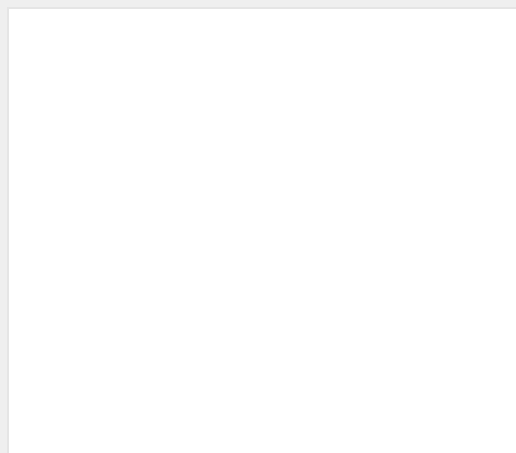
TRAVIS JOHNSON / SMALL STEP DESIGNS

The Strings of Color orchestra, a jazzy, 25-piece high school orchestra from Dallas, performs a free concert Saturday afternoon at downtown's all-ages Dizzy's. The group's Dizzy's performance comes in the wake of its scheduled Saturday gig at the Oasis Contemporary Jazz Awards, which was canceled on Monday because of "dismal" advance ticket sales.

The ensemble, whose repertoire includes works by **Herbie Hancock**, **Dave Brubeck** and **Michael Jackson**, was scheduled to appear here as part of the four-day **Oasis Contemporary Jazz Awards**. But **Oasis was abruptly cancelled Monday** because of what its Tulsa-based promoter described as "dismal" advance ticket sales.

To further complicate matters, the

Strings of Color



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rental rate for the Hard Rock Hotel ballroom — where Strings Of Color was to perform Saturday as part of Oasis — became prohibitively expensive and fell through. What had seemed like a dream trip quickly turned into a potential nightmare, replete with more than two-dozen, nonrefundable, round-trip airline tickets and the dashed hopes of gifted young people striving to make a difference with their music.

When: 4 p.m. Saturday, March 12

Where: Dizzy's Culy Warehouse, 338 Seventh Ave., downtown

Tickets: Admission is free, although donations will be accepted at the door

Phone: (858) 270-7467

Online: dizzysjazz.com

"I was numb when I got the word about Oasis. It's been an emotional roller coaster ride," Planks said Thursday from Texas, where he is the orchestra director at [Williams High School in Plano](#), outside Dallas.

Fortunately, that ride seems to be headed toward a happy conclusion for Strings of Color, whose members last summer began raising the \$800 per person needed to cover their travel, food and lodging expenses at downtown's [Holiday Inn Express](#).

Upon learning Wednesday about the orchestra's plight, San Diego's [Chuck Perrin](#) and Fritz Ahern stepped up, even though neither had previously heard (or even heard of) Strings of Color.

Perrin is the manager of Dizzy's, the all-ages jazz club that operates at two downtown locations. Ahern is the owner of the Culy Warehouse Complex on Seventh Avenue, across from [Petco Park](#), where the larger Dizzy's venue is located. Together, they are providing the 300-capacity Dizzy's Culy Warehouse free of charge for Strings of Color to perform at 4 p.m. Saturday, along with a bass amplifier and other gear.

Admission is free, although attendees can make a donation at the door. All proceeds will go to Strings of Color, and Perrin has sent out e-mail blasts promoting the show to local colleges, musicians and Dizzy's regulars.

"I didn't want these kids to view San Diego negatively because of what had happened with Oasis," Perrin said Thursday. "I checked out their [website](#) and I'm impressed. People like Ron in Texas and (noted San Diego jazz artist/educator) [Daniel Jackson](#) here are ensuring music can be a vital part of young peoples' lives, which — with all the school budget cutbacks — is more important than ever."

Saturday's gig at Dizzy's won't be the first here by Strings of Color. On Thursday, Planks received — and accepted — an invitation for the group to perform at [San Diego High School](#) Friday afternoon.

"We sent out an e-mail to our teachers who want to have their classes attend," said [Conseulo Manriquez](#), [San Diego High's principal of Media, Visual & Performing Arts](#). "We're happy to have Strings of Color."

Not surprisingly, Planks and his students are even happier about their trip, which will include a [Saturday morning](#) visit to the [San Diego Zoo](#) (which is waiving admission fees for the group).

"I'm elated!" Planks said Thursday afternoon from his classroom in Texas.

"It's pretty great how things worked out," agreed Strings of Color violinist Maya Kirkland, a 15-year-old sophomore at Planks' school.

"Earlier this week we were all in shock, because we put a lot of time and effort into practicing our music and going to San Diego. I've never been to California and this is opening doors for us."

MORE OPTIONS IN LIEU OF FAILED OASIS

The cancellation of this week's four-day [Oasis Contemporary Jazz Awards](#) here doesn't mean area music fans won't have options this weekend. Here's a list of Oasis-related concerts being

Balboa Park, San Diego



[San Diego Dinner Dance Cruise](#)

Tuesday, Mar 15, 6:30 pm

[City of San Diego](#), San Diego



[Stomp](#)

Tuesday, Apr 19, 7:00 pm

[Balboa Theatre](#), San Diego

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