

Dr. John Elliff and the Hoagies to perform Nov. 8

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Jazz and swing-era music are two types of genres to be offered on Sunday, Nov. 8.

Dr. John Elliff and the Hoagies will perform in the high school auditorium as part of the Phillips County Arts Council 2009-10 entertainment series.

The Hoagies have circulated around the Denver coffee house and jazz club scene since 2004, when they recorded and released their first CD "Smooth."

The brainchild of guitarist Scott Johnson, the group emerged from the ranks of the Denver Mandolin Orchestra where Mike Billings was a principal player, Dave Ball played bass and Johnson sat in the mandocello chair.

After a one-shot concert spotlight where they teamed on a 1940s era Hoagy Carmichael number, "Talkin' is a Woman," they found themselves in a bit of a demand for more swing-era music. Shortly afterward, The Hoagies were formed as a working trio, making the Denver circuit and entering the recording studio for the first time. With a repertoire embracing Carmichael, Louis Armstrong and Louis Jordan, they found themselves in sudden demand and attracted an eclectic and enthusiastic following.

In 2007, Wade Krauss joined the group on drums and, augmented with longtime jazz clarinetist Bill Pontarelli and guitarist Gordon Schrag, the Hoagies produced a second CD, "Shadow Ball," focusing on the music of Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday and, once again, their touchstone Hoagy Carmichael. Its release in late 2008 saw increased airplay and exposure for the Hoagies, expanding their appeal in the Denver swing scene and opening the door to a suddenly approving jazz crowd.

Before The Hoagies take the stage, local talent Joe Hall on piano and Bill Applegate on guitar will take the stage at 1:30 p.m. with the headliners to follow at 2 p.m.