

Aptos Choir departs on cruise today

APTOS _ Members of Aptos High School's Jazz Choir are taking to the high seas today, having been chosen as one of five vocal groups to perform on the SS Rotterdam, flagship of Holland Cruise lines.

The award-winning choir, whose repertoire ranges from spirituals to Manhattan Transfer tunes, raised about \$800 per student to perform on the cruise. What couldn't be raised through baby-sitting, Christmas concerts and contracting as a "Choir For Hire" at private parties was funded by a supportive group of parents.

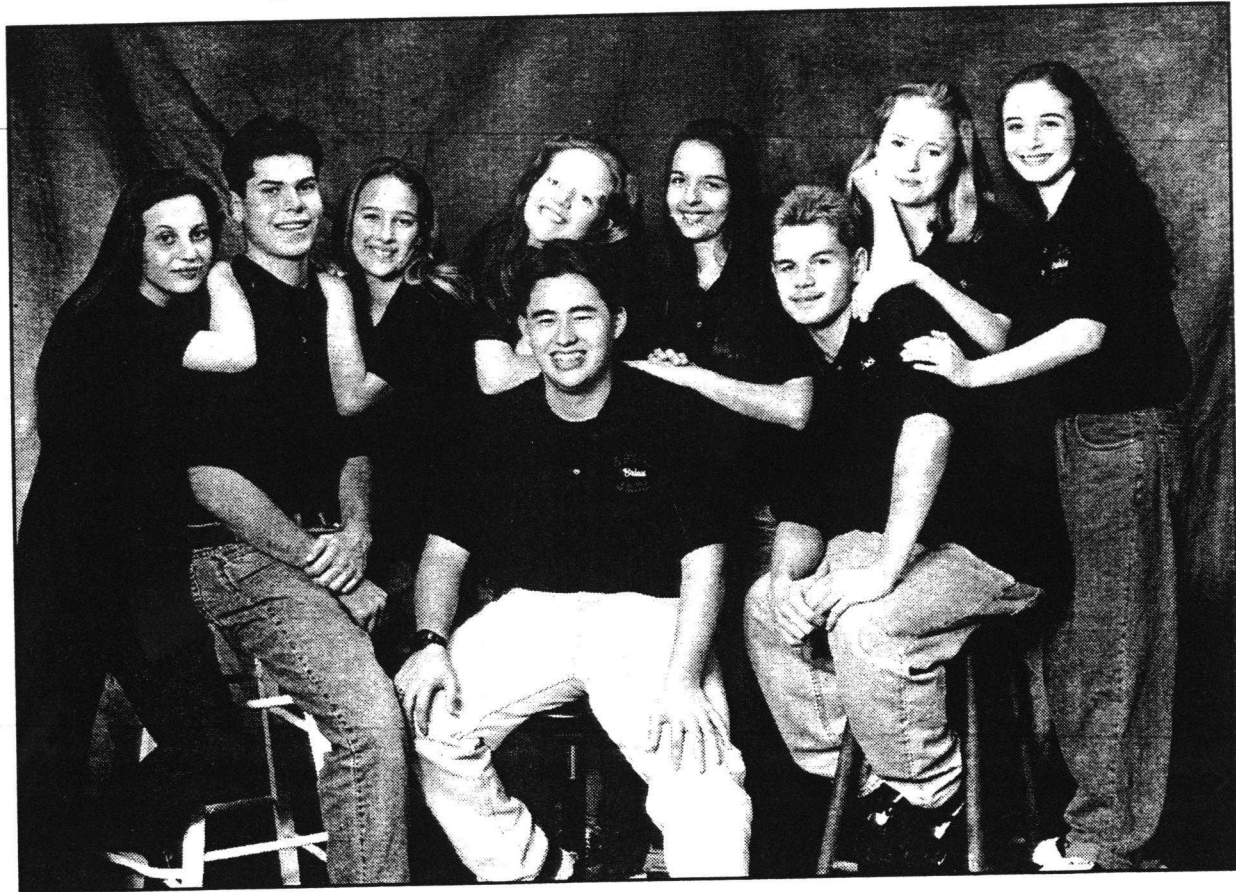
"They are unbelievable," Melanie Arao, the group's leader, said about the choir. "When I hear them perform, I can't believe they're high school students."

The yearly event is sponsored by the Monterey Jazz Festival and features both student groups and professional musicians from the festival.

In addition to performing, the choir will have the opportunity to work with jazz clinicians on board.

"They get to have dinner at the captain's table and everything," said Arao, who's son Brian, a choir member, was packing a suit for the occasion.

The ship sails from Los Angeles to Vancouver, British Columbia, and will return Sunday.



Aptos High School's Jazz Choir members Kelly Adams, Justin Petersen, Adriana Gilbert, Erin Angell, Anna Violich, Jack Kokot, Bevin Pahnke, Deborah Ginzberg, and Brian Arao. The director, not pictured, is Meri Pezzoni.