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# STETSON UNIVERSITY

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## Stetson University Jazz Ensemble Celebrates Big Band Music at Athens Theatre

*Oct. 9 concert kicks off the 2019-20 season*

**DELAND, Florida**, Oct. 3, 2019 – Jump and jive to the swinging sounds of yesteryear during the [Stetson University School of Music Jazz Ensemble's](#) 2019-20 season performances at the [Athens Theatre](#) in downtown DeLand.

The 19-piece ensemble features Stetson University students who perform big band and jazz standards throughout the academic year. Audiences will have a chance to experience the group's musical chops and classics by legendary musicians during its first concert of the season on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m., at the Athens Theatre, 124 N. Florida Ave., DeLand, 32720.

The Jazz Ensemble is directed by veteran musician and educator [Patrick Hennessey, PhD](#), assistant director of bands, who played trombone in the backing bands for powerhouse vocalists such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Liza Minnelli, The Temptations, the Four Tops, Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis and others before joining the Stetson music faculty seven years ago. He enjoys giving back and educating his students about big band and jazz music.

"I want the students to understand the difference between how a big band swings now and in the early days of swing," said Hennessey. "In the earlier days, coming out of a ragtime feel, it was more of a stilted, less swing feel. When you listen to Count Basie's band in the 1950s, '60s and '70s and into the early '80s, he established the standard for big band swing."

Andres Gonzalez, a Columbian-born junior majoring in music education, is a pianist in the Jazz Ensemble and embraces Hennessey's directive to know and understand the music's past.

"Jazz is completely American—truly, truly American," said Gonzalez. "It is important to know the history and where our idiom came from. I do my best to expose people to jazz and consider myself an ambassador for my peers. I believe it's an art form worth exploring for sure, for everybody."

The Oct. 9 concert features music from the 1920s to the '80s, including Ted Snyder's 1921 hit song "The Sheik of Araby;" Duke Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood" and "Portrait of Louis Armstrong;" John Coltrane's "Naima;" and Louis Prima's "Sing, Sing, Sing (Part 1)." The concert will conclude with "John Brown's Other Body," which pianist-composer John Oddo adapted from a Civil War tune, recasting it as what Hennessey describes as "revival funk."

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for youth and are available to purchase [online](#) or at the door. A jazz pass is available for \$50 per person and includes all four Jazz Ensemble concerts during the 2019-20 season at the Athens Theatre. Special reserved seating is available for jazz passholders until 7:15 p.m.

Additional Jazz Ensemble performances are Wednesday, Nov. 20, Wednesday, Feb. 26 and Wednesday, April 22 and begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Athens Theatre.

About Stetson University

*Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 5 on U.S. News & World Report's 2019 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 385 Best Colleges, 2020 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.*

**Contact:** Sandra Carr  
Media Relations  
**P:** 407-256-5090  
**E:** [scarr3@stetson.edu](mailto:scarr3@stetson.edu)