



SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

For immediate release

Swing Central Jazz 2017 Finalists Announced

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SWING CENTRAL JAZZ ANNOUNCES TWELVE HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BANDS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN 2017 SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Savannah, Georgia – Twelve of the nation’s top high school jazz bands have been selected to participate in the eleventh annual *SWING CENTRAL JAZZ* (SCJ) High School Jazz Band Competition & Workshop, an event produced by the Savannah Music Festival (SMF). Renowned jazz pianist/composer/educator Marcus Roberts leads a group of more than 20 esteemed musicians/educators as SMF’s Associate Artistic Director, along with SCJ Associate Director and trumpet player Jim Ketch, Director of Jazz Studies at UNC Chapel Hill.

Participating students work with jazz masters across three days, perform in the “Jazz on the River” showcase on Savannah’s River Street, play in competition rounds, and attend a variety of SMF performances during their stay, which takes place from March 29 through 31, 2017. “This was a fantastic group of applicants. These young people and their teachers represent the best in high school jazz in America today,” says Associate Artistic Director Marcus Roberts. “Leading Swing Central Jazz is one of the most important things I do. Year after year we hear from educators and students that our innovative approach to big band jazz is creating better musicians and stronger jazz programs across the country.”

In 2017, the nationally recognized *SWING CENTRAL JAZZ* program features the following bands going head-to-head for \$13,000 in cash awards:

Agoura High School Jazz “A” Band, directed by Bob Hackett (Agoura Hills, CA)
Bellevue High School Jazz Ensemble I, directed by Edd George (Bellevue, WA)
Byron Center High School Jazz Orchestra, directed by Marc Townley (Byron Center, MI)
Cedar Ridge Jazz Ensemble I, directed by Josh Cvijanovic (Hillsborough, NC)
Champaign Central High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by John Currey (Champaign, IL)
Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Jazz Ensemble I, directed by Don Zentz (Jacksonville, FL)
Grissom High School “A” Jazz Band, directed by Theo Vernon (Huntsville, AL)
Lower Moreland High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Erin Stroup (Huntingdon Valley, PA)
Memphis Central High School Jazz Band, directed by Ollie Liddell (Memphis, TN)
Tarpon Springs High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Christopher De Leon (Tarpon Springs, FL)
Thompson High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Justin White (Alabaster, AL)
Triangle Youth Jazz Ensemble, directed by Gregg Gelb (Raleigh, NC)
Alternate: Tri-Cities High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Aaron L. Johnson (East Point, GA)

The 2017 *SWING CENTRAL JAZZ* clinician team includes:

Voice: Brianna Thomas

Trumpets: Jim Ketch, Randall Haywood, Alphonso Horne, Terell Stafford

Reeds: Joe Goldberg, Boyce Griffith, Tissa Khosla, Ricardo Pascal, Stephen Riley

Trombones: Ron Westray, Corey Wilcox

Guitar: Dave Stryker

Drums: Leon Anderson, Bryan Carter, Jason Marsalis

Bass: Rodney Jordan, Rodney Whitaker

Piano: Marcus Roberts, Bruce Barth, Chris Pattishall, Bill Peterson

On March 30, all bands perform in a public showcase at Rousakis Plaza on River Street. Competition rounds take place all day on March 31 at the Lucas Theatre for the Arts, and are presented through webcast for family and friends who aren't able to make the trip to Savannah. Each band plays three selections: "At the House, In Da Pocket" composed and arranged by Jason Marsalis, "Boo-Dah" composed by Billy Strayhorn and "Easy Money" composed by Benny Carter for the Count Basie Orchestra.

The three top-scoring bands each receive an honorarium and vie for the coveted Faircloth Award (\$5000 for first, \$2500 for second and \$1000 for third place). They also perform the opening set at the SMF production of "Monk and Dizzy at 100," an original production celebrates the centenary of John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie and Thelonious Monk at 6:30 p.m. that night. All other competitors receive a \$500 travel stipend.

SWING CENTRAL JAZZ is sponsored by Wet Willie's Management Corp., Georgia Public Broadcasting and Anne P. West.

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About the Savannah Music Festival

A non-profit performing arts organization, the Savannah Music Festival (SMF) is dedicated to presenting world-class celebrations of the musical arts by creating timeless and adventurous productions that stimulate arts education, foster economic growth and unite artists and audiences in Savannah. In addition to year-round music education and broadcast initiatives, SMF produces one of the most distinctive cross-genre music festivals in the world. The 2017 festival runs from March 23 through April 8, including more than 100 performances in venues throughout Savannah's historic district. For more information visit www.savannahmusicfestival.org.

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