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Students to Perform with U.S. Army Field Band's Jazz Ambassadors

Mar-15-2011

The U.S. Army Field Band's Jazz Ambassadors, the Army's premier touring big band, will perform a free concert at Eastern Illinois University's Doudna Fine Arts Center on Thursday, March 24.

The ensemble, also known as America's Big Band, will perform at 7:30 p.m. in the Dvorak Concert Hall.

Three EIU students -- senior Brandon Jelks of Decatur, alto saxophone; senior Nick Grill of Park Ridge, trumpet; and sophomore Aaron Eckert of Belleville, trombone -- will perform with the Jazz Ambassadors on one selection.



The program includes a dozen songs, including "I Only Have Eyes for You," "Someone to Watch Over Me," "Armed Forces Salute" and "God Bless the USA."

Many of the ensemble's members are also composers and arrangers whose writing helps create the band's unique sound. Concert repertoire includes big band swing, bebop, contemporary jazz, popular tunes and Dixieland.

Each program includes exciting selections performed by the band's talented and versatile vocalist, Master Sgt. Marva Lewis.

The internationally acclaimed organization, which travels thousands of miles each year, has appeared in all 50 U.S. states, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan and the Republic of India.

Formal public concerts, school assemblies, clinics, music festivals, and radio and television appearances are all part of the Jazz Ambassadors' yearly schedule.

Notable performances include participation in the inaugurations of presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton, as well as appearances at the Nice Jazz Festival in France, the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, the Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans, and the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island.

The mission of the United States Army Field Band is to "carry into the grassroots of our country the story of our magnificent Army." In performances across America and throughout the world, the men and women of this organization take great pride in reflecting the excellence of all of our nation's soldiers.

Tickets are free, but there is a limit of four per household. Tickets may be obtained at the Doudna Fine Arts Center Box Office. For more information, call 217-581-3110 or e-mail doudna@eiu.edu.

The concert is sponsored by Brookstone Estates Senior Living and the Journal Gazette/Times-Courier.