ABAC Performing Arts Series Kicks Off Fourth Season September 2

TIFTON— From opera to jazz to classic drama on the stage, the “ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series” at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College packs a powerful punch for patrons of the arts during its fourth season.

Wayne Jones, Director of the ABAC Arts Connection and the coordinator for the events, said the 2014-15 series kicks off with a free performance by the United States Army Jazz Ambassadors on Sept. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Tift County High School (TCHS) Performing Arts Center. Although this concert is free, a ticket is required for admittance to the performance.

The Jazz Ambassadors group is the United States Army’s premier touring jazz ensemble. These internationally-acclaimed musicians, known as America’s Big Band, travel thousands of miles each year to present jazz music to enthusiastic audiences all over the nation and around the world.

Other performances in the series include The University of Georgia (UGA) Symphony Orchestra at the TCHS Performing Arts Center on Sept. 13, Harper Lee’s “To Kill A Mockingbird” on Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium at ABAC, the Peach State Opera
Company’s production of “The Elixir of Love” on Jan. 22, 2015 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium, The California Guitar Trio on Feb. 12, 2015 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium, and The Ron Westray-Thomas Heflin Quintet on April 16, 2015 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium.

While available tickets will be sold at the door for each show, Jones encourages advance purchase of tickets to ensure seating for patrons. Tickets for the entire series are $50 for adults and $20 for students under 18 years of age. Tickets can be purchased online at www.purplepass.com/abac or by phone at (229) 391-4895. Individual tickets for each event are $15 each for adults and $10 each for students under 18 years of age.

The UGA Symphony Orchestra is one of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music’s premier performing ensembles. The orchestra showcases some of the college’s finest musicians who perform under the direction of Maestro Mark Cedel. This concert on Sept. 13 at TCHS will feature George Gershwin’s “Concerto in F Major” and conclude with Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 in E flat Major, the “Eroica.”

The Olney Theatre Center’s National Players will stage Harper Lee’s great American novel, “To Kill A Mockingbird,” as part of the company’s 66th national tour on Oct. 16 at ABAC. The Olney Theatre Center, located in Montgomery County, Maryland, offers a diverse array of professional productions year-round that enrich, nurture and challenge a broad range of artists, audiences and students. It operates under an Actors’ Equity Association Council of Stock Theaters (COST) contract, one of only three theaters in the country under such a contract.

“The Elixir of Love” by the Peach State Opera on Jan. 22, 2015 at ABAC is an operatic comedy by Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti. This opera is prized for its inventive wit and charming characters. Nemorino, a fervent country bumpkin, is smitten with Adina, an
independent and beautiful yet fickle landowner. With the distinguished Sergeant Belcore also vying for Adina’s heart, Nemorino turns in desperation to traveling con man Doctor Dulcamara and his “elixir of love.” Chaos ensues with plot twists and changes of heart due to the “magical” concoction.

The California Guitar Trio at ABAC on Feb. 12, 2015 includes Bert Lams from Belgium, Hideyo Moriya from Japan, and Paul Richards from Utah. The trio brings impeccable technical skills combined with a varied array of instrumental range that include original compositions, classical pieces, newly-arranged jazz interpretations, and surf rock. The acoustic group’s daring multi-genre adventures have produced 14 albums and nearly 1,500 gigs across its 22-year career. The California Guitar Trio has also proven that a no-compromise musical approach can generate an ever-expanding audience. The trio’s most recent album, “Masterworks,” focuses exclusively on the classical side of its music, featuring works by composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Pärt, Shubert, and Vivaldi.

The Ron Westray -Thomas Heflin Quintet will be a part of the annual ABAC Jazz Festival on the campus of ABAC on April 16, 2015. Heflin, one of the country’s most recognized jazz trumpet artists, is the newest addition to ABAC’s Music Program as the director of the award-winning Jazz Ensemble. Westray is well-known as one of the most highly regarded trombonists of his generation, serving as lead trombonist with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. In 2009, the two influential jazz musicians produced an album together, “Live from Austin.”

The Ron Westray -Thomas Heflin Quintet will close out the series with a show that will spotlight the ABAC Jazz Ensemble, whose award-winning performances have taken the group to
some of the world’s greatest stages, including the Montreaux Jazz Festival in Switzerland and the North Sea Jazz Festival in Amsterdam.

The “ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series” is supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. The Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency - the National Endowment for the Arts.

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