



April 18, 2022

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## **Jazz Spectacular Lives Again!** ***MSU Music celebrates the in-person return of a jazz tradition.***

**EAST LANSING, Mich.** – The MSU Jazz Studies program is proud to present the **Jazz Spectacular Festival** featuring guest bassist and composer [John Clayton](#). The long-awaited live celebration of 40 years of Jazz Spectacular at MSU includes a three-day lineup of activities kicking off on Thursday, April 21, and concluding with the finale concert on Saturday, April 23.

This year's celebration will brim with the energy and excitement of live performance after canceling the event in 2020 and presenting virtual performances in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, live and in-person, four MSU Jazz Octets start things off Thursday by blending the sounds of big band with small group performance featuring guest bassist John Clayton, led by MSU Jazz Studies faculty-artists [Diego Rivera](#), [Randy Napoleon](#), [Michael Dease](#) and [Xavier Davis](#). Friday features the crowd favorite Swing Dance with MSU Jazz Orchestras, led by Director of Jazz Studies [Rodney Whitaker](#) with faculty-artist [Anthony Stanco](#) and graduate assistant Sam Corey, where the audience is invited to get up and move to toe-tapping repertoire..

On Saturday, this jazz juggernaut concludes with a full day of performances by bands participating in the [Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington Regional High School Jazz Band Competition and Festival](#). Bands perform the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers before Jazz at Lincoln Center clinicians and jazz professionals. Judges and clinicians are Andrew Dahlke, Jim Gaisor, Sherry Maricle, Gayelynn McKinney and Pharez Whitted. The outstanding band of the day will open the evening's finale concert that features an inspired lineup of MSU jazz artists, Jazz Orchestra I, jazz bassist and visiting artist John Clayton, and special guests.

John Clayton's multi-dimensional talents keep him in high demand as a bassist, composer, arranger, and producer. With a Grammy Award on his shelf and nine additional nominations, artists such as Diana Krall, Paul McCartney, Regina Carter, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Gladys Knight, Queen Latifah, and Charles Aznavour have had spots on his crowded calendar. Clayton co-founded the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra in 1985, and rekindled The Clayton Brothers Quintet. In addition to individual clinics, workshops, and private lessons, Clayton directs the educational components associated with the Centrum Jazz Festival and Workshop, and Vail Jazz Workshop.

"Spring means so many things here in East Lansing, and for us at the College of Music, it means jazz," said Whitaker. "We're grateful for the support we've received from our community and generous donors who have made the Jazz Spectacular a signature event for more than 40 years now."

**Thursday, April 21, Jazz Octets with John Clayton**  
6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., Murray Hall  
Gen. admission: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors, students free

**Friday, April 22, Swing Dance**  
8:00 p.m., Murray Hall  
Gen. admission: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors, students free

**Saturday, April 23, Jazz Band Competition**  
**Essentially Ellington Regional High School**  
**Jazz Band Festival featuring MSU Professors of**  
**Jazz and clinicians from Jazz at Lincoln Center**  
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Murray Hall, Free

**Saturday, April 23, Finale Concert with John Clayton**  
8:00 p.m., Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium  
Reserved seating: \$25 adults, \$20 seniors, \$15 students  
*Generously sponsored by Leonard and Sharon Tabaka,*  
*and Ken and Sandy Beall for the John Clayton jazz artist*  
*residency*

For more information visit: <https://www.music.msu.edu/event-listing?&category=9>

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