

For Immediate Release
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Ferris hosts famed Preservation Hall Jazz Band

BIG RAPIDS – The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, direct from its hallowed quarters in the French Quarter and featuring the toe-tapping New Orleans jazz and heartfelt southern spirituals for which the group has become world renown, is performing next month at Ferris State University.

The group presents a concert on Saturday, Feb. 12, at 8:00 p.m. in Williams Auditorium as part of the Live! at Williams Performing Arts Series. Prior to the event, Professor Harry Dempsey of FSU’s Humanities Department will give a lecture on the “History of Jazz.” The performance and lecture are supported by a grant from the Heartland Arts Fund, a program of Arts Midwest which is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Located in the French Quarter, Preservation Hall is a tiny tavern and living monument to the music and musicians of New Orleans. For more than 100 years, the players who have passed through its doors have kept the roots of America’s great indigenous art form alive. Members of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band perform nightly at the hall and since 1961 have toured about four months a year to bring authentic New Orleans jazz to audiences worldwide. The Preservation Hall players are hand-picked heirs of the musicians who invented the rich traditions of southern jazz — trained, nurtured, and turned loose on the world to carry the torch.

The group ranges in age from 31-88 and works to preserve the New Orleans jazz style and keep alive the traditions and history of this uniquely American sound. The tempo is a shade slower than the other jazz forms and the melody is always clearly heard with improvisation at its heart. Unobscured by complicated arrangements, its greatness lies in its simplicity.

Hailed by the San Francisco Examiner as "The best jazz band in the land," the Preservation Hall Jazz Band is known for its high energy, crowd-satisfying performances. The urge to move to their music is an impulse no one can resist – clapping, foot tapping, knee slapping, head bobbing and dancing in the aisles have accompanied this historic group in performances across the country.

Tickets are \$8 for students, \$22 for Ferris faculty and staff and \$24 for general admission, and can be ordered online at www.ferris.edu/arts or by phone at 231-591-5600. The Williams Auditorium ticket office, located in the auditorium lobby at 901 S. State St., is open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and two hours before the performance. Persons needing special accommodations to attend this performance may call the auditorium office at 231-591-3676.