

DSU's Feb. 26 "A Tribute to Donald Byrd" to Honor the Famed Musician

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The Delaware State University Foundation, Inc., will celebrate a legendary jazz musician as it presents “Amazing Grace – A Tribute to Dr. Donaldson T.L. Byrd” from 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 26 in the Education & Humanities Theatre on campus. Doors open at 1:30 p.m.



Legendary jazz musician and DSU artist-in-residence Dr. Donald Byrd.

The Tribute to Dr. Byrd will feature an exciting afternoon of prose and gospel jazz highlighted by jazz artist and DSU alumnus Dr. Carlton Cannon and his group JABARI, which has performed with the legendary musician in the past.

JABARI features Mr. Cannon on sax (who as a DSU student was mentored by Dr. Byrd in the 1990s), longtime Philadelphia pianist Dennis Fortune, Baltimore guitarist Ron Smith, world traveled bassist Karl McNeil, master percussionist Kenyatta Henry, renowned drummer Vernell “Dooder” Mincey, as well as vocalist/trumpet player Crystal J. Torres, who is billed as a “modern-day musical trailblazer who has performed with Roy Hargrove, Beyonce Knowles, Paquito D’Rivera and other renowned performers.

The Tribute event will also feature performances by some of DSU’s top student musicians.

In addition to being renowned in the jazz world as a stellar trumpet musician and composer, Dr. Byrd is also an Artist-in-Residence at DSU.

Dr. Byrd, a professional jazz musician since the 1950s, became known as one of the top trumpeters of the jazz “hard-bop” genre as he performed with musicians such as John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock and Thelonious Monk. Ironically at one point in the 1950s, Dr. Byrd actually replaced Clifford Brown in Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers band.

In the 1970s, Dr. Byrd began to record jazz fusion that combined jazz with funk, soul and R&B. While teaching music at Howard University in 1974, Dr. Byrd formed a jazz fusion group that consisted of his best students and called them the Blackbyrds. The

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group produced the 1972 album *Black Byrd*, which became Blue Notes Records' highest-ever selling album. In the 1990s, Dr. Byrd jazz fusion explorations expanded to the hip-hop genre.

Dr. Byrd has recorded 38 jazz albums and performed on countless other musicians' recording projects. In 2002, the National Endowment for the Arts recognized Dr. Byrd as one of its NEA Jazz Masters. As an educator, Dr. Byrd has developed a "Music + Math = Art" education program that he has introduced to youth across the country.

A native of Detroit, Mich., Dr. Byrd is an alumnus of Wayne State University and the Manhattan School of Music. In 1982 he earned an Ed.D from Columbia Teachers College of New York City.

For more information about the Tribute to Dr. Byrd, call (302) 857-6055.

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