



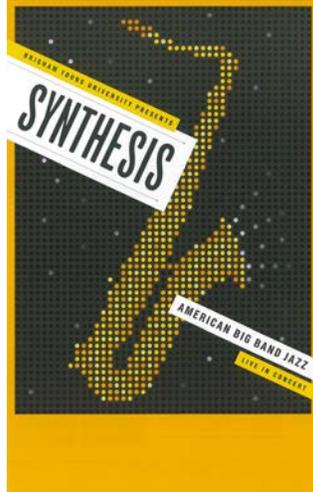
# News Release

2015-2016 Season

## SYNTHESIS

Contact: Performing Arts Management

(801) 422-3576 | perform@byu.edu



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## University Band Jazzing Things Up!

Hard swinging, catchy tunes, funky rhythms, and infectious spontaneity that are sure to keep you dancing all night long are the least one can expect during a Synthesis performance. **The award-winning instrumental jazz ensemble** that hails from Brigham Young University frequently travels throughout the world presenting popular a wide gamut of musical styles, all while exhibiting their first-class musicianship and professionalism.

Synthesis puts on a show that is creative and astounding. The group's repertoire flows indiscriminately through **swing, jazz, blues, rock, fusion, gospel, and Latin styles**. Along with their original music, they play the timeless numbers from jazz legends like **Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, and Louis Armstrong** as well as modern numbers from current legends like **Gordon Goodwin, Alan Baylock, and Mike Tomaro**. Synthesis musicians put it together and break it down in a night of jazz music **you've been waiting to hear**.



## **The Tours**

Don't let their university name deceive you: Synthesis **plays throughout the world** as peers to professional artists and groups at jazz festivals, concerts, and events, such as sharing the Cotton Club stage at the Pori Jazz Festival with the **Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra** and **Jon Faddis All Stars**. In fact, Synthesis was the **2013 winner of DownBeat Magazine's Top College Big Band** award. In 2016, the group will go on an extended tour to the **Baltic States, covering Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania**. In addition, they will also tour **Sweden and Finland**. Synthesis most recently **toured Brazil**, bringing their smooth jazz sounds to one of the most prestigious showcases of its kind – the **Rio das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival**, where they performed for thousands of people. In July 2010, Synthesis **toured in Denmark and Norway**. They played at the **Copenhagen, Kongsberg, and Aarhus Jazz Festivals**, sharing stages with some of the best jazz talent in the world. They toured **England and Scotland in 2008**, where they opened at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival and the Wigan Jazz Festival, and also played with **world-renowned tenors Stephen Duffy, Freddie King, and Todd Gordon**; they **visited Spain and Portugal** where they were the highlight of **national television**; they were showcased on the **Big Band Night** at the **International Jazz Festival** in Montreux, Switzerland along with **Gerry Mulligan's New York Big Band** and have performed at the **prestigious international jazz festival** two other times since then; and the list goes on.

In February 2002, Synthesis had the unique opportunity to perform for the world at the **Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games**. The band performed at Tabernacle Park, an Olympic venue in Provo, Utah, during the two-week Olympic Games.

But beyond sitting on their laurels, Synthesis does what they do because they love it. No matter where in the world they entertain, **their passion and music never need a translator**. Transcending language barriers through their music, Synthesis **touched the hearts of the people of Siberia**, as expressed by **John Galbraith of Novosibirsk, Russia**: *“Everyone who attended the concert felt the magic of your mood as you lit up the room with enthusiasm and energy. For two hours we were treated to something much more than a well done concert. (We) were swept away in the power of oneness.... Each one sensed a unity.... Each was proud to be a part of it.”*

(more)



## The Director

**Ray Smith**, director of Synthesis, performs and records music professionally in addition to serving as the director of jazz studies and a **professor of woodwinds at BYU**. Smith's talents have been requested by recognized artists such as **Kurt Bestor, Johnny Mathis, and The Supremes**. Having an experienced musician like Smith at the band's helm is crucial to the success that Synthesis has enjoyed throughout the years. Smith recalls the excitement of being part of the jazz world: *"There's something in our music that bespeaks the freedoms we enjoy that is appealing to people all over the world. Music brings us all together—we're more the same than we are different. And once the similarities are uncovered, we can all rejoice together."*



Following a 1998 tour through Russia and Finland, **Victor Tregoubov, of Novosibirsk, Russia** praised Smith, saying, *"Ray [was] not only a super conductor and soloist, but as a master of ceremonies created such a special atmosphere and warm contact with the audience."*

Smith's dedication to Synthesis extends beyond his experience as the ensemble's artistic director. As an undergraduate at BYU, Smith played lead alto saxophone with Synthesis. He also played first clarinet with the Wind Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestra. After graduating from BYU with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1975, Dr. Smith enrolled at Indiana University, where he earned both a **Master's and a Doctoral** degree and had the privilege of studying under many great musicians, including **David Baker**—one of the **top jazz educators in the world**.

Upon leaving Indiana, Smith taught at Murray State University in Kentucky for three years before returning to BYU to accept a faculty position in 1982. **Smith is currently the director of jazz studies** and a professor of woodwinds at BYU.

Smith has recorded music on numerous occasions as well, including back-up music for Frank Sinatra, a stage presentation for **Dick Tracy** at **Disneyland** and **Walt Disney World**, and for national ads

(more)



such as **Buick '92**, **Chevy Heartbeat of America**, **Chevrolet GEO**, and **The Children's Television Network**. He also contributed to the theme for Good Morning America.

Smith has toured and recorded with a number of artists, including **Sam Cardon**, **Mike Dowdle**, **Kurt Bestor**, and **Lex de Azevedo**. He has performed with numerous traveling entertainers, such as Johnny Mathis, The Supremes, John Davidson, and The Fifth Dimension.

Synthesis is produced by the School of Music at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. BYU is one of the nation's largest private universities with approximately 30,000 students from across the United States and 110 foreign countries.

(end)

## **PERFORMANCES**

**7 July- 1 August**  
Europe- *Extended Tour*

## **CONTACTS**

*Performing Arts* | Brigham Young University | 306 Hinckley Center, Provo, UT 84602-8500 | 801-422-3576  
**Management**

Troy D. Streeter  
**Artist Manager**  
801-422-3575  
Cell: 801-310-4973

*Tickets and more information available at: <http://pam.byu.edu>*