

**The University of Virginia
Music Department**

presents

The UVA Jazz Ensemble

***Swinging into the Future:
Introducing UVA Director of Jazz,
Sharel Cassity***

Saturday, November 22, 2025
8:00 pm
Old Cabell Hall
University of Virginia

Program

Ms. B.C. (For Betty Carter)

Pamela Watson
arr. Bobby Watson

A Sound for Sore Ears

Jimmy Heath

Pennies From Heaven

Johnston/Burke
arr. Leigh Pilzer for the DIVA Jazz Orchestra

Roy Allan

Roy Hargrove

Surrender

Sharel Cassity

Autumn Leaves

Johnny Mercer
arr. Michael Dease

The Backward Step

Nicholas Payton

I Ain't Got Nothin' but the Blues

Duke Ellington, Don George,
& Larry Fontine
Transcribed by Christopher Crenshaw

A Night in Tunisia

Dizzy Gillespie

The UVA Jazz Ensemble

Directed by Sharel Cassity

Saxophones

Connor Rose – alto
Bobby Downey – alto
Jack Peacock – tenor
Laveen Hiranandani – tenor
Ivey Mistele – baritone

Trumpets

Johnny Willey
Alan Hale
Alex Stephan
Will Novak

Rhythm Section

Ian Traub – piano
Grant MacMillan – guitar
Evan Di Cosmo – bass
Raghav Vesudeva – drums/percussion
Alexander Fanning – drums/percussion

Trombones

Jason Zermani
Blake Cabral
Quinn Seigfried

Vocalist

Cate Mangione

A Note from the Director

I am deeply honored to be the new Director of Jazz Performance at the University of Virginia. It is with tremendous excitement that I look forward to what we can achieve together as a program. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my predecessor, the remarkable John D'Earth, whose legacy I am proud to continue. I also want to extend my sincere thanks to Michael Rosensky for his invaluable assistance during this transition and to Music Department Chair Ted Coffey for the immense support I have received in taking on this vital role. From the time I stepped onto the grounds of UVA, I have been inspired by the incredible dedication and passion of our students. I already feel at home here, and I am eager to grow and shape this program into its next chapter.

Tonight, I would like to introduce myself through the music of several notable big bands I've had the privilege to perform with over my sixteen-year residence in New York City. These performances include legendary ensembles led by icons like Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy Gillespie, and Jimmy Heath, as well as modern luminaries like Roy Hargrove, Nicholas Payton, Orrin Evans, and Michael Dease, who I first met as my classmate at Juilliard. I take pride in being part of this lineage and wish to frame the lessons I've learned from masters with our students in a way that they are able to take with them in any endeavor.

Each piece we are performing this evening is an original work from the artists themselves, presenting the challenge of bringing these charts to life, from deciphering 60-year-old handwritten scores, learning sections that have never been notated, and tackling intensely challenging passages. I'd like to thank each member of the Jazz Ensemble for their hard work and commitment in preparing for this concert and for rising to the occasion.

One of my heroes, saxophonist Wayne Shorter, famously said that jazz means “I dare you.” This captures the essence of jazz—curiosity and the willingness to take educated risks. It thrives in the moment, requiring us to adapt and connect with one another. Each time we step onto the bandstand, anything is possible. So tonight, let’s dive in together, listen deeply, feel passionately, and celebrate with joy. I dare you!

—Sharel Cassity

Special Thanks to:

The Department of Music and all the students, interns, and volunteers
who made this performance possible.

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