



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**®

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

JAZZ WEEK 2026

presents:

**THE SOUTHERN COMFORT  
JAZZ ORCHESTRA  
& JAZZ SINGERS**

WITH SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST

**WILLIS DELONY**

JACK COOPER, DIRECTOR

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APRIL 4, 2026 | 7 PM

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**SFPAC** SCHEIDT FAMILY  
PERFORMING  
ARTS CENTER

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music  
Jacob Allen, Interim Director  
College of Communication and Fine Arts  
Deb Burns, Dean

# PROGRAM

## PROGRAM TO BE CHOSEN FROM

Don't Get Sassy Thad Jones

Con Alma Dizzy Gillespie  
arr. Slide Hampton

Wacky Dust Levant/Adams  
arr/adapted Franko Coleman

Chega De Saudade (No More Blues) Antonio Carlos Jobim  
English lyric - Jon Hendricks  
arr. Jack Cooper

Moonlight in Vermont Suessdorf/Blackburn  
arr. Jack Cooper

## WITH MR. DELONY

What Is This Thing Called Love Cole Porter  
arr. Jack Cooper

Crazy Willie Nelson  
arr. Willis Delony

Seascape Johnny Mandel  
arr. Willis Delony

My Man Willis Greg Yasinitsky

Joy Spring Clifford Brown  
arr. Rob Pron

# **SOUTHERN COMFORT JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

JACK COOPER, DIRECTOR

## **SAXES**

Chris Ghaffer - 1st alto

Kenny Reed - 2nd alto

Mark Lynch - 1st tenor

Auldin Givhan - 2nd tenor

Franco Coleman - baritone

## **TRUMPETS**

Dylan Mashburn - lead

Connie Robinson - 2nd

Evan Green- 3rd

Zachary Smart - bass

## **RHYTHM SECTION**

Aiden Mills- Guitar

Riley House - Piano

Logan Clark/Egypt - Bass

Kurtis Gray - drums

Daniel Padron - percussion

## **U OF M JAZZ SINGERS**

Ava Shantley

Rachel Young

Jeniya Parker

Ben Nguyen

Liam Tubbs

Sirlatimore Wilson

## **WILLIS DELONY**

In a performing career spanning over four decades, pianist Willis Delony has won acclaim as a leading classical/jazz crossover artist. His innovative concert explorations of the two musical worlds are showcased in a series of solo piano recordings on the Centaur label. *A New World A' Comin'* – Classical and Jazz Connections was released in 2001. *Double Dance* – Classical and Jazz Connections II was released in 2008. *Out of Character* – Classical and Jazz Connections III, was released in October 2014. Also part of the series is an independent release from 2018 entitled *Butterfly Room* – Connections for Solo Piano. The project continues with *Between the Notes*, which was released by Centaur in 2021. Previous album credits include a recording of sonatas by Samuel Barber and Sergei Prokofiev, also on the Centaur label, and a jazz album entitled *Civilized Conversations*, featuring Delony and bassist Bill Grimes. He collaborated with bassoonist William Ludwig on the Mark Records release, *Rhapsody in Bassoon*, which features the world premiere recording of André Previn's *Sonata for Bassoon and Piano*. He also appears with oboist Johanna Cox Pennington on her album *Orion Nocturne* on the Albany label. His most recent project is a double album with violinist Joana Genova featuring the *Four Sonatas for Violin and Piano* by Stephen Dankner, which was released by Centaur in April, 2024. His newest jazz album, *Standards and Improvisations* – the Music of Joe Makhholm, is set for release on April, 3 2026 release on the Centaur label.

Delony has appeared as piano soloist, chamber musician, jazz performer, and pianist/arranger/conductor with orchestras throughout the United States as well as orchestras in Canada, the former Soviet Union and China. As a solo and collaborative recitalist, he has performed classical and jazz concerts throughout the U.S. as well as France, Germany, the former Soviet Union, Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil and Argentina. His pops orchestra arrangements have been performed throughout the U.S. and Canada, including over 50 scores written for the Minneapolis-based jazz vocal quintet *Five By Design*. He collaborates regularly with leading contemporary composers, having premiered the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* by Stephen Dankner with the LSU Symphony Orchestra in 2015. He has recorded and performed his own solo piano works plus solo works by Paris-based American composer Joseph Makhholm and jazz composer Les Hooper. In January 2017, he premiered Greg Yasinitzky's *Jazz Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra. Due in part to the strength of this performance, the work was awarded The American Prize in composition. Delony's new jazz concerto, *Ebbs and Flows* – Fantasy for Piano, Winds, Vibraphone and Double Bass, was premiered in 2025 with the composer at the piano in collaboration with the LSU Wind Ensemble directed by Damon Talley.

## **WILLIS DELONY**

Delony is the Boyd Professor of Piano and Jazz Studies in the School of Music at Louisiana State University, where he has been a member of the music faculty since 2000. From 1986-2000 he served on the music faculty at Southeastern Louisiana University and is a former member of the music faculty at Delta State University. He received the LSU Distinguished Faculty Award in 2019 and was named the SEC Professor of the Year for LSU in 2020. In October, 2025, he was inducted into the Steinway and Sons Teachers Hall of Fame, recognizing his contributions in both classical and jazz piano