

Musicians jazz things up at Elon's 2004 Jazz Festival

Anna Johnson
Reporter

One of Elon's snazziest traditions was this week: the 2004 Elon Jazz Festival hosted and directed by musician, Elon jazz professor, and associate editor of the International Association of Jazz Educators Jon Metzger. McCrary Theatre doors opened on Wednesday night, giving Elon students and faculty the chance to experience American classical music: jazz.

The 2004 Jazz Festival featured Ira Wiggins, Director of Jazz Studies at North Carolina Central University; Thomas Taylor, a jazz musician and professor at several universities in North Carolina; the Elon University Jazz Ensemble and several middle school and high school bands.

"The festival has grown so much over the seven years I've done it that I've had to expand it to a two-day event," said Metzger. "This year I had to turn down three bands because there wasn't any room in the schedule." According to Metzger, the clinicians selected



Photo courtesy of Jon Metzger

Thomas Taylor, pictured above on the drums, was one of the featured clinicians at this year's Jazz Festival, hosted by professor and musician Jon Metzger. Musicians and clinicians from major North Carolina universities came to Elon to share in a two-day long festival of learning and performances.

striking talent among the musicians they heard on Tuesday, to return Wednesday and perform at the evening concert after rehearsing as

part of an "All Festival" Big Band. Even after months of practicing for this remarkable event, the artists have maintained their eager-

ness to learn more about jazz music.

"That's why I only select artists/clinicians like Ira and

Thomas who are amazing players—but great teachers too," said Metzger. "Like them, I know what it meant to me when I got to rub elbows with the pros who were traveling through—the experience gave me a tremendous amount of inspiration to work hard to become better." Metzger said that just getting to hear the players and observe their actions gave him a target to shoot for.

"It's also a means by which to perpetuate the music through education," said Metzger. "High school and middle school bands from throughout the state and Virginia will travel to Elon for the opportunity to perform three selections for our visiting artists/clinicians."

Another feature of the Jazz Festival was the short presentation made by Barth Strempek (School of Business) and Brian Baker (School of Communications) about the connections between music and these particular areas of study.

Contact Anna Johnson at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

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