

Edwardsville's Gary Dammer brings the Big Band Scene to Jacoby Arts Center stage

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On May 15, the joint will be jumping and the crowd jiving when Edwardsville's Gary Dammer performs his repertoire of Big Band standards and jazz hits at Jacoby Arts Center in Alton. Take a trip through America's musical history from the era of Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald up to the contemporary jazz classics of today, led by one of the region's premier trumpet legends.

The performance will swing into action starting at 7 p.m. at Jacoby, 627 E. Broadway in Alton. Doors open at 6 p.m., and a cash bar and refreshments will be available. General admission is \$10, and tickets can be purchased through www.jacobyartscenter.org or by calling 618.462.5222.

A truly musical storyteller, Dammer's love for Big Band has expanded the decades. He has been a regular on the St. Louis music scene since his high school band days. In the 1950's, he enlisted in the Missouri Air National Guard, performing with many active duty Air Force Bands, including "Airman Of Note," the premier jazz band of the U.S. Air Force, until his retirement after 42 years of service.

Dammer formed his own Big Band in 1957, playing alongside a veritable who's who of musicians, including The Glenn Miller Orchestra, Tex Beneke and Stan Kenton. He's also accompanied Bob Hope, Marilyn May, Ella Fitzgerald, Wayne Newton, and Buddy Greco, among others. He continues to lead his Big Band and several small groups and has recorded several CDs with some of St. Louis' finest musicians.

Dammer will be joined by a trio of seasoned musicians, including Dave Venn on piano, Dave Troncoso on bass, and Steve Schininger on drums. Venn is considered by many instrumentalists as one of the best piano players to work with while both Troncoso and Schininger honed their musical skills with the Air Force – Troncoso in Shades of Blue, the U.S. Air Force jazz ensemble, and Schininger with the Air Force Band.

It's a night of music and excitement no Big Band fan will want to miss.

About Jacoby Arts Center: The mission of the Jacoby Arts Center is to nurture and promote the practice and appreciation of the arts through education, exhibits, cultural programs, and community initiatives. For more information, visit www.jacobyartscenter.org or call 618-462-5222.