



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gogue Center reopens with outdoor performances beginning April 18

Sold-out concerts with physically distanced seating to be presented at amphitheatre venue

AUBURN, Alabama —The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University will reopen in April 2021 with outdoor concerts at its Amphitheatre at the City of Auburn Lawn and Porch, following a 13-month hiatus in live, in-person performances. The center, adhering to strict safety guidelines, including the use of physically distanced seating, will present a series of six sold-out performances from its inaugural and second seasons that had been postponed due to public health concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Artists featured in the Gogue Center's Spring 2021 performance lineup include:

Zakir Hussain & Masters of Percussion
Sunday, April 18; 7:30 p.m.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Septet
with Wynton Marsalis
Wednesday, April 21 and Thursday, April 22; 7:30 p.m.

Dover Quartet and Bridget Kibbey
Friday, May 7; 7:30 p.m.

The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra
Directed by Scotty Barnhart
Thursday, May 13; 7:30 p.m.

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
Monday, June 7; 7:30 p.m.

Like performing arts centers across the country, the Gogue Center's approach to reopening has been incremental. The decision to welcome patrons back for live, in-person performances was made once artists resumed touring and the necessary health and safety protocols could be put in place. The center's current outdoor performance operating protocols call for all Spring 2021 performances to be presented outdoors in the amphitheatre at a reduced capacity. The plan has been reviewed and approved by Auburn University.

"Last March, not even a full year into our inaugural 2019–20 season, we made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone performances and programs due to the escalating COVID-19 crisis," said Christopher Heacox, executive director of the Gogue Center. "After months of careful deliberation and planning, we are confident we have set in place the most effective protocols necessary to ensure the safety of our artists, patrons, staff, volunteers and vendors.

With its expansive, open-air design, the amphitheatre is the ideal venue for the center's return to presenting live, in-person performances. In a recent town hall meeting of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP), of which the Gogue Center is a member organization, Dr. Anthony Fauci, leading immunologist and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, noted that events held outdoors are "much, much safer than indoors."

For all Spring 2021 performances, patron seating will be organized on the amphitheatre lawn in adequately spaced two- and four-person seating areas, or pods, akin to outdoor theatre boxes, and will allow patrons from the same household or party to enjoy performances together while remaining physically distanced from other groups.

Though seating capacity in the amphitheatre will be reduced in order to maintain physical distancing, use of the outdoor venue will enable the Gogue Center to accommodate all patrons who purchased tickets to performances rescheduled for Spring 2021. One performance, the much-anticipated Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis concert, has been split into two engagements in order to accommodate the number of ticketholders. The ensemble, which is

currently touring as a septet, will perform on Wednesday, April 21 and Thursday, April 22. Ticketholders will be alerted to their assigned performance date starting next week.

The reduction in seating capacity means that all six Spring 2021 performances are now officially sold out. No additional tickets will be made available for purchase. New, updated digital tickets—another safety measure implemented to reduce physical touchpoints—will be sent to patrons beginning next week. A print-at-home option will also be available.

“We are communicating with all ticketholders to remind them of the performances for which they currently have tickets and, more importantly, to make sure they understand that their tickets are still valid for admission on rescheduled dates,” Heacox said. “When you purchase a ticket to a performance at the Gogue Center, your admission will always be honored, no matter when or where we present the performance.”

In addition to moving all Spring 2021 performances to the amphitheatre and the implementation of physically distanced seating, the Gogue Center will also enact a number of new protocols and procedures designed to help protect the health and safety of patrons, artists, staff, volunteers and vendors. These practices include but are not limited to:

- Outdoor box office stations and entry gates will be configured to reduce congestion in the arrival plaza prior to performances.
- Admission into the amphitheatre will be staggered with assigned arrival times to maximize space for physical distancing.
- To reduce physical touchpoints and eliminate hand-to-hand contact between patrons and staff, all tickets will be reissued as digital tickets and distributed electronically.
- To reduce congestion at concessions areas, food and beverage items will be available for advance purchase only. All concessions will be prepackaged in individual and/or closed containers to help prevent cross-contamination.
- All transactions, including ticket handling and concessions ordering, payment and pickup, will be contactless and cashless to reduce physical touchpoints.
- Foot traffic patterns will be configured to limit queuing and crowding throughout the amphitheatre. Movement within the venue will be directed to minimize congregation and limit physical interaction between patrons from different households/parties.
- Face coverings will be required in accordance with Auburn University policy, in light of current CDC guidance, and/or at the request of the artist. When required, face coverings must be worn by all patrons, staff, volunteers and vendors regardless of vaccination status. Masks must cover both the nose and mouth and be worn at all times except when eating or drinking.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be widely available for use throughout the amphitheatre.
- Outdoor restrooms, including portable toilets, will be fully operational, outfitted with touch-free fixtures (e.g., faucets, toilets, etc.) and adequately stocked with supplies for handwashing.

The Gogue Center’s Spring 2021 performance announcement is the first of three strategically scheduled announcements planned. Future announcements specific to Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 will be made as new information and details, including featured artists, performance dates, and updates to policies and protocols, are confirmed.

For more information on rescheduled Spring 2021 performances, visit the Gogue Center’s website at goguecenter.auburn.edu/spring2021.

Patrons with specific questions or concerns regarding performances, seating or ticketing policies may contact the Gogue Center box office by telephone at 334.844.TIXS (8497) or via email at gpactickets@auburn.edu.

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