

MUSIC

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Edison's music program by following Crisara's tradition. "He cared about his students in an honest and genuine way. He set a high standard and you were expected to reach that." He also plans to increase awareness in the community about the music program and work with local high schools to offer a wider range of scholarship opportunities for their music students.

"Many people are surprised to hear that we have scholarships available for music students," he said. "Unfortunately, that means many of our scholarships go unfilled each year. We need to change that."

"It's a very open door enrollment. Any student who wants to play music has an opportunity to pursue that here in a very open environment."

Dr. Smith will lead the Edison Jazz Ensemble, Edison Symphony Orchestra and Edison Concert Band. He will also teach several courses, including applied trumpet and jazz band. His jazz band students will learn songs like Oliver Nelson's "Blues and the Abstract Truth" and Woody Herman's "Wood Choppers Ball."

"I like to pick a repertoire that gives students an idea of the history and tradition of jazz," he said.

Jazz history, in which students learn about "the only true American art form," is his most popular course and is available as a general education requirement. "We expanded the class size to get more people to come in," he said.

He has played alongside jazz greats such as Charlie Haden, Gunther Schuller, Jean Luc-Ponty and the Duke Ellington Repertory Orchestra. But he also gamely sat in with a group of music majors last week for a few improvised bars of rock 'n' roll and jazz.

They came on a breezy Friday mid-morning, outside of class, to pursue their own band.

There are about 120 music majors at Edison this year, and Dr. Smith hopes that number will grow. "There has always been a strong music program (at Edison State)," he said. "I just think some students aren't aware of the great faculty we have."

Dr. Smith has been a music professor and band director at a liberal arts school in Georgia, and most recently was director of a two-year music program in Texas similar to the one at Edison State.

Although he was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, he moved often because of his father's position in the Air Force. He spent most his youth on Florida's Gulf coast, and said he jumped at the chance to work at Edison and live on Fort Myers Beach with his wife and son. He also has two college-aged children.

He first played professionally in Panama City at age 14, in the horn section of soul music groups with his two older brothers (both now horn players and music professors in Georgia).


Since then, Dr. Smith has performed in most musical genres, with groups including the Georgia Bach Festival Orchestra and rock bands Graham Central Station and Freddie Fender, as well as in musical theatre.

"I'm a crossover player," he said. "Not strictly classical, not strictly jazz or rhythm and blues... It's sort of like — how do you choose which children you like the best?"

This Saturday, Oct. 25, Dr. Smith will perform on trumpet with the Edison Pops 50-piece orchestra as part of the Edison Pops at Sunset Concert featuring Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Call 489-9085 for more information or buy tickets online at www.edisonpops.com.

Other upcoming concerts include a Nov. 17 Jazz Ensemble concert at Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall. Check for other Edison State College musical events at www.bbmannpah.com. ■





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