

CRYSTAL SPRINGS ALLIANCE CHURCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Church Produces Jazz Concert

Grand Rapids' world-traveling jazz trumpeter, Willie A. "Sweet Willie" Singleton, will present a set of Christmas favorites during morning worship at Crystal Springs Alliance Church December 9.

The church meets in the auditorium of South Christian High School, 160 68th St. S.W., at 1045 a.m.

Singleton, a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, adopted Grand Rapids as his home in 1996. From here he tours extensively with the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble, an historical jazz group associated with Preservation Hall and Tulane University in New Orleans committed to the preservation of that great American music form called "Dixieland" or "Bourbon Street" jazz. The ensemble has been featured in the Calvin College January Series and with major orchestras across the nation: the Boston Philharmonic, Princeton NJ, Youngstown OH, Indianapolis, Grand Rapids, Toledo and Richmond IN. They have played in the Bay Chamber Concert Series in Maine, the Little Rock AR Jazz Festival, the Brevard Music Camps and the New York and Minnesota Chautauqua resorts.

One of "Sweet Willie's" most memorable appearances was under the fabled Wynton Marsalis as he directed "Jazz at Lincoln Center: The Armstrong Continuum" in New York in 1994. He also played in "Cornet Kings before Armstrong" there. His international tours include jazz festivals in Poland, Holland, Great Britain, Germany and France. He played

Italy, Japan, Bermuda and Canada with the Mills Brothers, Joe Williams, Harry Bellafonte and Lannie Kazan.

Locally, Singleton has formed the *Gentlemen of Jazz* with which he has performed benefit concerts for St. Mary's Hospital and the American Diabetes Association and played for social events. He has been guest lead trumpet with the Grand Rapids Symphony as they accompanied Lou Rawls, Ben Vereen, Mercedes Ellington, Monica Mancini, the Starlight Trio, the Capital Quartet and Frank Sinatra Jr.

In his early career, during an eight-year Navy tour, Singleton was duty bugler at Arlington Cemetery, participating in President Kennedy's and General MacArthur's funerals. After the Navy, he pursued an education at Southern University at Baton Rouge, earning a bachelor's degree in jazz studies with trumpet. While in college he studied with Clark Terry on a National Endowment for the Arts grant, later [1979-80] playing lead trumpet with the conductor's Big Band. Shortly after graduation he joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra, playing lead trumpet for three years, then the Count Basie Band as lead trumpet. Over the next two decades into the early '90s, he played with 15 major bands and orchestras, including the famous orchestra in the Blue Room of the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans under Dick Stabile, accompanying many of the most famous acts in show business from Ella Fitzgerald and Carol Channing to Gladys Knight and the Temptations.

The Crystal Springs Alliance Church, hosts of the Christmas concert, is under the leadership of Doyle DeGraw, a former pastor and Christian educator in California and Toledo. He also teaches in support of home schooling in the Grand Rapids area. The church was founded by Jeff Brown, now the superintendent of the Great Lakes District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, headquartered in Ann Arbor.

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