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JAZZ ST. LOUIS CEO DEPARTING TO HEAD SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Gene Dobbs Bradford will end his tenure next spring after more than 20 years

ST. LOUIS, December 6, 2021 – [Jazz St. Louis](https://www.jazzstl.org) announced today that President & Chief Executive Officer Gene Dobbs Bradford is leaving the organization in spring 2022 to become the Executive Director of the Savannah Music Festival, Inc. in Savannah, Georgia.

Jazz St. Louis has seen extraordinary growth and transformation during more than two decades of Bradford's tenure. The small presenting jazz club originally known in St. Louis as Jazz at the Bistro has gone from a \$300,000 annual budget to \$3 million. The non-profit's mission and vision outgrew its space and in 2012 commenced a capital campaign, raising \$8.5 million to expand the facilities to create greater capacity for the education and community engagement programs about jazz, society, and their impact on each other.

Jazz St. Louis reopened in 2014 in the Harold and Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz in Grand Center. The reinvented performance space quickly became known as one of the top jazz listening rooms in the world. The expansion included the Centene Jazz Education Center and the internationally acclaimed jazz performers booked in the Ferring Jazz Bistro became integral to the education programs started under Bradford's direction and have already served over 200,000 students.

“When I came to Jazz St. Louis from the St. Louis Symphony 23 years ago, I had a dream of building an organization that would be a vital and well-respected cultural institution both here in St. Louis and throughout the world. With the help of a very generous and nurturing family of supporters, we were able to do that,” Bradford said. “Right now, the organization is in great shape financially, has a fantastic team and a great artistic vision. I feel the time is right for me to embark on a new venture that will allow me to follow my passion for live performance, education, community engagement.”

“Gene brings people together, and his experience collaborating with other arts organizations here will serve him well in Savannah,” added Bill Higley, Chairman of the Board at Jazz St. Louis. In recent years, Jazz St. Louis has partnered with Opera Theatre St. Louis, The Big Muddy Dance Company, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, The Nine Network, St. Louis Public Radio, and the Kranzberg Arts Foundation, among others. With a history of co-commissioned works like *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Jazz St. Louis is producing its first solo commission with renowned jazz trumpeter, producer, and songwriter Keyon Harrold who was selected as the first JSL Creative Advisor by a team led by Bradford.

During the next three months, Jazz St. Louis will celebrate Bradford’s achievements for the organization and conduct a search for a new Chief Executive Officer, which will include consulting its key stakeholders about the direction they would like the non-profit to go in the future.

“Jazz is all about changing and evolving,” Bradford explained, “and I’m confident Jazz St. Louis will select a new leader who will build on the foundation we have created and take the organization to the even greater heights and further broadens its appeal across diverse audiences and artistic genres.”

The Savannah Music Festival is Georgia’s largest musical arts event, presenting a diverse selection of classical, jazz, American, and international roots music. The organization operates year-round to plan and produce the festival as well as off-season concerts, broadcast programs, and free music education programming focused on youth.

About Jazz St. Louis

Jazz St. Louis advances the uniquely American art of jazz through performance, education, and community engagement. Each year, this non-profit organization presents over 270 performances in its internationally acclaimed concert series. Jazz St. Louis takes a three-pronged approach to its work: presenting jazz, encouraging and educating future audiences, and nurturing budding musicians. For more information about Jazz St. Louis visit www.jazzstl.org or www.facebook.com/jazzstl.