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Brett Stamps brings knowledge, passion to jazz

The famous French painter Henri Matisse once wrote and commented, "I understand better what Brett Stamps is, as he demonstrates through his compositions and teaching.

Brett Stamps was born in Washington, D.C. He received his bachelor's in music from the College of Charleston in South Carolina and his master's in music from the University of Miami, which he earned in 1995. Stamps is the director of jazz activities and professor of music at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

"I got into jazz because there was so much trumpet in the trombone, which, despite looking very modern, goes way back several thousand years as one of the most important instruments in jazz," Stamps said.

"I was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and grew up playing traditional jazz in the St. Louis area. I didn't start doing this until I was 50 years old," said Stamps.

"I think the reason why the trombone is an important instrument is because it can do so many things," Stamps said. 

"The way players have to tie their lips, and the way they put their tongues to change notes. It is part of so many types of music. It is part of high school bands, but also in bands and even rock bands."

"Stamps is able to teach others at UISEP to imitate. But can a person — even one of Stamps' ability — teach students improvement?"

"Absolutely you can," said Stamps. "As with most great artists, there is kind of an inner ability that will come forth and become strong. One of the myths of improvement is that you just make it up and work hard. Measurement in music has taken away from the way that players have to be tied up. I don't think that is a problem," he said. "It is to do with the way that people relate to their own personal abilities."".

"At the level that these students have become involved. It is a lot of pleasure to hear people that are really involved."