



Winter 1-23-2017

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Recommended Citation

University Communications, "Concerts Planned as Part of IWU Jazz Festival" (2017). *News and Events*. 3036.

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Concerts Planned as Part of IWU Jazz Festival

Jan. 23, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Area residents can hear nationally acclaimed jazz artists at three public venues as part of Illinois Wesleyan University's annual [Jazz Festival](#) on Feb. 3-4.

The non-competitive festival for high school and junior high jazz groups features comments and feedback from guest artists and adjudicators. The festival also features a concert, set this year for Feb. 4 at 12:45 p.m. at Westbrook Auditorium, featuring guest artists [Darden Purcell](#), a jazz vocalist and educator, and [Shawn Purcell](#), jazz guitarist, arranger, composer and educator.

New this year is a community outreach concert at 4 p.m. Feb. 3 at the Western Avenue Community Center, 600 N. Western Ave., Bloomington. The Purcells, several of the Jazz Festival clinicians, and Jazz Festival Director [Glenn Wilson](#) will also perform Feb. 3 at 8 p.m. at the "IWU Jazz Fest at [Jazz UpFront](#)," 107 W. Front St., Bloomington (\$5 cover charge).

"We're very excited to have a record number of groups attend our festival this year, including three jazz vocal groups," said Wilson. "To be able to have our jazz guest artists perform for the general public and, especially, for the kids at Western Avenue is a great chance to spread the word about our festival and jazz in general. Also new this year is the fact that our clinicians, who work with every band attending, will also perform on some of these events, including the Feb. 4 afternoon concert. These are some of the top jazz musicians and educators in our area as well as Chicago, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and beyond."

Guest artist Darden Purcell has shared the stage with many of the world's top jazz artists, and has performed backup vocals for national recording artists Chaka Khan, BeBe Winans, Melba Moore and Rita Coolidge as well as a televised performance behind Darlene Love on "The Late Show with David Letterman." She is currently director of jazz studies at George Mason University. Her latest recording "Where the Blues Begins" is just released on Armored Records. The Jazz UpFront performance also serves as a CD release party.

Shawn Purcell can be heard on more than 20 recordings. He was the guitarist for the United States Air Force premier jazz band, The Airmen of Note. He's also a columnist for *Premier Guitar* magazine, *Jazz Guitar Life* and *DownBeat* magazine. As a composer/arranger his works have been commissioned by several groups and solo artists. He is currently guitarist for The Jazz Commodores, the U.S. Navy's premier jazz band. The IWU Jazz Ensemble and guests will be performing four of Shawn Purcell's compositions and arrangements at the Feb. 4 afternoon concert.