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Jazz Director Reginald Lewis to Conduct HBCU All-Star Jazz Ensemble

Dec. 19, 2022

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Director of the Illinois Wesleyan University jazz program Reginald Lewis was selected as a guest conductor for an upcoming performance by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) All-Star Jazz Ensemble.

The performance will take place at the HBCU National Band and Orchestra Directors' Consortium in Chicago on Tuesday, Dec. 20, at 2:30 p.m. during the group's annual meeting.

Lewis joined Illinois Wesleyan in fall of 2022 as an adjunct instructor with the School of Music and director of the jazz program. He will lead the All-Star Jazz Ensemble alongside other guest conductors including James Holden Jr. of Virginia State University; Derrick Gardner and Darius Hampton of Northwestern Bienen School of Music; and Roxanne Stevenson of Chicago State University.

"It is cool how things come full circle. I was once an undergraduate student auditioning in front of Dr. Roxanne Stevenson, Derrick Gardner and Ron Carter. Now I will be conducting alongside them. This is such an honor," said Lewis.

Lewis' involvement with the HBCU All-Star Jazz Ensemble began in 2013 while he was studying music at Jackson State University. There, he participated in the consortium held in Atlanta, Georgia, and then auditioned for the band from 2013-2015.

This ensemble and event helps enhance the status and reputation of jazz programs in HBCUs, said Lewis, especially among institutions that are underrepresented.

"This can be used as a platform to increase funding in the HBCUs as well as create connections with students and fellow graduates with deep connections in the music industry. Huge relationships are built by connecting musicians from all the existing HBCUs across the nation," he said.



Director of the Illinois Wesleyan University jazz program Reginald Lewis was selected as a guest conductor for an upcoming performance by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) All-Star Jazz Ensemble.

By Julia Perez