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## New and Experienced Musicians to Perform at 49th Annual Jazz Festival

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# New and Experienced Musicians to Perform at 49th Annual Jazz Festival

BY JULIA PEREZ | JANUARY 31, 2024

## NEWS



BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Young musicians from the region will perform and gain feedback from seasoned jazz artists at the 49th annual Jazz Festival hosted by Illinois Wesleyan University's School of Music on Friday, Feb. 2 and Saturday, Feb. 3.

The performances at Westbrook Auditorium in Presser Hall are free and open to the public, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. [The full program can be viewed here.](#) 

Student ensembles from 14 regional junior high and high schools will perform in the two-day festival, including Normal West High School directed by Ryan Budzinski '06 and Dwight Township High School directed by Jakobe Rabor '23.

"These younger musicians will gain experience playing for an audience (and) they will receive comments on how to improve from some of the world's greatest musicians," said Reginald Lewis, director of the [IWU jazz program](#). "They may make new friends from other bands but most importantly they will get inspired."

While the festival is non-competitive, students will have the chance to receive feedback from a lineup of expert adjudicators: saxophonist and New York jazz legend Ron Bridgewater from the University of Illinois, Bloomington native and jazz pianist John Campbell, Chicago composer and drummer Clif Wallace, and vocalist and bassist Dr. Emma Taylor of Millikin University.

The IWU Jazz Ensemble will perform at 1 p.m. both days and the panelists will perform at 6 p.m. Friday and 11:30 a.m. Saturday. The event is sponsored by The Music Shoppe, which was founded and has been managed by [a long line of Titan musicians](#).

"This would not be possible without the guidance of Glenn Wilson (retired director of the IWU jazz program) and the help from faculty and the community," said Lewis. "I hope that the community realizes what talent sits right here in their own backyard, and that Illinois Wesleyan is an amazing and active University in the community. Send your children here to study, especially music."



A trombone player performs at a previous Jazz Festival.