

ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC PRESENTS

# 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Festival

March 27 - 28, 2026

March 27, 9:30am - 3:30pm

March 28, 10:00am - 4:30pm

Westbrook Auditorium,  
Presser Hall

1210 N Park St.  
Bloomington, IL 61701

Admission is free and open to the public

For more information,  
visit [www.iwu.edu/music/events](http://www.iwu.edu/music/events)



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*51<sup>st</sup> Annual*  
**Illinois Wesleyan**  
*Jazz Festival*  
**Encore**

March 27, 2026

\$10 ticket fee at the door

Jazz Upfront  
107 W Front St,  
Bloomington, IL

6:00 - 6:50pm Richwoods Jazz Band

7:00 - 8:15pm Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Combo

8:30 - 9:30pm Clinicians Performance



## About the Jazz Festival

The Illinois Wesleyan University Jazz Festival is one of the longest-running educational jazz festivals in the Midwest. Now celebrating its 51st year, the festival brings together middle school and high school jazz ensembles, educators, and professional artists for a day of performance, learning, and celebration of America's original art form, jazz.

Founded in 1975 by Professor Tom Streeter, the festival was created to provide young musicians with an opportunity to perform and receive meaningful educational feedback from experienced jazz educators and professional performers. What began as a modest gathering of school jazz bands has grown into a respected annual event that attracts ensembles from across Illinois and the surrounding Midwest.

A hallmark of the Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Festival is its educational and non-competitive format. Participating ensembles perform for a panel of distinguished clinicians and then work directly with those artists in clinic sessions designed to help students refine their ensemble playing, improvisation, and understanding of jazz style. This structure creates an encouraging environment where students can develop their musicianship while engaging with experienced performers and educators.

Throughout its history, the festival has hosted outstanding guest artists, clinicians, and educators from universities and professional ensembles around the country. These musicians have presented concerts, worked directly with student ensembles, and shared their expertise through masterclasses and clinics. The festival continues this tradition by featuring special guest performers who work closely with participating students and the Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Ensemble.

Over the decades, the festival has remained an important part of Illinois Wesleyan's commitment to jazz performance, jazz education, and the preservation of the jazz tradition. By connecting young musicians with professional artists and educators, the Illinois Wesleyan University Jazz Festival continues to inspire new generations of performers while celebrating the enduring legacy of jazz.

**52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jazz Fest dates:  
February 19–20, 2027**

**Instagram: @iwu.jazz**

## **Festival Highlights**

- **Ensemble Performances:** Featuring high school and middle school jazz ensembles in a supportive, non-competitive atmosphere.
- **Jazz Ensemble Performance:** There will be a performance by our wonderful clinicians and special guests, Jarrard Harris, Gabriel Wade, James Mauck, Maxwell Beckman and Kurt Reeder on Friday, March 27th at 2:40pm – 3:30pm. The Dr. Lewis Big Band will also perform with some of the most talented musicians in the area compiled of students from Illinois Wesleyan, Illinois State, University of Illinois, Chicago State and the clinicians.
- **Clinic Sessions:** Each performing group will receive a private, 20-minute clinic to refine and enhance their musicianship.

## **Participants:**

- Centennial High School
- Franklin STEAM Academy
- Pekin Community High School
- Richwoods High School
- University High School
- Urbana High School
- Urbana Middle School

# Schedule

## Friday, March 27, 2026

9:40am . . . . . Pekin Community HS directed by Karli McCann  
10:05am . . . . .Franklin STEAM Academy, Harris Avenue Jazz Band , directed by Nick Shulz  
10:30am . . .Franklin STEAM Academy, Harvard Avenue Jazz Band, directed by Jaime Escatel  
10:55am . . . . . Centennial HS Jazz Band directed by Mike Allen  
11:20am . . . . . Centennial HS Lab Band directed by Brian Ford  
11:45am . . . . . University HS directed by Jason Landes  
12:10pm . . . . .Richwoods HS directed by Christopher Render  
1:00pm – 2:30pm . . . . .LUNCH  
2:35pm . . . . .Awards  
2:40pm – 3:30pm . . . . .Clinician Performance

## Jazz Upfront Schedule Friday, March 27, 2026

6:00pm – 6:50pm . . . . . Richwoods HS  
7:00pm – 8:15pm . . . . . Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Combo  
8:30pm – 9:30pm . . . . .Clinician Performance

## Saturday, March 28, 2026

10:05am . . . . . Urbana Middle School directed by Stacey Peterik  
10:55am . . . . . Urbana HS directed by Stacey Peterik  
12:00pm – 12:45pm . . . . .LUNCH  
12:50pm – 2:00pm . . . . . The ORGANization Performance and Masterclass  
2:15pm – 2:40pm . . . . . Illinois Wesleyan Jazz Combo  
2:40pm . . . . . Awards  
2:50pm – 4:30pm . . . . . Dr. Lewis Big Band Performance

## Clinician Bios

### Special Guest: Jarrard Harris

Louisville Kentucky native saxophonist and educator Jarrard Harris has been performing and teaching in Chicago since 1998. In addition to his own group, he was also a member of the Chicago Jazz Ensemble and has performed nationally and internationally with Joe Lovano, Jimmy Heath, Jon Faddis, Louis Bellson, Randy Weston, Nicholas Payton, Victor Goines, Nancy Wilson, Antonio Hart, Claudia Acuna, Bill Holman, Etienne, Charles, Gerald Wilson, Bobby Watson, Muhal Richard Abrahms, The Temptations, Donald Harrison, Steve Wilson, Eric Reed, The Chicago Sinfonietta and many others. He has performed in the pit bands of Black Ensemble Theater of Chicago, Goodman Theater, Court Theater, and Auditorium Theater.



He has served on the faculties of Northwestern University, Columbia College, and the City Colleges of Chicago where he taught applied saxophone, improvisation, and directed small and large jazz ensembles. He also served as director of jazz studies program at the Chicago Public Schools Advanced Arts Education Program in conjunction with The Herbie Hancock Institute of jazz. Jarrard is currently the clinical assistant professor of jazz bands at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana where he directs jazz bands and teaches Jazz history and improvisation. He is a founding board member of the Jazz Education Network and a board member of the Board of directors for the Jazz Institute of Chicago. He serves as the host of the Jazz Links Jam Session, been a faculty member of the Yamaha Bands of America Jazz Camp and Straight-Ahead Jazz Camp in addition to serving as the director of the Shell Lake Arts Center Saxophone camp. He has also appeared as an adjudicator, clinician, and performer at The University of Louisville, Coe College, Loyola University New Orleans, University of Chicago, Simpson College, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, University of Cincinnati, Purdue University, Iowa Jazz Championships, Illinois Music Educators Conference, Indiana Music Educators Conference, Iowa Music Educators Conference, Jazz Education Network National Conference to name a few.

Jarrard is a proud graduate of the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music where he earned his Bachelor of Music in Jazz studies and DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois where he earned a Masters in Jazz Studies.

### Kurt Reeder

Keyboardist Kurt Reeder, originally from Provo, Utah, is nearing completion on his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The 2009 winner of the Downbeat Award for best original composition,



Reeder earned his Masters in Jazz Performance at Cal State Fullerton where he had the opportunity to study with pianist and composer Bill Cunliffe. After 5 years back in Utah as a freelance musician and adjunct teacher at two universities he relocated to Champaign-Urbana in 2018. Fluent in multiple styles, Reeder is a working musician, playing everything from cocktail piano to rock and pop tunes to incendiary jazz organ in the school of Jimmy Smith and Charles Earland. He is also an expert in Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean styles. He developed a taste for Brazilian music while living in Brazil from 2006-2008, learning to speak fluent Portuguese in the process. His love for Afro-Caribbean styles was born as a young teenager, and has led to work directing the Salsa ensemble at Cal State Fullerton, and performing with artists such as Alex Acuña, Poncho Sanchez, and Tito Puente Jr.



### **Gabriel Wade**

Little Rock, Arkansas native Gabriel Wade is a versatile trumpeter, pianist, and educator with a rich performance history. He's shared the stage with iconic ensembles and artists such as the Count Basie Orchestra and Bobby Watson, and Chicago staples like the Clif Wallace Big Band, Tom Garling Jazz Orchestra, Marlene Rosenberg Quartet, and the Afro-Caribbean Jazz Collective. As a sideman, he's appeared at notable venues, colleges and festivals

across the United States, including various colleges in Wyoming, Dazzle (Denver, CO), the Bop Stop (Cleveland, OH), Merriman's Playhouse (South Bend, IN), and the Jazz Gallery Center for the Arts (Milwaukee, WI), the Elmhurst Jazz Festival (Elmhurst, IL), and the Chicago Jazz Festival (Chicago, IL). As a bandleader, he has had the pleasure of performing on stages in Arkansas, Milwaukee, WI, and Illinois, including Chicago's Fulton Street Collective, Andy's Jazz Club, and the Jazz Showcase.

Recent achievements include qualifying as a semi-finalist in the Jazz Improvisation Division for the International Trumpet Guild's 2024 and 2025 Ryan Anthony Memorial Trumpet Competition, being selected for the prestigious, donor-funded 2024 Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy Big Band led by artistic director, Christian McBride, and earning 1st place in the 2024 Tom Williams Jazz Division of the National Trumpet Competition.

Gabriel Wade is also an avid music educator as his educational roles include being the Adjunct Professor of Trumpet at Harper College (Palatine, IL) and College of DuPage (Glen Ellyn, IL), Trumpet Instructor for the Ravinia Lawndale Family Music School (Chicago, IL), Combo Instructor for the Milwaukee Jazz Institute (Milwaukee, WI), a piano teacher at Naperville Music Academy (Aurora, IL), and a trumpet/piano teacher at the Northern Illinois University Community School of the Arts (DeKalb, IL).

## Maxwell Beckman

Maxwell Beckman started music training at the age of 3 at Springfield's Flemming academy of music studying violin. Studying saxophone in middle school and fell in love with the bass guitar. Was awarded the Franklin Middle School Louis Armstrong award for outstanding jazz performance. In high school began studying Double Bass with Illinois Symphony member Andrew Tinge. Won several high school scholarships to study at summer music programs which led him to the Interlochen Arts Academy for senior year of high school. Getting to play with Bob James, Shelly Berg, Aaron Johnson amount others. Performing at the Monterey Next Gen Jazz Festival.



Launched to Chicago to study at DePaul University's school of music Max studies with Kelly Sill among others. Touring And performing shows with Axis Sova, Woongi, Northbrook Symphony, Oistrakh symphony of Chicago, Lamp, Flyer De Lune, Sean Green, Charles Gorzinski, Flux Bikes, Marquis hill, Sean Green, Baron Von Something, Options, Sen Morimoto to name a few.

## James Mauck

James Mauck enjoys performing and teaching many styles of music that reach beyond the humble cornfields of the Midwest. He works as an accompanist and composer for the Dance Department at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Adjunct Professor of Percussion at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, and performs as an acoustic-electronic improviser under the title, Forebeat.

In 2018, he created his solo musical project, Forebeat, which combines drum set and acousto-electronics, and blends free-flowing improvisation with sequenced synthesizers and pre-recorded samples. While performing as Forebeat, James has had the honor of collaborating with prestigious improvisors such as Bloomington-Normals own Stefan Robinson (Yea Big), Chicago's Jason Stein and Avreeayl Ra (Sun Ra Arkestra), and international artists Tatsuya Nakatani and Ryosuke Kiyasu. He released his debut album, Duality (2019) and was commissioned to compose the music for Cynthia Oliver's dance work, Summon. Sow. Reap. (2023) which premiered at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.



James is also sought after as an on-call drummer and percussionist across the Midwest and has had the chance to share the stage with artists/ensembles such as Gavin Lee (West End/Broadway), Sara Caswell (Esperanza Spalding), Kyle Gass (Tenacious D), Charlie Ballantine, the Danville Symphony Orchestra, the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra, and the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra.

He received his B.M. in Percussion Performance from Eastern Illinois University and M.M. in Jazz Performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## **Featured Performers**

### **The ORGANization**

- Organ – Kurt Reeder
- Drum Set – Ian Shepherd
- Percussion – Sean Kutzko
- Guitar – Beto Rodrigues
- Saxophone – Dr. Reginald Lewis

### **Dr. Lewis Big Band, directed by Dr. Reginald Lewis**

- **Saxophones**
  - Featured Guest: Jarrard Harris
  - Alto 1 – Dr. Reginald Lewis
  - Alto 2 – Adam Brown
  - Tenor 1- Darius Botley
  - Tenor 2 – Donovan Lloyd
  - Baritone Saxophone– Logan Hughes
- **Trombones**
  - Bone 1 – Jonathan Hanna
  - Bone 2 – Graham Miller
  - Bone 3 – Kyle Hunt
  - Bone 4 – Brady Wade
- **Trumpets – The trumpets will be alternating parts**
  - Matt Oyibo
  - Charlie Machamer
  - Jackson Baker
  - Brian Choban
  - Kimberly Branch
- **Rhythm Section**
  - Piano - Kurt Reeder
  - Bass – Diego Martinez & Maxwell Beckman
  - Drums – Jameel Stephens & James Mauck
  - Guitar – Jay Thomason



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### 2026 BIG BAND JAZZ ACADEMY SESSIONS

Session I  
July 12 - 25

Session II  
July 26 - Aug 8

**Scholarships are available!**



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