October 1, 2023

Re: The First Annual UI Jazz Combo Competition

Dear Iowa Jazz Band Directors,

We hope that this message finds you well and that your 2023-24 school year is off to a fantastic start!

The University of Iowa jazz studies area is beyond pleased to announce our 2nd Annual Jazz Combo Competition! The overwhelming jazz focus in the state has been big band up to this point, and while we acknowledge and respect the value of large group musicianship, we’re long overdue for an annual event that both encourages and celebrates the art of small group jazz performance. With two different categories of competition offered, we hope that all interested schools and Iowa jazz students have the opportunity to participate should they choose. We’re sharing news of our competition (and revised competition date) with you early out of respect for your very busy fall teaching schedules - and the time it takes for you and/or your students to prepare for a competition of this nature.

Apart from shedding some long overdue light on the small group side of jazz performance, we are incredibly excited about the prize pool that we’re offering for competition winners. We’re pleased to offer a slew of coveted and beneficial prizes designed to be of practical value to you and your young student jazz groups well beyond the date of the competition! A complete disclosure of competition rules, prizes and entry instructions is included in this mailing. We hope that you will find the competition to have benefits well in excess of the modest entry fee that we are charging to participate.

Full competition rules and an event poster are included in this mailing. We hope you can join us! Until then, all the best for a successful 2023-24 year.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Damani Phillips (on behalf of the UI Jazz Studies faculty)
Jazz Area Head and Associate Professor of African American Studies
Email: Damani-phillips@uiowa.edu / UI Jazz program info: www.music.uiowa.edu/jazz
Meet Your Competition Adjudicators/Clinicians

**Dr. Damani Phillips**
UI Assoc. Professor of Jazz (saxophone) and Jazz Area Head

Dr. Damani Phillips is a native of Pontiac, MI, and currently serves as head of the Jazz Studies program and Associate Professor of African American Studies at the University of Iowa. Phillips has earned Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from DePaul University and The University of Kentucky in classical saxophone, a second Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies from Wayne State University and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder; becoming the first African American in the country to do so. An active performer, pedagogue and lecturer, Phillips has performed, taught and lectured throughout the world. He previously served on the faculty of Grinnell College and Oakland University, and is actively sought as a guest artist, clinician, presenter and adjudicator throughout the nation. He has performed with artists/groups such as Lewis Nash, Christian McBride, Wycliffe Gordon, Bobby McFerrin, Marcus Belgrave, Terrell Stafford, Hank Jones, Red Holloway and Pat Bianchi among many others. Phillips has released 6 albums as a bandleader and published his first book "What Is This Thing Called Soul: Conversations on Black Culture and Jazz Education" in 2017.

**Dr. William Menefield**
UI Asst. Professor of Jazz (piano) and Composition

A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, William earned his Bachelor of Music from university of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (2005) and Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Texas at Austin (2011), both in music composition. He has recorded two albums as a solo artist and has also been featured as a soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (2005) and the Cincinnati Opera (CO) (2006, 2013). In 2019, William was commissioned by the CO to compose "Fierce", a one act opera which debuted in July of 2022. He has also performed with a variety of notable musicians including Roy Ayers, Clark Terry, David "Fathead" Newman, Gary Bartz, Steve Wilson, and Javon Jackson. William currently serves as the Assistant Professor of Jazz Studies at the University of Iowa.

**Prof. Curtis Taylor**
UI Lecturer of Jazz Studies (trumpet and brass)

Curtis Taylor has performed and recorded with Patrice Rushen, Billy Childs, Gary Novak, Bob Sheppard, Ed Motta, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Rodney Whitaker, Antonio Hart, as well as great gospel luminaries Karen Clark-Sheard, Kierra Sheard, and The Singletons. Taylor’s stint with jazz pianist Cyrus Chestnut included a notable concert performance at Kennedy Center which was recorded for NPR’s Jazzset. In 2014, Taylor relocated to Southern California where he worked with producer Kamau Kenyatta on Gregory Porter’s GRAMMY-winning album Liquid Spirit.
**Featured Special Guest Clinician, Adjudicator and Performer**

**Prof. Kevin Woods**

Dir. of Jaz Studies / Jazz Trumpet – Western Washington University

Origin Records recording artist Kevin Woods is quickly emerging as one of the most melodic and emotive voices in improvised music in the Northwest. His passion for both performance and education have made him in demand as a leader and a sideman as well as a composer, arranger and clinician. Woods received his B.A. in Music from Western Washington University and his M.M. in Jazz Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Kevin has performed with Cuban saxophonist and bandleader Paquito D'Rivera, trombonist Slide Hampton, saxophonists Joe Lovano, Walter Blanding Jr. and Gary Smulyan, trumpeters Bobby Shew, Brian Lynch, Claudio Roditi, guitarist Mike Stern and many others. He has been a member of award-winning and nationally touring musical groups and has performed at numerous national and international music festivals. Woods has been featured in both Downbeat and Jazziz magazines, and in 2007 he participated in the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead residency at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Kevin has six recordings as a leader.

As an educator, Woods has taught at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Whatcom Community College, Seakyung College in South Korea, and Spokane Falls Community College. He has given clinics and performances at numerous public schools and colleges throughout the US and has served as adjudicator and clinician for many jazz festivals. Currently, Kevin lives in Bellingham, Washington where he is active as a performer, educator and composer/arranger and serves as director of jazz studies at Western Washington University. He leads the Kevin Woods Quartet, Trio Linguae, and co-leads the Malmo, Sweden based Woods/Axelsson Quartet.
The 2nd Annual University of Iowa Jazz Combo Competition

Competition Guidelines and Entry Information

Competition Date: Saturday, March 30, 2023

Location: Voxman School of Music, 93 E. Burlington Street, Iowa City, IA 52240

Divisions: There will be two separate competition “division” options:

1. Intra-School Division
2. Mixed School Division

See detailed division descriptions below

Time:
- Intra-school division groups: 8am to 11:30
- Jazz Combo Clinic by Prof. Kevin Woods: 12:30pm to 1:30pm
- Mixed School division groups: 2pm to 5pm
- Evening Winner’s Concert: 7pm

Note: Individual group time slots assigned after registration

Entry Fee: $100 per individual group

Entry Deadline: March 1, 2024 (entry fee non-refundable after this date)

Info and Registration: https://bit.ly/UIjazzcomp

Competition Rules

1. Two separate divisions for the competition: Intra-School Combos and Mixed School Combos.
   - Intra-school combos must be comprised entirely of students who attend the same school and are representatives of a single school’s music program.
   - Mixed school combos may be comprised of students from across multiple school districts and multiple music programs. There are no restriction on how many different programs may be represented in a single mixed group.

2. Multiple entries from the same school are permitted, but no single student shall be allowed to play in more than three (3) different groups across both competition divisions.

3. Competition is open to groups comprised of students registered and actively attending middle school or high school at the time of the competition.

4. There will be no partitioning of competing groups based on school size or state classification (1A, 2A, etc.). All competitors will compete on an even tiered system within each division – regardless of student age, school district size or group size.

5. Each competing group will be allotted 20 minutes of performance time in which three different selections of contrasting styles/tempo should be presented. Each group is not required to fill all 20 minutes, but shall not exceed that amount of performance time.

6. While related, outside styles of music are welcome to be included in group repertoire, the competition is indeed a jazz competition – and will be evaluated as such. Related styles of popular music are allowed, but jazz music (in the traditionally-accepted sense) must be decisively at the core of the music presented by each group.
7. To meet the criteria stipulated in item #6 above, improvisation is a necessary component of each group’s performance. Performances should be improvisation-centered, just as one would reasonably expect in a typical small group jazz performance.

8. Use of sheet music is allowed, but “improvised solos” should not be written out and read and/or memorized by performing students.

9. In the spirit of fairness and equity to all participants, hand-picked “all star” (or mixed-school) groups shall not compete against groups limited to students within their respective school’s current student body (intra-school groups).

10. The maximum size of any single group will be capped at 7 musicians maximum (jazz septet). The instrumentation within that cap of 7 is open to any/all instruments – commonplace in jazz music or otherwise.

11. Each individual group entering the competition will be required to pay a separate entrance fee of $100/group by check (via mail) or credit card (through the competition’s secure web portal) at: https://music.uiowa.edu/public-programs/jazz-combo-competition.

12. Competition winners of each division will be invited to perform on the evening winner’s concert (3/30/24 – 7pm). We ask that winning groups for each division make the necessary arrangements to remain in Iowa City to participate in this celebratory performance.

**Adjudication**

1. Each student group will be evaluated by our panel of 5 adjudicators – consisting of the permanent University of Iowa jazz faculty and one featured guest adjudicator/clinician.

2. To flatten any individual judge’s scoring variances, raw scores received will be converted to a scale of X/100. Converted point totals for all 5 judges will be added together to create a composite score for each competing combo. The group with the highest point total in each division will be named the 1st place finisher.

3. All groups will receive copies of their written score sheets (with raw scores and comments) and/or an audio recording of adjudicator comments recorded during the group’s performance.

**Prize Pool and Benefits to Competitors**

All competing groups will receive the following:

- Written and/or verbal constructive comments from all 5 adjudicators
- A one hour mid-day jazz combo clinic, lead by the competition’s featured guest artist.
- Pro-quality audio and DVD-quality video of the group’s performance to be used as the ensemble director/students see fit (copyright clearance/use permissions for cover songs/standards is the responsibility of each performing group – not the competition hosts).

**1st place winners in each division receive the following (in addition to items above):**

- School or Band name engraved on UI Jazz Combo Competition travelling trophy – to be kept for the year by division winners until the date of the following year’s competition.
- A performance slot on the evening winner’s concert (Voxman Recital Hall, 7pm), which will be broadcast live on KCCK Jazz 88.3 FM. Evening concert shared between both division winners and UI Jazz Faculty Quintet (feat. the festival’s invited guest artist).
• Two guaranteed performance opportunities at major performance venues/outlets within the state of Iowa during the summer following the competition (courtesy of KCCK Jazz 88.3 FM).
• High quality audio and video of evening concert performance including 1-year copyright clearance/video use permissions provided by UI Jazz Studies and UI School of Music.
• Reimbursement of travel costs for winning groups and free entry into next year’s competition.

Instructions for Group Registration
• The easiest method of registering your group for the competition is online at our secure competition info/registration website site: https://bit.ly/UIjazzcomp. Registration and electronic payment of entry fees may both be handled here.
• Registration by mail is also permitted. Please mail the enclosed registration form and check for competition fee to: Dr. Damani Phillips, University of Iowa, Voxman School of Music, 93 E. Burlington Street, Iowa City, IA 52242.
• All entries must be postmarked by the entry deadline: March 1, 2023. Late entries not accepted.

For complete competition info, rules and online registration, visit: