

## 2017 Tucson Jazz Festival Showcases Top Musicians

Written by Alyssa DeMember

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Growling trumpets, sultry saxophones, elusive ride cymbals with bass drum accents and some of the most velvety voices in jazz music come together for the annual Tucson Jazz Festival. Spanning nearly two toe-tapping weeks, the jazz festival is located at venues throughout downtown, including the Rialto Theatre, Fox Tucson Theatre, Club Congress and the Tucson Convention Center Music Hall. This high-spirited musical event runs from Jan. 12 to Jan. 22 and features some of the best jazz musicians in the country.

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Executive director of Jazz in January, Yvonne Ervin, says festival-goers can't miss Grammy Award-winning vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater. "She's one of the best singers around." Jazz in January is a non-profit organization that works to put the event together each year.

Ervin says she is most excited to have legendary guitarist/vocalist George Benson in attendance, stating that the *Breezin'* musician is the biggest name since Burt Bacharach took the stage to perform an 11-piece ensemble in 2015. Tucson is a great hub for a large musical gathering such as this, since the weather this time of year is "absolutely beautiful," Ervin says. This year on Martin Luther King Day, jazz-lovers can attend the all-day Downtown Jazz Fiesta with two outdoor stages and half a dozen indoor stages for free.



Other musicians set to perform at the festival include saxophonist Kamasi Washington, singer/songwriter Storm Large, drummer Lewis Nash and the Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Band, among other talented music artists. The Ellington Band, opening for Bridgewater, showcases young musicians and gives them a chance to shine, says Ervin.

For those interested in diving into the rich and vibrant world of jazz music, Ervin suggests Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, arguably the largest selling jazz album ever. "It's a very good intro to straight-ahead jazz," she says.

For jazz connoisseurs and newcomers alike, the Tucson Jazz Festival is about bringing a diverse community together through music.

To learn more, visit [tucsonjazzfestival.org](http://tucsonjazzfestival.org)