

WIU Guitar Studio Promo - "What Makes WIU Better?"

Jesse Mazzoccoli: Specialized lessons in Applied Jazz and Guitar.

Marcos Rios: We get to play in like combo groups.

Evan Desaulnier: You get a lot of close contact with professors.

Brady Lavin: I've learned a ridiculous amount of stuff.

Dr. Matthew Warnock: We've had jazz guitar players like Jack Grassel and Adam Smale from New York City.

Evan Desaulnier: Personalized approach to teaching.

Brady Lavin: (about Matt Warnock) He's like your friend, but he's also your teacher.

Marcos Rios: ...and he came and visited me, and we jammed for like six hours.

Evan Desaulnier: Lots of good playing time as well.

Jesse Mazzoccoli: Different ensemble opportunities to play in.

Evan Desaulnier: It's really about honing your skills.

Brady Lavin: Yeah, it's just a very positive experience.

Jesse Mazzoccoli: Learning music

Dr. Matthew Warnock: I'm Matt Warnock - I'm the associate faculty here in guitar and I run the guitar area. I also chair the board of directors for the guitar festival that we offer every year. My degrees: I went to the McGill University in Montreal for my undergraduate degree, Western Michigan for my Master's degree, and the University of Illinois for my doctorate degree – all were in jazz guitar performance. And currently I teach all the undergraduate and graduate guitar students. Five years ago I was hired on to run the guitar area here and at the time it consisted of just two classes – general classroom guitar courses – so I came over, I taught two classes a week. My second semester I recruited three guitar majors and then since then it's grown to about ten to twelve per semester that we have. We also offer two guitar ensembles. We have an international guitar festival that we run. We have about four to five guest artists per year outside of the festival that come, and we also have a graduate degree program now in guitar.

The Undergraduate Program:

Dr. Matthew Warnock: The undergrad program here people can major in a wide variety of things: we have music therapy, music business, music education, composition, jazz studies, and performance. They can do either jazz guitar or classical guitar; those are the two kind of tracks that we offer as far as guitar majors.

Brady Lavin: My name is Brady Lavin, I'm a music business major – I'm a Junior. Music classes are generally pretty small classes. The teachers are all really good; it's, a lot of it is discussion-based.

Marcos Rios: You learn about composition, theory, ear-training. Marcos Rios: jazz studies. I perform in places with like trios and stuff – now I have a trio.

Brady Lavin: I mean, I've been in the jazz combo one semester, we play at the Country Club. It's pretty laid back too but you still want to play well. The combos are with are with a drummer and a bassist and with some horns usually. Also we do a guitar duo thing at Café Aroma, which is just two guitars playing jazz standards or whatever we feel like.

The Graduate Program:

Dr. Matthew Warnock: We have a performance degree and we have a jazz studies degree in either performance or composition and that's what the two main areas that our students do right now. We also have a musicology degree – a Master's – which is basically music history and research which some of students have done in the past.

Evan Desaulnier: My name is Evan Desaulnier, I'm a grad student – grad performance major in jazz guitar. Well I've been playing in combos for years – small groups – I was living in Toronto and played around there a lot, the Southern Ontario area. In May we actually have a gig at Carnegie Hall with some players from Italy actually so that's going to be Memorial Day – so that's big news for us. We do sort of a tour of the Mid-West – we did that in November – and that was excellent. I learned a lot, it was tiring but it was great.

Dr. Matthew Warnock: Every student's different. It depends on where they start and what their major is. Obviously, if they're a performance major they have different goal than if they were a music therapy major because they have to do different things when they leave here. A performance major needs to perform and they need to have a certain high level of repertoire as a soloist, whereas a therapy major needs to have a wide repertoire of songs to sing and perform – be able to transpose different keys on the spot, know different songs for different groups of people that they're working with, young people old people. So it just depends what the student's major is and what they come in on, and we kind of gear their studies here towards reaching those goals and make sure that when they graduate they're able to get a job in their field.

Brady Lavin: The studio's really unique in that it's not competitive.

Jesse Mazzoccoli: Everybody's willing to help somebody else.

Evan Desaulnier: A lot of people really willing to make extra time for you if you have questions.

Brady Lavin: Everything here – everyone's friends with each other.

Evan Desaulnier: Lots of joking around.

Jesse Mazzoccoli: Plus Matt brings in guys from all over the world basically.

Marcos Rios: The professors here are very knowledgeable with what they're teaching; especially [Dr. Michael] Stryker and Warnock too.

Evan Desaulnier: Lots of good playing time as well.

Dr. Matthew Warnock: So they're just getting a lot of performance opportunities that maybe in a bigger city they might not because of all the competition from professionals and other schools and other students. Whereas here, they get a lot chances to play right away.

Brady Lavin: It's just a very positive experience and will help you become a lot better at guitar.