

DARDEN PURCELL is a Washington D.C. based jazz vocalist. A multi-faceted musician, Ms. Purcell is an active featured soloist with symphony orchestras, big bands and small ensembles, band leader and vocal instructor. Ms. Purcell has shared the stage with many of the world's top jazz artists including Eric Alexander, Terell Stafford, Jim Pugh, Chip McNeill, Chuchito Valdes, Dana Hall, Alan Baylock, Don Heitler, Glenn Wilson, Chip Stephens, Stockton Helbing, Byron Stripling, Bobby Floyd, Joel Spencer, Darmon Meader, Lianne Lyons, Jeff Helgesen, Jim Carroll, Charlie Young, Chris Vadala, Kenny Rittenhouse, Shawn Purcell, Steve Fidyk, Matt Niess, Dave Detwiler, Joe McCarthy, Harold Summey, Tom Williams, the *Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra*, the *US Navy Commodores*, Naval Academy Big Band, *Next Wave*, *The Airmen of Note*, *US Army Blues* and the *American Festival Pops Orchestra* (Tony Maiello) performing at concert halls and clubs throughout the nation, including Blues Alley (Washington DC), Pops for Champagne (Chicago), The Jazz Kitchen (Indianapolis), The Blue Wisp (Cincinnati), Sandler Center (back-up vocals for Ben Folds) Meyerhoff Center (BSO with Ben Folds), Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts (NSO with Ben Folds) and The Kennedy Center (back-up vocals for Mr. George Benson). Dr. Purcell is the Director of Jazz Studies, Jazz Voice Instructor and Director of the *Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble* at George Mason University.

Ms. Purcell is a former Washington DC Air Force Band vocalist, with the groups High Flight and the Airmen of Note, performing nationally and internationally, including Germany, Italy, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Purcell performed back-up vocals for nationally renowned recording artists, Chaka Khan, BeBe Winans, Bryan White, Lari White, Janie Frickie, Freda Payne, Sherrie Payne, Gloria Loring, Melba Moore and Rita Coolidge as well as a televised performance behind Darlene Love on "The Late Show with David Letterman."

In addition to her active performing schedule, Dr. Purcell is a sought-after jazz vocal educator and clinician. Dr. Purcell was the Jazz Voice Instructor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and founder/director of the University of Illinois Jazz Vocal Ensemble. She is now the founder/director of the Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble. Her groups have been invited to perform at the New York Voices Jazz Festival (Chicago), Western Michigan's Gold Company Jazz Vocal Invitational (Kalamazoo, MI) the 2012 Jazz Education Network (JEN) conference (Louisville, KY) and the Kansas City Jazz Summit (Kansas City, MO). Dr. Purcell has served on the faculty of the W.O. Smith Music School camp (Nashville), Illinois Summer Youth Music, George Mason Summer Jazz Workshop, National Jazz Workshop and Music/Arts/Theatre Camp (Evanston, WY). She has been a guest artist/clinician at Illinois Wesleyan University, Texas Tech University, Virginia Tech, Southern Nazarene University and Indiana State School Music Association. Her students have won "Outstanding soloist" and "Outstanding Musicianship" awards at collegiate festivals as well as Downbeat Student Music Awards. Spring 2016, the Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble was awarded "Outstanding Ensemble" at the Kansas City Jazz Summit and recently performed at the JENerations Jazz Festival in New Orleans, LA.

Dr. Purcell received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Vocal Jazz Performance at Virginia Tech, a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Jazz Performance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Ms. Purcell's CD, *Easy Living*, released on Dallas based record label Armored Records, was produced and features Grammy Award-winning saxophonist Chip McNeill, Shawn Purcell, Chip Stephens, Dennis Carroll and Stockton Helbing. Darden's recent CD, *Where the Blue Begins*, produced by Stockton Helbing with arrangements by Shawn Purcell, released November 2016 and continues to receive airplay throughout the nation.

