

Darden Purcell, a Washington D.C. based jazz vocalist, 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 top jazz artists including Maria Schneider, Eric Alexander, Terrell Stafford, Jim Pugh, Chip McNeill, Chuchito Valdes, Dana Hall, Alan Baylock, Glenn Wilson, Don Heitler, Stockton Helbing, Byron Stripling, Bobby Floyd, Joel Spencer, Darmon Meader, Lisanne Lyons, Jim Carroll, Charlie Young, Chris Vadala, Matt Niess, Joe McCarthy, the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra, US Navy Commodores, Naval Academy Big Band Next Wave, The Airmen of Note, US Army Blues, Ben Patterson Jazz Orchestra and the American Festival Pops Orchestra (Tony Maiello) to name a few. Dr. Purcell is the Director of Jazz Studies, Jazz Voice instructor and Director of the Downbeat award-winning Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble at George Mason University.

She has performed at concert halls and clubs nationally and internationally, including Club Bonafide (NYC), Blues Alley (Washington DC), Pops for Champagne (Chicago), The Jazz Kitchen (Indianapolis), The Blue Wisp (Cincinnati), The Kitchen Cafe (Dallas), The Bop Stop (Cleveland), Con Alma (Pittsburgh), JazzB (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Sandler Center (VA Beach Symphony, back-up vocals for Ben Folds) Meyerhoff Center (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra), Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts (National Symphony Orchestra) and The Kennedy Center (back-up vocals for Mr. George Benson, Sara Bareilles and Caroline Shaw).

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 educator. She has been a guest artist/clinician/conductor at Capital University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Texas Tech, Virginia Tech, Southern Nazarene University, Tiffin University, Indiana State School Music Association, Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA), ACDA Southern Region conference and Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Jazz festivals. Her students have won "Outstanding soloist" and "Outstanding Musicianship" awards at collegiate festivals as well as Downbeat Student Music Awards. The Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble has shared the stage with the Manhattan Transfer, the New York Voices, and ACCENT. They were awarded "Outstanding Ensemble" at the Kansas City Jazz Summit, were a featured collegiate ensemble at the 2018 JEN conference and in 2023, won a DownBeat Student Music Award for "Outstanding Performance - Undergraduate College Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble."

Darden has presented internationally at the Institute for Jazz Research "Jazz Voices" conference in Graz, Austria and through a George Mason University Global Education grant, she performed at Projeto GURI and JazzB in Sao Paulo Brazil. 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.

Darden's CDs, *Easy Living* and *Where the Blue Begins*, produced by Stockton Helbing with arrangements by Shawn Purcell, can be purchased at iTunes and BandCamp.