



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **WILSON CENTER GUITAR FESTIVAL RECEIVES INCREASED PRIZE MONEY SPONSORSHIP** **Fifth annual multi-genre competition will award \$32,000, opening act for Kevin Eubanks**



**Brookfield, WI (February 8, 2017)** Guitar players of all ages have a chance to win their share of \$32,000 in prize money as part of the fifth annual international Wilson Center Guitar Festival taking place August 17-19, 2017, at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts (Wilson Center) in Brookfield, Wisconsin. The increase of \$10,000 in cash awards has been made possible by a generous competition prize money sponsorship from Milwaukee philanthropists and guitar enthusiasts Mark and Sharon Cameli in memory of John Cameli.

Committed to celebrating the greatest guitarists of today and tomorrow, the Wilson Center Guitar Festival is the only guitar festival in the world to feature four different genres—Classical, Fingerstyle, Jazz, and Rock & Blues—with competitions, master classes, guitar industry exhibits, free live music, and ticketed headliner concerts, which this year will feature renowned classical ensemble Beijing Guitar Duo; fingerstyle legends Antoine Dufour, Gareth Pearson, and Mike Dawes; and modern-day jazz prophet and former band leader of *The Tonight Show* Kevin Eubanks.

All semi-final and final competition rounds are live and open to the public to attend, with winners announced on the Saturday afternoon of the festival. First-place winners in each genre will receive \$5,000; second-place winners in each genre will receive \$2,000; and third-place winners in each genre will receive \$1,000. In addition to the cash prize money, all four first-place winners will have the opportunity to open for Eubanks on Saturday, Aug 19.

“We are tremendously grateful to the Cameli family for their generous gift, and the increased prize money is an opportunity for us to provide our competitors with a life-changing experience,” said Wilson Center Guitar Festival Manager Don Sipe. “Over the past five years, the festival has grown to a true international celebration of all things guitar, with competitors coming from more than 26 states and 16 different countries, including Italy, Finland, Serbia, Japan, Croatia, Israel, Slovenia, Australia, Israel, Brazil, France, Indonesia, Singapore, Jamaica, Vietnam, and Canada. It is our goal to make sure that the weekend is a tremendous stepping stone in each of their careers.”

The initial preliminary round of judging will take place via YouTube video. From the pool of YouTube and DVD applications, jurors will select semi-finalists who will be invited to the live semi-final round at the Wilson Center on Friday, Aug. 18. The number of competitors advancing to the final round at the Wilson Center on Saturday, Aug. 19, will be determined by the semi-final round adjudicators; semi-final and final round performances will be judged by a panel of renowned artists from each genre, including 2017 Festival headliner performers and music industry experts.

The competitor application is now open; all competitor applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. (CDT) on May 31. The application fee is \$50 and competitors may apply online at [www.wcguitarfest.com](http://www.wcguitarfest.com) for a maximum of two categories.

Single tickets to headliner concerts will go on sale on Monday, Mar. 13, at 11:30 a.m. (CDT) and may be purchased through the Wilson Center Box Office at 262-781-9520 or [www.wcguitarfest.com](http://www.wcguitarfest.com).

The 2017 Wilson Center Guitar Festival is sponsored by Cascio Interstate Music, CandyRat Records, Competition Prize Money Sponsor Mark and Sharon Cameli in memory of John Cameli, and Krause Funeral Homes and Cremation Services. To learn more, visit [www.wcguitarfest.com](http://www.wcguitarfest.com).

### **ABOUT THE WILSON CENTER GUITAR FESTIVAL**

Established in 2013, it is the goal of the Wilson Center Guitar Festival to celebrate the greatest guitarists of today and tomorrow. As the only guitar festival in the world to feature four different genres—Classical, Fingerstyle, Jazz, and Rock & Blues—the three-day weekend is filled with activities for music lovers of all ages. In addition to ticketed headliner evening concerts, all daytime activities are free and open to the public, including: semi-final and final competition rounds, master classes, leading industry vendors, and live music from local artists. To learn more, visit [www.wcguitarfest.com](http://www.wcguitarfest.com).

### **ABOUT THE SHARON LYNNE WILSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

The Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts is one of the finest multi-disciplinary cultural arts centers in the United States, with a mission to be the catalyst for lifelong discovery and exploration of the Arts. Founded in 2002, the Wilson Center presents performances by world-renowned artists and ensembles; offers arts education opportunities; curates the Ploch Art Gallery, which features both national and Wisconsin-based fine artists; and is committed to extending the arts beyond the walls of the Center through Lynn Chappy ArtsPark—a vibrant, outdoor sculpture landscape that will engage and inspire the broader Southeast Wisconsin Community. In August, the annual Wilson Center Guitar Competition & Festival celebrates the world's leading classical, rock/blues, jazz, and fingerstyle guitarists. The Wilson Center nurtures lifelong learning through innovative programs and classes for all interests, ages, and abilities in state-of-the-art studios and classrooms. Some of Southeast Wisconsin's finest arts organizations offer professional instruction at the Wilson Center, including First Stage Theater Academy, Trinity Irish Dancers, and the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. From performances and recitals to meetings and special events, the Wilson Center's beautiful spaces are available for rental to individuals, schools, organizations, and corporations throughout the community. To learn more, visit [www.wilson-center.com](http://www.wilson-center.com).

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