

Jazz musos delighted as Aitken hits town

By AGRON LATIFI

The region's up and coming jazz musicians will this week get a chance to learn from one of the best jazz educators in the business.

Downbeat Magazine's Jazz Educator Of The Year Award winner Dr Gene Aitken will drop by Wollongong today and tomorrow to run a series of workshops.

Wollongong Conservatorium of Music jazz studies director Eric Dunan said Aitken was one of the most respected jazz educators in the world.

Earlier this year the American was in Iraq leading jazz ensembles that united Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds and many other religions as part of a 10-day jazz festival in performing arts.

In May this year Aitken conducted China's top military band and conducted master classes on how to build their instrumental programs.

The respected jazz educator was head of the University of Northern Colorado jazz department, considered one of the top programs in the US, for nearly 25 years.

Dunan said he was excited that Aitken had included a stop in Wollongong during his first visit to Australia.

He said in the past few years Wollongong Conservatorium of Music had developed an international reputation for jazz education.



Wollongong Conservatorium of Music jazz studies director Eric Dunan, ready to welcome jazz great Gene Aitken to Wollongong.

This year the conservatorium jazz ensembles brought home first and second place trophies from the Reno International Jazz Festival in America.

"It is only right that Gene should come here as part of his Australia tour," Dunan said.

"Amongst jazz educators like myself, Gene is highly regarded. I've known who he is since I was a university freshman in 1986. He's a legend."

Aitken will work with jazz ensembles and jazz vocalists at the conservatorium as well as a workshop with the Bulli High School Jazz Band during his two-day residency in Wollongong.

For information about these workshops or Gene Aitken contact Eric Dunan on 0423 809 316.