

Casper College Presents

# KINSER JAZZ 2026 FESTIVAL February 9-11, 2026

Wheeler Concert Hall • Casper College



Opening Act:

**Wyoming Jazz Educators Big Band**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 7 p.m.**

John F. Welsh Auditorium, Natrona County High School

## Student Performances

Monday-Wednesday,  
February 9-11, 2026  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

# ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

## Regional Jazz Band Festival

Wednesday,  
February 11, 2026  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

# Jazz at Casper College

Casper College offers a wide range of performance activities. Jazz ensembles at Casper College include Jazz Ensemble, Contemporary Singers, also known as Triple C, and when student interest permits Jazz Combo. Music activity scholarships are available to music majors and non-majors alike.

Jazz studies at Casper College encompass a wide variety of music and experiences. Students study and perform standards, new arrangements, original compositions, new commissions, free jazz, and fusion.

In addition to performance opportunities students are encouraged to enroll in History of American Popular Music either in person or online. This course provides the groundwork for a lifetime of jazz enjoyment and is designed to encourage free thinking, spontaneous music making, and a historical understanding of the only originally American art form. This course is also a three-credit humanities general education course. Triple C and the jazz ensemble have enjoyed numerous

performing opportunities at Casper College, in the community, and around the world.

Triple C has toured throughout the state of Wyoming and the Northwest. The jazz ensemble has performed at the All-Northwest Conference, and both the jazz ensemble and Triple C have performed at the Greeley Jazz Festival in Greeley, Colorado.

The CC Jazz Ensemble routinely works and performs with clinicians and guest artists through the academic year and during the Kinser Jazz Festival. Past artists include: Dizzy Gillespie, Ellis Marsalis, The Manhattan Transfer, Bob Mintzer and the Yellowjackets, Arturo Sandoval, John Roberts, Ben Markley, Eric Marienthal, Randy Brecker, Kris Berg, and Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band.

## Special Thanks To:

### Title Sponsor:

- Casper College Foundation

### Founders Circle:

- Natrona County Joint Powers Recreation Board
- Natrona County BOCES

### Gold Circle:

- Wyoming Arts Council
- Friends of the KJF:
- In Memory of David Bentzin
- Chad Rose

### In-kind:

- Shawn Weis and students
- Casper College Music Department
- Casper College Grants Office
- CC School of Fine Arts and Humanities
- Larry Burger, CC Recording Engineer
- Bryce Ledbetter, NCHS House Manager
- Natrona County School District No. 1
- Natrona County High School

### With sincere thanks:

- The Hill Music Company
- Brandon Kosine, President Casper College
- Julia Whyde, Dean School of Fine Arts and Humanities
- Wyoming Jazz Educators
- Hilton Garden Inn
- John Dutton, Piano Services

# History

The Casper College Kinser Jazz Festival, now in its 59th year, is named for the late Thomas Kinser, Ed.D., who founded the festival and promoted jazz as a standard component of music study in Wyoming. In 1967, the festival hosted three ensembles. Today, the festival has grown to accommodate nearly 50 ensembles, including college, high school, and junior high school instrumental and vocal ensembles.

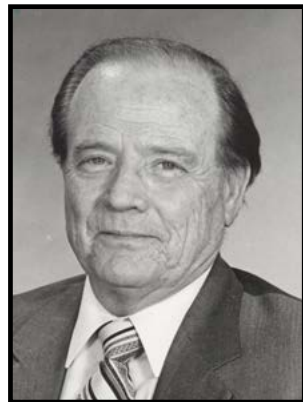
The festival's mission statement is: "The Casper College Kinser Jazz Festival exists to provide world-class jazz and jazz education to the current and future generations of musicians in the Rocky Mountain region. Our focus is to present authentic jazz performances by artists of the highest caliber and to offer a variety of educational experiences for jazz ensembles, their directors, and the public at large." The clinicians provide written comments, a rating, and a custom work session for each ensemble to help improve future performances. Regularly scheduled seminars, workshops, and performances are offered to expose festival attendees to high quality jazz performance and education.

The highlight of this year's festival is the evening concert featuring the three-time Grammy Award winning vocal quartet *säje* and the Wyoming Jazz Educators Big Band. These artists have performed for and worked with students from across Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, Utah, and Montana — including the Wyoming All-State Jazz Choir.

Due largely to Kinser's passion, Casper College has a strong tradition of excellence in the area of jazz. The program provides students with an excellent beginning and continuation to their jazz careers. Students are provided excellent scholarships and financial resources, and enjoy solo opportunities and leadership roles typically available only to upperclassmen and graduate students at larger institutions.

The jazz program at Casper College has provided a solid start for generations of musicians. To date, we can confirm five generations of Wyoming instructors who have brought their students to our festival to perform and we are rapidly anticipating the sixth generation. While on campus for the festival, students who are interested in attending Casper College may arrange to audition for scholarships by speaking with any of our faculty and performing a short, private audition.

Further information is available at [caspercollege.edu/music-department](http://caspercollege.edu/music-department).



*Thomas Kinser, Ed.D.*

# Schedule of Events

Tap the button below for the most up to date schedule of events

[caspercollegearts.cc/kinser-jazz-festival](https://caspercollegearts.cc/kinser-jazz-festival)

LEARN MORE



## Adjudicators



**Kara Baxter** is known for her creative arrangements and compositions, striking vocals, and skillful violin playing. Baxter infuses her music with a wide range of influences from her musical life. Baxter studied classical violin at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she began singing jazz, and after graduating, moved to Chicago and earned a Master's in jazz voice and commercial music at the Chicago College of Performing Arts of Roosevelt University studying with Patricia Barber and Mike Molloy.

In 2014, Baxter completed her Doctorate in jazz composition at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, studying with Eric Richards. Baxter has taught at the collegiate level since 2006 at institutions such as Doane University, Nebraska Wesleyan University, the University of Nebraska, Hastings College, and Casper College, where she taught jazz voice lessons, violin lessons, Composition, song writing, and directed jazz choirs, big bands, as well as orchestras and chamber music.

Baxter performs as a jazz vocalist and violinist with her jazz combo, and appears as a guest soloist with big bands, orchestras, and choirs throughout the Midwest. Her arrangements and compositions have been performed by Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra; Jazz MN, a professional big band in Minneapolis; the Hastings Symphony, and the Powder River Symphony, among others. She has recorded two CD's, "Black Coffee," and "On This Journey," featuring vocal group QuinteCentral and the Kara Baxter Big Band.

# Adjudicators



**Bailey Hinkley Grogan** is an award-winning jazz vocalist, songwriter, musician, and sought after feminist scholar based out of Denver. After receiving a Doctorate in jazz studies with an emphasis in musicology from University of Miami, Grogan went on to release her debut album, “Three Sides of a Story,” which features a series of vocal and instrumental duos that illustrates Grogan’s vocal and jazz mastery. As a vocalist, she has been featured at various festivals, including the Monterey Jazz Festival, and has presented her research at conferences and universities across the country. Most recently noted for her research of feminism in jazz history, Grogan is also a published author and frequent presenter in topics of jazz history, Black American music, and representation in jazz.

She received her Bachelor’s in jazz studies from Indiana University in 2017 and her Master of jazz studies from California State University, Long Beach in 2019. In 2019 she was awarded the Outstanding Creativity Award and the Distinguished Achievement in Creative Activity for her work on her graduate thesis project at California State University, Long Beach. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts in studio music jazz voice from the University of Miami in May 2023 where she served as a Henry Mancini Fellow at the Henry Mancini Institute directed by Maria Schneider. In 2024, she received the Downbeat Student Music Award for the Graduate Jazz Vocalist category and has received acclaim for her doctoral research, “The Lives and Careers of Six Female Black Instrumentalists.” This research has been presented at the Jazz Education Network Conference, the Association for Popular Music Education Conference, the Reno Jazz Festival, and the College Music Society Conference.

While Grogan has been heavily involved in various academic credentials, she spends her free time performing with a quartet in her hometown of Denver as well as the greater Los Angeles area. She is a regular performer at Dazzle Jazz and Nocturne in downtown Denver.

# Adjudicators



**Wil Swindler**, composer and saxophonist, currently resides near Denver where he leads Wil Swindler's Elevenet, the modern pop quintet GoodRattle, and the Wil Swindler Quartet. In addition to his own bands, he is an active performer with the Peter Sommer Septet, Al Hood's H2 Big Band, Colorado Symphony, the Ben Markley Big Band, the Colorado Jazz Orchestra, the Adam Bartczak Republic, and many more. In addition to receiving International Association for Jazz Education's Gil Evans Fellowship in 2008, Swindler has completed numerous commissions from jazz ensembles, military bands, and symphony orchestras around the world. Swindler has three CDs available under his own name, "Universe B" "Right Riot" with GoodRattle, and "Chamber Jazz Ensemble," and can be heard on numerous other albums including Ingrid Michaelson's "Songs for the Season," Steve Owen's "Stand Up Eight," Peter Sommer's "Happy-Go-Lucky-Locals," Al Hood/Dave Hansen's "You're It," Bob Washut's "Journey to Knowhere," and David Caffey's "Enter Autumn" and "All in One."

Swindler is an instructor of music and the associate director of jazz bands at Colorado State University, a position he has held since 2009. He is a frequent adjudicator for high school and college jazz festivals around the country and maintains a private saxophone/composition studio in the Denver area. He has served as an adjunct saxophone teacher and jazz ensemble director at Denver University, instructor at the University of Northern Colorado, composition teacher for the Colorado Conservatory of the Jazz Arts, faculty at the Yellowstone Jazz Camp, as well as the University of Northern Colorado Jazz Camp, and the Rocky Mountain Summer Music Camp.

Originally from Central Texas, Swindler began studying music at age 5, and picked up the saxophone at age 9. He earned a Bachelor of music in jazz studies from the University of North Texas in 2001 where he played in, composed for, and recorded with the 1:00 Lab Band. While at North Texas, he studied with Jim Riggs, Paris Rutherford, Neil Slater, and others. In 2000 he attended the Henry Mancini Institute on a full scholarship from BMI, and received a commission the following year from HMI for a piece premiered at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. In 2001, Swindler relocated to New York City, where he played with Toshiko Akiyoshi and Bill Warfield's NY Fusion Ensemble, among others. During his time in N.Y., he studied saxophone with Dave Pietro and composition with Michael Abene and Jim McNeely as a member of the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop. In 2003, he returned to his hometown of Austin, Texas, where he co-founded the 10-pc Chamber Jazz Ensemble and served as musical director for vocalist Kevin Ahart. Swindler has lived in Colorado since 2006 with his wife April Johannesen and daughter Annika.

# Adjudicators



**Summer Camargo** is a 23-year-old jazz trumpeter and composer who was recently named “25 for the future” rising stars of jazz by *DownBeat* magazine. Camargo is a native of Hollywood, Florida, and a Jerome Greene Fellowship recipient at The Juilliard School, where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. She is a regular performer at notable NYC jazz clubs like Dizzy’s and Birdland, as well as a member of the Mingus Big Band. In 2022 Camargo became the newest and youngest member of the “Saturday Night Live” house band and is also enjoying her most recent role as a band member in Broadway’s new musical, “Just in Time.”

Steadily collecting a list of competition wins, grants, and awards, Camargo was the recipient of the Laurie Frink Grant, was awarded the Ella Fitzgerald Outstanding Soloist Award, the Dr. J. Douglas White Student Composition Contest, the International Trumpet Guild’s Ryan Anthony Trumpet Memorial Competition, and the Outstanding Trumpet Soloist Awards at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s 2017, 2018, and 2019 Essentially Ellington Festivals.

In her young career, Camargo has toured with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra on the Big Band Holidays tour, served as a panelist for Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Jazz Congress, was featured in the FENDI Renaissance — Anima Mundi project in New York City, performed with Jon Batiste at the Newport Jazz Festival, was a guest artist at Wynton at 60, participated in Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead at The Kennedy Center, performed her original composition “Alalazoo” at the 2022 Jazz at Lincoln Center Gala, played in the Broadway pit for Disney’s “Aladdin,” and much more.

As an educator, Camargo has conducted masterclasses at the JEN conference, the Louis Armstrong House Museum, as well as at multiple jazz camps. She has also adjudicated jazz festival competitions at Northern State University, the Eau Claire Jazz Festival, and Essentially Ellington Regional Festivals.

Camargo released her debut album “To Whom I Love” with Blue Engine Records in March 2024, which received a notable review in *DownBeat* magazine and was featured in their Hot Box. Camargo is also a proud Conn Selmer/Bach artist.

# Adjudicators



**Scott Brown** joined the Roosevelt music program in 1984, after graduating from the University of Washington with a degree in music education. He directs the Roosevelt High Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Marching Band, Jazz Band, and Percussion class, and spends many evenings and weekends rehearsing, performing, meeting, or traveling with Roosevelt's many musical groups.

A versatile and active trombonist and member of the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra and Latin Expression, Salsa!, Brown was the first ever winner of the John Stanford Award for Excellence in Art Education in 2000. In 2001, he was awarded the Christa McAuliffe Washington State Award for Excellence in Education. He has also won the Nordstrom Award for Promoting Cultural Diversity and the Alliance for Education A+ Award. Brown works wonders with students in class, during performances, and on the marching field. He brings enthusiasm, a passion for teaching, and the expectation for excellence to the Roosevelt music program and its students.



BEN WINCKLER PHOTOGRAPHY

# SENIORS

MORE INFO



LEARN MORE



# KINSER JAZZ FESTIVAL

# Wyoming Jazz Educators

WJE is dedicated to the advancement of jazz education, performance, and tradition through organized events and activity



## MUSIC AT CASPER COLLEGE



Find your **RHYTHM** with individual attention, excellent instructors, and small class sizes.

**Associate of Arts in music with concentrations in:**

- Instrumental Performance
- Vocal Performance
- Instrumental Music Education
- Vocal Music Education
- Music Composition



**Full tuition scholarships available for students with any major.**

Casper College

## säje

When a jazz ensemble earns a Grammy Awards nomination with its very first song, something unusual is in the works. In the case of säje, it's a rare example of the sound of the future finding the right ears at its inception. An unprecedented collaboration that brings together four women creators who are all composer/arrangers, vocalists, and entrepreneurs with impressive individual careers, säje has emerged as a singular communion unlike any other group on the scene.

Featuring Los Angeles-based Sara Gazarek and Erin Bentlage, and Seattle-based Johnaye Kendrick and Amanda Taylor, säje, rhymes with beige, is closer in spirit to collective instrumental ensembles than jazz vocal combos. Encompassing finely wrought originals, reimagined jazz standards, and inventive interpretations of contemporary tunes by the likes of Björk, The Bad Plus, and YEBBA, säje exists in a space without sonic or genre boundaries, coaxing the vocal ensemble into new sonic territory. The group's eponymous debut album is a striking achievement, from the shimmering harmonies of the Grammy-nominated opening track "Desert Song" to the gorgeous closing medley of British singer-songwriter Michael Kiwanuka's "Solid Ground" and Lennon and McCartney's "Blackbird."

These are not women who grew up singing together. They bring disparate experiences, influences, and career paths to the collective and are all equally invested in its creative evolution. It's not a question of säje being more than the sum of its parts. Rather, the group has become a vehicle for expressing their deepest musical selves, even as it takes them into unexplored realms. The fact that they're keeping company with fellow vocal explorers such as Jacob Collier and Michael Mayo, along with a cadre of era-defining players, including trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, drummer and NEA Jazz Master Terri Lyne Carrington, tenor saxophonist Daniel Rotem, bassist Ben Williams, and pianists Dawn Clement and Gerald Clayton, speaks to the group's questing mission.

For vocalists and instrumentalists alike, the music requires a creative vision encompassing the jazz improvisational imperative and the lapidary arrangements of chamber pop. It's a rarefied skill set, and "There are only a handful of people in my circle who have come up through the jazz scene and identify as improvisers, yet who are also wholly satisfied by the structure of the written thing," Gazarek says. "While there is a certain amount of interplay, we're not improvising the arrangements. There are set voicings. We're really invested in the improvisational aspect, but I know for a few of us, it has been a new challenge also to put on the accompanist hat and serve the arrangement. But that's really where a new layer of magic happens."

Magic is a word that comes up often when the women of säje talk about the group's founding and evolution. The story of "Desert Song," their first single, has already attained near-legendary status. Building on various degrees of friendship and acquaintance, the foursome arranged a Palm Springs, California, weekend retreat to experiment with writing and producing music together. Not much composing was done, but the women forged much closer bonds that manifested in the creation of "Desert Song." For Kendrick, initial reluctance to share her creative process ended up giving way to a shocking reassessment of her own creative needs.

"From the beginning, we were very vulnerable, discussing personal life experiences that informed who we were," Kendrick says. "That level of vulnerability in a collaborative process was new and uncomfortable for me; in fact, I was quite resistant. But the second session, we wrote 'Desert Song,' and I had the strong feeling something important and magical was happening."

The creative frisson of the collaboration sparked again in January 2020 when the opportunity to make their performance debut at the Jazz Education Network Conference in New Orleans led the women to quickly create an entire set of new material. "We knew it would be some kind of vocal harmony-based thing," Bentlage recalls. "What if we did the vocal jazz arranging thing, but something authentic to us, not for fulfilling the traditional sound? I do a lot of arranging; this has felt so expansive because of what we're not willing to default to."

The ecstatic reception in New Orleans led to a busy run of performances at festivals and major clubs that winter, momentum that ground to an immediate halt with the advent of COVID. News that "Desert Song" earned a Grammy nomination in the "Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals" category provided a burst of light during lockdown's darkness and uncertainty, as did winning the John Lennon Songwriting Contest Grand Prize Award for their second composition, "Wisteria," a 2021 nomination for "Best Vocal Jazz Group" in the Jazz Journalists Association Awards didn't hurt either. The upcoming debut album brings this extraordinary ensemble into the international spotlight, opening up sonic and emotional terrain that is sure to be followed by other singers.

"Having sung in a lot of groups, I never knew there could be such intimacy and depth or that I would experience it," Taylor says. "I'm excited for all the groups that will be birthed because of our albums. Everyone deserves this experience."

A glimpse at the accomplishments of the women in säje and their singular chemistry starts to make sense. Bentlage has been featured on albums by Jacob Collier, "Djesse Vol. 3," Kiefer, "When There's Love Around," Kate McGarry, "What to Wear in the Dark," and Amber Navran, their collaboration "Golden Light." On the faculty at California State University, Northridge, she teaches classes on voice, musicianship, jazz, improvisation, and composition. As a studio vocalist, she has contributed to a wide variety of projects, from film scores to singing, and often writing background vocals for artists such as Pomplamoose and Moonchild. In 2020, the Los Angeles Jazz Society commissioned Bentlage to create a 20-minute original work as part of the New Note project.

A multi-Grammy-nominated arranger known for her work with leading vocal ensembles, including Groove for Thought, The Manhattan Transfer, Chanticleer, and Kings Return, Taylor is an in-demand teacher and clinician at schools around the country. Known for writing accessible and inventive arrangements for young jazz ensembles via her vocal arranging company, Wicked Pigeon, she's an active composer/arranger and studio singer whose work can be heard on World of Warcraft, Diablo III, Destiny, Shadow of Mordor, and DOTA, among other games.

A graduate of the elite Thelonious Monk Institute, Kendrick has honed a deep repertoire of originals and inventively arranged standards, jazz tunes, and contemporary pop songs, often accompanying herself on harmonium, violin, viola, and percussion. She's released two albums on her record label, johnnygirl: 2014's "Here," featuring her emotionally charged originals, and 2018's acclaimed "Flying." A 2019 Artist Trust Fellow, a recipient of the Chamber Music America 2020 Performance Plus Grant, and the Marble House Residency, Kendrick is a music professor at Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts. In addition to her many musical endeavors, she's a certified sound therapy practitioner and energy healer with a blossoming practice, johnnygirl sound therapy & healing arts studio.

A two-time Grammy nominee for her own solo albums, Gazarek has pulled off the treacherous feat of living up to the buzz generated by her John Clayton-produced 2005 debut album, "Yours." An internationally touring artist with eight albums to her credit, she's collaborated with heavyweights such as Kurt Elling, Fred Hersch, Billy Childs, and Larry Goldings. Currently serving as governor of the LA Chapter of the Recording Academy and a recently appointed associate professor in the Eastman School of Music's developing Vocal Jazz Program, Gazarek is widely considered one of her generation's definitive jazz vocalists.

Attracting attention and support before the release of their debut album, säje recently received support for their continued work through the Chamber Music of America New Jazz Works grant, the Super Patron Grant, the Jazz Road Creative Residencies grant, and the USC Visions + Voices grant. In a business that has often shortchanged the artists upon which it's built, these women have confidently seized control of their own destiny. Creatively ambitious on and off stage, they're creating a new paradigm, writing and arranging the tunes, calling the shots, and reaping the rewards.

"The sky is the limit," Gazarek says. "We just want the music of säje to reach as many people as possible. Yes, we're a four-woman musical machine: we have our five-year plan, the second album is already in the works, along with a list of songs and collaborators we'd like to work with, including Maria Schneider, Björk, Vince Mendoza, and Laura Mvula. But we just want to create the music that moves us — without fear or limitations, boundaries, or glass ceilings. And hopefully, in the process, we might inspire the next generation of creators to do the same."

Their highly anticipated debut album was released in August 2023, featuring new original work and compelling covers, highlighting collaborations with artists Jacob Collier, Terri Lyne Carrington, Ambrose Akinmusire, and more. The album was received with critical acclaim and wide reception, landing a No. 2 spot on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz Chart and peaking at No. 4 on the iTunes Jazz Chart. The group won their first Grammy Award in 2024 for their arrangement of "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning" in collaboration with their friend Jacob Collier, and in 2025 received their second for their original composition/arrangement "Alma," both in the Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals categories. At the recently held 68th Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026, they received their third Grammy for Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals with Nate Smith for "Big Fish." The union of säje is rooted in the tradition of joy, curiosity, lush harmony, heartfelt expression, and profound sisterhood.



# essentially ELLINGTON

The Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Program, EE, is unique among educational resources for high school jazz bands. Each year, Jazz at Lincoln Center, JALC, transcribes, publishes, and distributes charts by Duke Ellington and other seminal big band composers and arrangers, along with additional educational materials to bands in the U.S., Canada and American schools abroad. Beyond providing these charts, EE also supports its members throughout the school year with a variety of initiatives including teaching guides, the Essentially Ellington website, newsletters, a student composition contest, and professional feedback of student performances of the charts. Schools that join the program are eligible for participation in noncompetitive regional festivals and also have the option to submit recordings for the national Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival held annually in New York City at Frederick P. Rose Hall, the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Fifteen bands are selected as finalists and, to prepare, each finalist band receives an in-school workshop in their community led by a JALC clinician. The Competition & Festival culminates in a three-day festival in May for the finalist bands, including workshops, rehearsals, jam sessions, and performances. The three top-placing bands perform an evening concert with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Since 1995, over 846,000 students have participated in Essentially Ellington. To date, more than 280,000 copies of 150 previously unavailable scores have been distributed to more than 5,300 schools internationally. In 2006, Essentially Ellington piloted noncompetitive, education-focused regional festivals in an effort to reach more bands and provide the opportunity to perform Ellington's music and receive professional feedback from JALC clinicians and other jazz professionals in their own backyard.

Founding leadership support for Essentially Ellington is provided by The Jack and Susan Rudin Educational and Scholarship Fund. Major support is provided by Jessica and Natan Bibliowicz, Alfred and Gail Engelberg, Casey Lipscomb, Dr. J. Douglas White and the King-White Family Foundation, Augustine Foundation, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation, and the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Bloomberg, Con Edison, Entergy, and United Airlines.

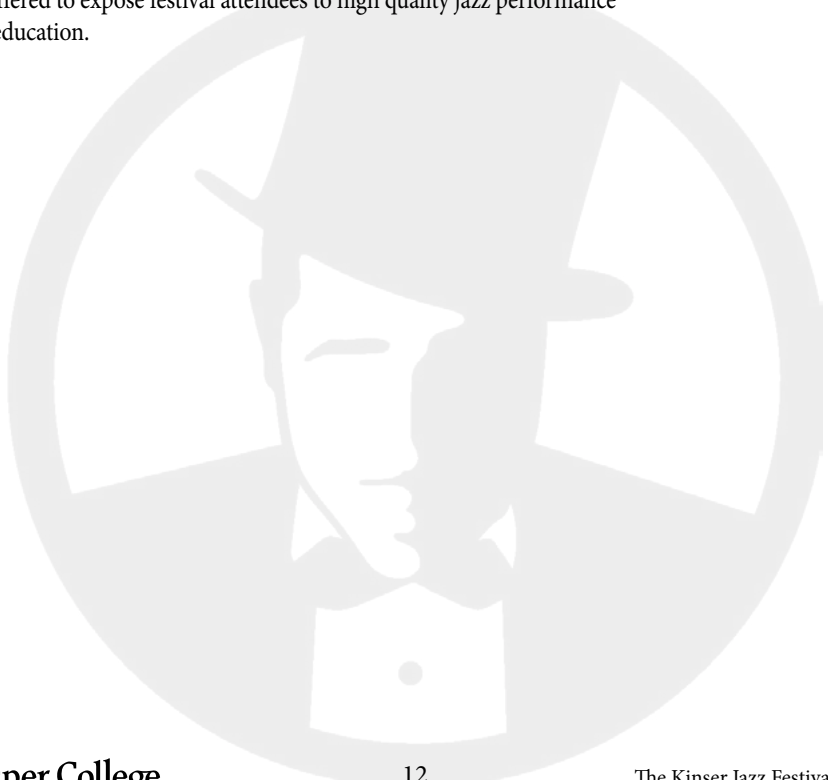
# essentially **ELLINGTON**

The Casper College Kinser Jazz Festival, now in its 59th year, is named for the late Thomas Kinser, Ed.D., who founded the festival and promoted jazz as a standard component of music study in Wyoming. In 1967, the festival hosted three ensembles.

Today, the festival has grown to accommodate nearly 50 ensembles, including college, high school, and junior high school instrumental and vocal ensembles.

Our mission statement is: “The Casper College Kinser Jazz Festival exists to provide world-class jazz and jazz education to the current and future generations of musicians in the Rocky Mountain region. Our focus is to present authentic jazz performances by artists of the highest caliber and to offer a variety of educational experiences for jazz ensembles, their directors, and the public at large.”

The clinicians provide written comments, a rating, and a custom work session for each ensemble to help improve future performances. Regularly scheduled seminars, workshops, and performances are offered to expose festival attendees to high quality jazz performance and education.



## MISSION

- To offer a world-class jazz experience to Casper, Wyoming, and the Rocky Mountain Region
- Presenting concerts by high-quality headliner artists
- Advancing performance opportunities to college, high school, and middle school students
- Supporting music education in Wyoming
- Showcasing the Casper College Music Department
- Furthering the development of jazz in Wyoming

## PROCESS

- The Kinser Jazz Festival is the signature event for the Casper College Music Department
- The Kinser Jazz Festival is an annual event with the goal of reaching as many jazz aficionados as possible and emphasizing young musician and student programs
- Students and audience members come from throughout Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, Utah, and Nebraska

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- The Kinser Jazz Festival attracts participants from throughout Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. Festival participants spend money on:
  - Lodging
  - Dining
  - Shopping
  - Winter activities around Casper, including skiing
- This event benefits the Casper College Music Department, Casper College, and the entire Casper community

## EVENT MARKETING

- Casper College website/event webpage
- Event T-shirts and banners
- Email
- Social media
- Print media
- Radio and TV
- Posters
- Postcards

# Sponsorship Opportunities

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

Each year, the Kinser Jazz Fest operates independently of the budget of the Casper College Music Department. We apply for grants with local and national foundations to help cover our expenses. In 2016 we began a campaign to build an endowment that, when complete, will enable the Kinser Jazz Fest to provide the same rich musical experiences in to our students and community perpetuity. We are operate through the Casper College Foundation, a 501(c)(3) and all sponsorships are tax deductible. If keeping the Kinser Jazz Fest available to all future generations of students, is important to you, please keep reading:

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

### SPONSOR OR DONATE

### SPREAD THE WORD

Follow us on Instagram @caspercollegebands and follow us on Facebook @Casper College School of Fine Arts and Humanities.

### VOLUNTEER

Receive one complimentary ticket to the headliner performance when you volunteer for two shifts.

### CONTACT US

Joshua R. Mietz, DMA, Executive Director  
joshua.mietz@caspercollege.edu  
307-268-2246  
caspercollege.edu/foundation

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### TITLE SPONSOR — \$15,000

- Event name will include sponsor's name: "The Kinser Jazz Festival sponsored by XYZ Company"
- Introduction from stage
- Corporate logo with top billing on projections during all student performances
- Corporate logo with top billing in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)
- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Top billing for corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Reserved seating at headliner concert
- Assigned parking at headliner concert
- Sponsor booth space during festival
- Space for banners to hang in the Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium throughout festival
- Twelve complimentary tickets
- Private reception at president's house
- CD autographed by headliner artist(s)
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

LEARN MORE



# Sponsorship Opportunities

## FOUNDERS CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$5,000

- Corporate logo on rotation with other Founders Circle donors on projections during all student performances
- Corporate logo with prominent billing in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)
- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Prominent billing for corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Reserved seating at headliner concert
- Sponsor booth space during festival
- Space for banners to hang in the Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium throughout festival
- Ten complimentary tickets
- Private reception at president's house
- CD autographed by headliner artist(s)
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

## GOLD CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$2,500

- Corporate logo in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)
- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Reserved seating at headliner concert
- Sponsor booth space during festival
- Space for banners to hang in the Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium throughout festival
- Eight complimentary tickets
- Private reception at president's house
- CD autographed by headliner artist(s)
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

## SILVER CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$1,250

- Corporate logo in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)
- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Sponsor booth space during festival
- Space for banners to hang in the Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium throughout festival
- Six complimentary tickets
- CD autographed by headliner artist(s)
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

## BRONZE CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$1,000

Corporate logo in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)

- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Sponsor booth space during festival
- Space for banners to hang in the Jean D. and H.A. (Dave) True, Jr. Atrium throughout festival
- Four complimentary tickets
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$800

- Corporate logo in publicity materials and mention in press release(s)
- Corporate logo on website and link to business website
- Corporate logo placement on festival T-shirt
- Two complimentary tickets
- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)

## ARTIST CIRCLE SPONSOR — \$500

- Poster autographed by headliner artist(s)
- Logo on festival T-shirt
- Priority ticket sales
- Name in program

## PARTNERS — \$250

- Name in program

## FRIENDS — \$100

- Name in program

# Festival Directors



*photo credit Ben Winckler Photography*

## **JOSHUA R. MIETZ, DMA** — Executive Director

**Joshua R. Mietz, DMA**, is an instructor at Casper College in Casper, Wyoming. He teaches applied clarinet and saxophone, college band, jazz ensemble i, chamber music, the history of american popular music. He is the Wyoming state chair for the International Clarinet Association and serves as the executive director of Casper College's Annual Kinser Jazz Festival. He performs with the Wyoming Symphony Orchestra.

Prior to arriving at Casper College, Mietz served as an adjunct instructor at both Fort Lewis and San Juan Colleges, as well as the director of choirs at the First United Methodist Church in Durango, Colorado. He also directed a clarinet choir comprised of musicians from the Four Corners Region of the American Southwest and performed with the San Juan Symphony Orchestra.

While earning a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Mietz studied clarinet with Diane Barger and conducting with Carolyn Barber. His doctoral document examined David Maslanka's "Desert Roads" from the perspective of a clarinetist and a conductor. It contains the transcription of an interview detailing Maslanka's fascinating compositional technique.

While at the University of Montana-Missoula, Mietz served as the E-flat/bass clarinetist with the Missoula Symphony and studied applied clarinet with Maxine Ramey and conducting with Stephen Bolstad, Kevin Griggs, and Luis Milan.

Prior to his study at the University of Montana, Mietz taught junior high and high school band/orchestra in the public schools of Colorado as well as performed with the Denver Pops Orchestra. Mietz received a Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance from the University of Colorado-Boulder and studied clarinet with Daniel Silver, Bil Jackson, and Phillip Aaholm. He also studied conducting with Allan McMurray. Additionally, Mietz completed the requirements as a certified massage therapist at the Denver School of Massage Therapy where he acquired positions both at local clinics and teaching cadaver-based human anatomy at the Laboratories of Anatomical Enlightenment.

In his spare time, Mietz enjoys ultra-marathon running, bread baking, and is an amateur radio operator.



## **ZACHARY VREEMAN, DMA** — Vocal Director

**Zachary Vreeman, DMA**, is director of choral activities at Casper College, and current president-elect of the Wyoming chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. He holds two degrees from Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, and completed his DMA in choral conducting at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he studied with Peter Eklund and Therees Hibbard. At Casper College, Vreeman conducts the Collegiate Chorale, men's and women's choirs, and the Contemporary Singers and teaches music history and education courses. Prior to Casper College, he directed choirs at the University of Wyoming. Vreeman has also sung with

several professional chamber choirs. He is currently with the Colorado Bach Ensemble and the Skyline Singers. In 2016 he founded the Wyoming Choral Arts Ensemble in Casper, and is also choirmaster at Grace Reformed Church in Casper. When not teaching or conducting, Vreeman enjoys woodworking and spending time with his wife and six children.

# Festival Directors



## **CYNTHIA HARRISON** — *Graphic Design Instructor*

**Cynthia Harrison** holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in communications from the College of Visual Arts and a Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from the University of Minnesota, where her thesis explored visual representation in Roman antiquity. In addition to her professional work, she has over 18 years of experience teaching graphic design at the college level. As a tenured instructor at Casper College, Harrison is responsible for developing curriculum and preparing students for careers in design or successful transfers to four-year institutions. Outside of design, she is passionate about creating fine art, exploring a variety of mediums from oil painting to metal casting, often inspired by ancient sculptures and world monuments. For Harrison, art and design is not just a career — it is a lifelong commitment and source of inspiration.

## Faculty

**Nathan Baker, M.A.** — Music Theory, Music Technology, and Trombone

**Larry Burger** — Dante 2/ProTools Certs. — Audio Engineering

**Eugenie Burkett, Ed.D.** — Percussion Ensemble and Percussion

**Jennifer DePaolo, M.M.** — Chamber Orchestra, Upper Strings

**Gary DePaolo, M. Ed.** — Viola

**Paula Flynn, M.M.** — Piano

**Jane Hamman, B.M.** — Harp

**Eirik Haugbro M.M.** — Bass

**Ethan Lorentz, DMA** — Guitar

**Joshua R. Mietz, DMA** — Executive Director — Kinser Jazz Festival, Director of Bands, Woodwinds

**Delores Thornton, B.A.** — Flute

**Richard Turner, B.M.** — Bassoon

**Veronica Turner, M.M.** — Voice

**Zachary Vreeman, DMA** — Director of Choral Activities, Vocal Director Kinser Jazz Festival— Department Chair

**Julia Whyde, Ph.D.** — Dean, School of Fine Arts and Humanities

**Don Williams, M.M.** — Trumpet

# Music Scholarships

\$4500 or \$2250 tuition scholarships for all majors\*



## New Audition Days

Every Semester

The Casper College Music Department offers associate degrees in:

- Instrumental Performance
- Instrumental Music Education
- Music Composition
- Vocal Performance
- Vocal Music Education

Students engage through multiple ensemble opportunities and individualized instruction in a state of the art environment.



Contact us for details, to schedule an audition, or to submit a video audition, call 307-268-2606 or email: [music@caspercollege.edu](mailto:music@caspercollege.edu)

*\*For majors and nonmajors*

## Casper College

Casper College provides equal opportunity in education and employment — [caspercollege.edu/nondiscrimination](http://caspercollege.edu/nondiscrimination).

- AH Aley Hall
- BU Thorson Institute of Business
- CA Civic Apartments
- CS McMurry Career Studies Center
- DL Doornbos Livestock Facility
- EC Early Childhood Learning Center
- EI Skelton Energy Institute
- GW Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center
- HS Saunders Health Science Center
- KT Krampert Center for Theatre and Dance
- LH Liesinger Hall
- LI Goodstein Foundation Library
- LS Loftin Life Science Center
- MA Maintenance Building

- MU Music Building
- PS Wold Physical Science Center
- RH Residence Hall
- SF Storage Facility
- SH Strausner Hall
- TA Thorson Apartments
- TB Erickson Thunderbird Gym
- TM Tate Geological Museum
- UU Union/University Building
- VA Goodstein Visual Arts Center
- WA Werner Agricultural Pavilion
- WM Werner Wildlife Museum
- WT Werner Technical Center
- 1 Parking Lots

**Bus parking  
(Krampert and/or  
Gateway lots)**

**DO NOT enter  
parking lot**

**Enter here**

**Drop off and  
pick up**

**Enter here**

**Cafeteria**

