

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

CHRISTINE JENSEN,  
JAZZ COMPOSITION &  
SAXOPHONE

Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
Hatch Recital Hall  
7:30 PM



EASTMAN  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

## PROGRAM

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*Song order and soloists will be announced on the stage, from the selections below:*

**Day Moon** Christine Jensen

**Quiescence Suite** Christine Jensen

Lined

Twenty Twenty Blues

Tolos d'Abril

Étude de Mars

**Wind Up** Christine Jensen

**Girls Can Play the Blues** Christine Jensen

**Persephone** Christine Jensen

**Mink Monk** Christine Jensen

### CHRISTINE JENSEN QUARTET

Christine Jensen, alto & soprano saxophone

Gary Versace, piano

Alex Boneham, bass

Colin Stranahan, drums

## PROGRAM NOTES

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This is a collection of thoughts and emotions that I went through in the turbulent times of our lockdown days of 2020. Through the act of working on form through composition and improvisation, I went on a deep dig in reaction to a struggle that either touched, bruised, or altered myself, as well as others around me. Sometimes my sketches were knee-jerk reactions, and other times a long contemplative thought process in working through a sound that I was trying to catch. 'Alone' took on a new meaning for me, yet rebuilding also lent rays of new colours in the light.

*Day Moon* is the opening, as I wrote it in advance of even knowing there would be a global health crisis that would lead to a shut down. I was on my street in the middle of the day where I saw this perfect moon in front of me with the sun glowing behind me. It had a foreshadowing feeling of the world shifting.

The *Quiescence Suite* was commissioned by the Jazz Coalition out of New York. Their support made it so that I jumped in and forged ahead in writing and playing right from the beginning of our new times. I wrote a piece every few weeks, including my own birthday song *Tolos d'Abri!* My April Fools theme allowed me to fantasize about where I would rather be than lockdown, and it turns out that would be Brazil...

— *Christine Jensen*

## MEET THE ARTISTS

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As a *DownBeat* Critic's Poll winner for Rising Star Big Band, Arranger, and Soprano Saxophonist, **Christine Jensen** is constantly in motion leading her own jazz orchestra and small ensemble. Her jazz orchestra recordings have gone on to win Juno awards, including *Habitat* (2014) and *Treelines* (2011). She is two-time recipient of SOCAN's Hagood Hardy Jazz Composer Award. *Habitat* received the coveted 5 stars in *DownBeat*, along with being included at the top of several international critic's polls, including Jazz Album of the Year in 2014.



Jensen's music has taken her all over the world, where she has received numerous commissions and conducting opportunities in Canada, the US and Europe. Her recent guest artist residencies have brought her to Frost School of Music-UMiami, The New School, University of Michigan, UMO Jazz Orchestra, Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, and Luxembourg Jazz Orchestra. She has performed with Jeremy Pelt, Phil Dwyer, Ben Monder,

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Gary Smulyan, Geoffrey Keezer, Lenny Pickett, and Donny McCaslin, as well as directing Terrence Blanchard with the Orchestre National Jazz de Montreal. She is founding artistic director and conductor of the Canadian National Jazz Orchestra, as well as the past artistic director of Orchestre National Jazz de Montreal. As a saxophonist, Jensen continues to collaborate on small and large ensemble projects with her sister Ingrid Jensen out of New York, along with the addition of guitarist Ben Monder with Infinitude.

Teachers and mentors include Kenny Werner, Jim McNeely, Dick Oatts, Remi Bolduc and John Hollenbeck. Since 2006, she has held composition and arranging lecturer positions at McGill University, Purchase College, University of Sherbrooke as well as guest professor at University of Montreal, as well as being artistic director of McGill Jazz Orchestra and small ensembles.

Originally hailing from Cos Cob, CT, jazz pianist, organist, and accordionist **Gary Versace** is one of the busiest and most versatile musicians on the international jazz scene, often featured in bands led by musicians such as John Scofield, Maria Schneider, John Abercrombie, Anat Cohen, Al Foster, Regina Carter, Ellery Eskelin, Ray Anderson, Rich Perry, John Hollenbeck, Ralph Alessi, Kurt Elling, Madeleine Peyroux, Matt Wilson, Brad Shepik, Ingrid Jensen, and many others.



Versace has released several CD's under his own name on the Criss Cross and SteepleChase labels, the most recent being *All for Now*, released in 2020 to critical acclaim and a 4 star review in *DownBeat* magazine. He received a Grammy nomination in 2019 along with vocalist Kate McGarry and guitarist Keith Ganz for their trio recording *The Subject Tonight is Love*, thus marking his eighth appearance on a Grammy nominated recording. Other recent CD releases as a sideman include appearances with Rich Perry, Vic Juris, John Hollenbeck and the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, Ronnie Cuber/Gary Smulyan, John Hart, the Andrew Rathbun quintet featuring Tim Hagans and Bill Stewart, Ralph Alessi, Kurt Elling, and dozens more over the past several years with both nationally and internationally known jazz artists.

Versace continues to appear annually in the *DownBeat's* Critics and Reader's Polls, and won the Jazz Journalists' Association's "Best Instrumentalist—Instruments Rare In Jazz (accordion)" award in 2018 and their "Organist of the Year" award in 2012. Gary appeared twice as a

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guest on Marian McPartland's acclaimed NPR show "Piano Jazz," and McPartland has described him as "...endlessly inventive...(Versace) really has an extraordinary talent."

Gary was a tenured professor at the University of Oregon in their jazz studies program before moving to New York City in 2002, where he has spent the last 18 years as a full time performer. He joined the Eastman faculty in 2017 as an Associate Professor of Jazz Studies, and continues to maintain an active career worldwide as a performer, educator, and clinician.

Bassist **Alex Boneham** is one of the most in demand musicians of his generation, known for his versatility and relentless creative drive. Born and raised in Sydney, Australia, Alex has worked extensively worldwide with a wide array of artists from across the musical spectrum.



After graduating from the Sydney Conservatorium with a bachelor's degree in music in 2009, Alex spent several years performing, recording and touring in Australia and New Zealand with a who's who of Australian artists and international touring acts including James Morrison, Mike Nock, Bernie McGann, Dale Barlow, James Muller, Greg Osby, George Garzone, Mike Moreno, Joel Frahm, Will Vinson, Sarah McKenzie, Jazzgroove Mothership Orchestra, and co-led group The Vampires.

In 2014, Alex was accepted into the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Ensemble (now the Herbie Hancock Institute), a selective masters program where a group of musicians is hand-picked by a panel of living legends including Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Jimmy Heath, Kenny Burrell, James Newton, and Herb Alpert.

During his two-year stint with the Monk Institute, Alex performed with Herbie Hancock and Dee Dee Bridgewater in Morocco, headlined the Playboy Jazz Festival at the Hollywood Bowl with Hancock and Wayne Shorter, and performed at the White House for First Lady Michelle Obama during International Jazz Day celebrations.

Alex's musicianship has been recognized throughout his career having been awarded the James Morrison Generations in Jazz Scholarship in 2007, named the Bell Awards Young Jazz Musician of the Year in 2012, and runner-up in the 2015 National Jazz Awards. He was also a featured

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performer on Sarah McKenzie's 2012 ARIA award winning album *Close Your Eyes*.

Alex has toured and recorded with a extensive range of artists worldwide including Billy Childs Quartet/Trio/Jazz Chamber Ensemble, Walter Smith III, Sara Gazarek, Josh Nelson, Gerald Clayton, James Muller, Tommy Emmanuel, Passenger, David Weiss, Theo Croker, Denise Donatelli, Rosario Giuliani, Roberto Tarenzi, Alice Ricciardi, Josh Johnson, Daniel Rotem, Michael Mayo, and more.

Born In Denver, Colorado, **Colin Stranahan** has always been surrounded by music. By his teenage years, he was already actively working on the local Denver scene, and has recorded multiple records on the Capri Record label. After receiving the prestigious National Foundation Advancement of the Arts Presidential Scholar award in 2005, he studied at the University of the Pacific for one year as a Brubeck Institute Fellow. Shortly thereafter, he attended the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Stranahan was also one of the winners of the 2012 Thelonious Monk Drum Competition. Now living in Brooklyn, New York, Colin is among the most sought-after drummers in the world working with such artist as Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jonathan Kreisberg, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Fred Hersch, Terence Blanchard, Dave Kikoski, Kevin Hays, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and many others. He is part of a collective trio featuring some of the most talented and praised young musicians in New York City. Together, the Stranahan/Zaleski/Rosato trio has recorded and released two successful albums and are releasing a third that was recorded live at Smalls, scheduled to be released in 2015.

Colin Stranahan currently holds adjunct teaching positions at Aarhus Royal Academy of Music, and London's Royal Academy of Music, where he teaches both private lessons, and ensemble teaching.

He also teaches at a few summer jazz programs including The Brubeck Institute Summer Jazz Colony, The Fara Sabina Summer Jazz School and Festival in Fara Sabina, Italy. Colin also gives drum master classes at Oberlin College, New England Conservatory, International Jazz Conference in Thailand, and the Singapore Esplanade Jazz Festival.

## UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

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Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at [EastmanTheatre.org](http://EastmanTheatre.org)

### KILBOURN CONCERT SERIES

#### **Kevin Hays Trio**

Kilbourn Hall

Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist composer Kevin Hays is internationally recognized as one of the most original and compelling musicians of his generation. His many recordings have received critical acclaim from *The New York Times*, *DownBeat Magazine*, and *Jazz Times*, as well as the “Coup de Coeur” award from the Académie Charles Cros (France).

### FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

#### **Priscilla Yuen, Irina Lupines, & Soojin Kang, collaborative piano**

Kilbourn Hall

Sunday, February 16, 2025 at 3:30 PM

## UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

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All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

#### **Composers Concert**

Kilbourn Hall

Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 7:30 PM

#### **Eastman School Symphony Orchestra**

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Saturday, February 8, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Music of Zhou Tian, Arild Plau, Watkins, & Copland  
with Guest Conductor Jherrard Hardeman

*We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.*



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