

EASTMAN SISTERS IN JAZZ WEEKEND

EASTMAN SISTERS IN JAZZ FACULTY ENSEMBLE

Saturday, September 21, 2024
Hatch Recital Hall
10:00 AM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

Program to be announced from the stage.

EASTMAN SISTERS IN JAZZ FACULTY ENSEMBLE

Christine Jensen, director

Sara Gazarek, voice
Christine Jensen, saxophones
Melissa Gardiner, trombone
Alyssa Falk Verhoeven, drums

with

Danica Rebudiao, bass
Annie Orzen, piano

Welcome to the inaugural Eastman Sisters in Jazz Day. Thank you to Eastman School of Music, The JCM Jazz studies department and The George Walker Center. Special thank you to Reinhild Steingrover, Jeff Campbell and Crystal Sellers Battle in supporting this event.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Graced with an “impeccable” voice (Winnipeg Free Press) and hailed as an artist who “may well turn out to be the next important jazz singer” by the LA Times, two-time GRAMMY Award® nominated vocalist **Sara Gazarek** has been one of the leading lights of an impressive generation of jazz vocalists since her brilliant emergence at age 20. While her subsequent career has been the picture of success – highlighted by five critically acclaimed albums, numerous world tours, an ardent fanbase, enthusiastic reviews, a teaching position at the University of Southern California and collaborations with such luminaries as Kurt Elling, Fred Hersch, Billy Childs and Larry Goldings, it is with her latest double-GRAMMY® nominated album, *Thirsty Ghost*, and most recent four-song EP, *Vanity*, that Gazarek brings her musical expression stunningly into phase with her emotional maturity. Gazarek is a founding member of the all-female, GRAMMY® nominated vocal ensemble, *säje*, and currently serves as Governor of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Recording Academy. Learn more about Sara by visiting her website.



Composer, bandleader and saxophonist **Christine Jensen** has contributed a distinctive voice to creative jazz scene with large and small ensemble for the last twenty-five years. As a Downbeat Critic’s Poll winner for Rising Star Big Band, Arranger, and Soprano Saxophonist, she is constantly in motion leading her own jazz orchestra and small ensemble. Her jazz orchestra recordings have gone on to win three Canadian Juno Awards, including her large ensembles recordings *Habitat* (2014), *Treelines* (2011) and most recently for her quartet *Day Moon* (2024). She is two-time recipient of SOCAN’s *Hagood Hardy* Jazz Composer Award. *Habitat* received the coveted 5 stars in Downbeat, along with Jazz Album of the Year, while making the top of several international critic’s polls. In 2017, Jensen was awarded The *Prix Oscar Peterson* from the Montreal International Jazz Festival.



MEET THE ARTISTS

Jensen's music has taken her all over the world, where she has received commissions, performance and conducting opportunities in Canada, the US and Europe. In 2023 she led the HR Big Band-Frankfurt in conducting and arranging with Mark Turner and his music, alongside her mentor and teacher Jim McNeely. She has appeared as invited guest artist with Frost School of Music-UMiami, The New School-NY, University of Michigan, UMO Jazz Orchestra-Finland, Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra, Hard Rubber Orchestra, and Luxembourg Jazz Orchestra. She has performed with Jeremy Pelt, Phil Dwyer, Ben Monder, Gary Smuylan, 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. Between 2012 and 2022 she collaborated with Orchestre National Jazz de Montreal, including composing, conducting and recording *Under The Influence Suite*, which went on to receive the *Prix Opus* for jazz recording of the year in 2017.

In 2022 Jensen joined the Eastman faculty as professor of jazz studies, where she teaches jazz composition and arranging, as well as directing the award-winning Eastman Jazz Ensemble. Since 2006, she has also held saxophone, composition and arranging positions at McGill University, Purchase College (NY), University of Sherbrooke, Université de Montreal, as well as being artistic director of McGill Jazz Orchestra I. Jensen has studied with Kenny Werner, Jim McNeely, Dick Oatts, Remi Bolduc and John Hollenbeck.

Alyssa Falk is a drummer, percussionist, educator, clinician & composer based in the NYC area. Her talents and unique style have led her around the world to perform in many popular venues. Alyssa received both a masters in jazz drumset performance from Manhattan School Of Music and bachelor of music education/percussion performance from Crane School Of Music. Alyssa has performed with a variety of traditional and experimental jazz groups with artists in the US and Canada, including Alex Dean, Pat Labarbera, Christine Jensen and David Restivo. Awards include



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the International Association of Jazz Educators Sisters in Jazz drummer in 2001, and jazz composition award in 2004. She has toured with the American Wind Symphony and has performed as part of many music festivals including the Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Festival. Internationally she has mentored jazz students in Canada as part of the Always on Stage Festival. Compositionally, Alyssa she writes for small and large jazz groups, percussion ensembles and concert bands Her teachers include John Riley and Bret Zvacek. In 2022 she was nominated for a Canadian Juno award for her work with the David Restivo trio on his album *Arancia*.

Trombonist **Melissa Gardiner** has been described by Curtis Fuller as technically creative and emotionally powerful. Her improvisation is inspiring and motivating for the listener, and she draws you in with a raw expression that directly relates to life experience.



Throughout her career she has worked with several notable musicians including Aretha Franklin, The Temptations, Geri Allen, Wycliffe Gordon, Steve Turre, Gerald Wilson, Patti Austin, Tia Fuller, Ingrid Jensen, Arturo O’Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, and Vulfpeck.

As a bandleader, she has released four albums, *Transitions* (2011), *Second Line Syracuse* (2016), *Empowered* (2019) which features prominent jazz women Tia Fuller (Beyonce) and Ingrid Jensen, and *The NOVA Collective* (2023). Gardiner has won several awards including two Syracuse Area Music Awards (SAMMYS) for Best Jazz Album (2016, 2019), and a Grand Prize Winner at the International Jazz Competition in Bucharest, Romania (2018).

In addition to an active performance career, Gardiner has teaching credentials at Syracuse University, Le Moyne College and Cornell University and has been recognized as an outstanding educator in many settings, including as a finalist for the National Music and Arts Educator of the Year award (2017), as an inductee to the Liverpool High School

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Fine Arts Hall of Fame (2018) and a Lifetime Educator of the Year award for the SAMMYS Hall of Fame (2019).

Gardiner received her master's degree in jazz performance at The Juilliard School where she studied with Steve Turre. She graduated with a bachelor's degree at The University of Michigan where she studied with Dennis Wilson (jazz) and David Jackson (classical). Former teachers also include Bill Harris, Curtis Fuller and Wycliffe Gordon. She is an artist for BAC Musical Instruments and plays on a BAC Custom Trombone.

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.

UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at EastmanTheatre.org

KILBOURN CONCERT SERIES

Brandee Younger

Kilbourn Hall

Saturday, September 21, 2024 at 7:30 PM

The sonically innovative harpist Brandee Younger is revolutionizing harp for the digital era. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked relentlessly to stretch boundaries and limitations for harpists. In 2022, she made history by becoming the first black woman to be nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition. Ever-expanding as an artist, she has worked with cultural icons including Common, Lauryn Hill, John Legend, and Moses Sumney.

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media Faculty Showcase

Kilbourn Hall

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 7:30 PM

UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra & Eastman Philharmonia

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Monday, September 23, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Music of Beethoven, Montgomery, and Tchaikovsky

EMuSE

with **Kotoka Suzuki**, guest composer

Hatch Recital Hall

Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 7:30 PM



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



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