



UNC • GREELEY

JAZZ FESTIVAL

APRIL 24-26, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

UNC

Downbeat 2024

Student Music Award Winners

Ensembles & Soloists

Jazz Soloist

Undergraduate College Outstanding Performance

PARKER SIBLEY, Drums

Jim White, Professor

Vocal Jazz Soloist

Graduate College Outstanding Performance

KELSEY WALLNER, Vocals

Marion Powers, Professor

Small Vocal Jazz Group

Graduate College Outstanding Performance

NORTHERN COLORADO VOICES

Marion Powers, Professor

Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist

Graduate College Outstanding Performance

EDWARD W. HARDY, Violin

Jubal Fulks, Professor

Composition & Arranging

Original Composition – Large Ensemble

Graduate College Outstanding Composition

DAVID BERNOT, “Lonesome Log”

Drew Zarembo, Professor

Jazz Arrangement

Graduate College Winner – Small Ensemble

TSU HAO KEN KUO, “East of the Sun”

Drew Zarembo, Professor

Jazz Arrangement

Graduate College Outstanding Arrangement –

Studio Composition

JARED CATHEY, “Chime”

Drew Zarembo, Professor

David Bernot, saxophone
UNC Compass Jazz Orchestra

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FEATURED EVENTS

CONCERTS

VOCALIST EKEP NKWELLE + TROMBONIST WYCLIFFE GORDON WITH THE ERIC HITT TRIO & UNC COMPASS JAZZ ORCHESTRA

THURSDAY, APRIL 24 | 4:30 PM & 7:30 PM

Up-and-coming vocalist Ekep Nkwelle takes the stage ahead of the inimitable Wycliffe Gordon and the award-winning Compass Jazz Orchestra. Nkwelle's captivating voice commands the hall, and with Gordon's unique vocal style and deep connection to the blues, this promises to be a soulful musical experience for all.

COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA + PERCUSSIONIST SAMUEL TORRES WITH UNC COMPASS JAZZ ORCHESTRA

FRIDAY, APRIL 25 | 4:30 PM & 7:30 PM

Jazz grandeur and excellence are personified as the legendary institution the Count Basie Orchestra fills the stage with their truly unique and swinging style that has been a mainstay through most of jazz history. And Latin Grammy Award-winning percussionist and composer Samuel Torres lights up the hall with the UNC Compass Jazz Orchestra.

SULLIVAN FORTNER, SOLO PIANO + JAZZ FESTIVAL ALL-STAR BIG BAND WITH SAXOPHONIST SARAH HANAHAN & TRUMPETER WAYNE BERGERON

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:30 PM

Grammy Award-winning pianist Sullivan Fortner brings his uncompromising individualism to the solo piano to open this finale concert. The Jazz Festival All-Star Big Band sweeps in next joined by Sarah Hanahan, a NYC-based alto saxophonist who was recently named one of NPR Jazz Night in America's 30 under 30 Youngbloods, and legendary trumpeter Wayne Bergeron.

AFTER-HOURS SESSION

UNC JAZZ FACULTY QUARTET WITH DON ALIQUO & CLAY JENKINS

FRIDAY, APRIL 25 | 10PM | MOXI THEATER (802 9TH ST, GREELEY)

This close-knit sextet unites a group of accomplished jazz musicians with a shared passion for exploration and expression. With a seamless blend of rich improvisation, intricate harmonies, and dynamic groove, they draw from a wide range of influences to create their own forward-thinking sound. Each member's unique voice shines through, creating a cohesive, engaging musical experience that pushes the boundaries of modern jazz while staying true to its rich traditions.

Clay Jenkins, Trumpet
Don Aliquo, Saxophone
Dana Landry, Piano

Steve Kovalcheck, Guitar
Erik Applegate, Bass
Jim White, Drums

MOXI
THEATER

CLINICS & WORKSHOPS

UNIVERSITY CENTER LONG'S PEAK BALLROOM

THURSDAY

WORKSHOP	Vocal Workshop with Sherry Alves	10AM
WORKSHOP	Blowing Better Bars: Exploring Tension & Release Over the 12-Bar Blues with Tyler Thomas	11AM
WORKSHOP	Finding the Pocket for Vocal Improv with Marion Powers	12PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Wycliffe Gordon	1PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Ekep Nkwelle	2PM
WORKSHOP	"Did You Hear That?!" Active Listening Workshop with Trist Curless	3PM

FRIDAY

WORKSHOP	Saxophone Workshop with UNC's Andrew Janak	10AM
WORKSHOP	Steve Kovalcheck Trio Special Performance	11AM
WORKSHOP	A Fundamental Approach to Style & Improvisation for Brass Players with Miles Roth & Daniel Cosio	12PM
WORKSHOP	UNC Faculty Rhythmic Section: Steve Kovalcheck, Dana Landry, Erik Applegate, and Jim White	1PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Igniting Latin Rhythms with Samuel Torres	2PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Count Basie Orchestra: Scotty Barnhardt (Band Leader), Dee Askew (Band Manager), Martin McCain, Clarence Banks	3PM

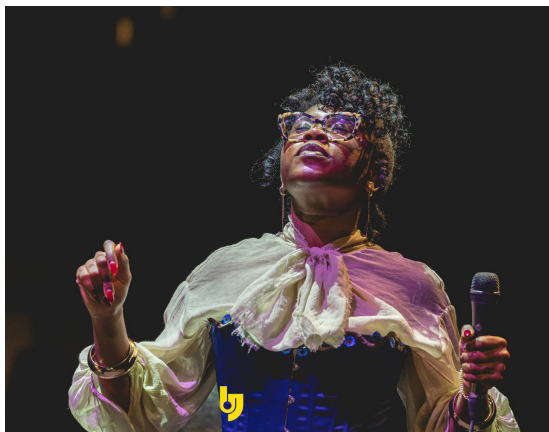
SATURDAY

WORKSHOP	Advancing the Role of Latin Identifying Musicians Throughout Jazz History with Brian Casey	10AM
WORKSHOP	Jazz Bassics: Mastering the Fundamentals of Jazz Bass with Eric Hitt	11AM
MEET THE ARTIST	Sarah Hanahan	12PM
WORKSHOP	Finding Your Voice: Jazz Composition as Daily Ritual with Annie Booth	1PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Sullivan Fortner	2PM
MEET THE ARTIST	Wayne Bergeron	3PM



EKEP NKWELLE

THURSDAY, APRIL 24 | 4:30PM & 7:30PM



Ekep Nkwelle is a force in today's jazz scene, charting a remarkable journey from the vibrant culture of Washington, DC, to the iconic stages of New York City and beyond. She refined her musical gifts through rigorous academic training, earning a diploma from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a Bachelor's degree from Howard University, and a Master's from The Juilliard School.

Her voice has captivated legendary jazz figures such as Wynton Marsalis, Dianne Reeves, the late Russell Malone, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Catherine Russell, Cyrus Chestnut, and Jeff "Tain" Watts, earning her multiple opportunities to collaborate with these luminaries. A dynamic performer, Ekep has left her mark on world-renowned stages, including Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, Marians Jazzroom in Switzerland, the San Javier Jazz Festival in Spain, Carnegie Hall in New York City, NPR's Tiny Desk Concert in DC, and SFJAZZ in San Francisco.

In 2023, she was honored with the prestigious Juilliard Career Advancement Grant, nominated by Marsalis, recognizing her exceptional artistry and promise. Beyond the stage, she contributes her talents to influential arts organizations such as The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Jazz Houston, and The Woodshed Network. As one of Jazz at Lincoln Center's latest rising stars, Ekep is poised to shape the future of jazz.



UNC

School of Music

WYCLIFFE GORDON

THURSDAY, APRIL 24 | 4:30PM & 7:30PM



Wycliffe Gordon has enjoyed an impressive career touring the world, performing to great acclaim from audiences and critics alike.

Jazz Journalists Association named him 2022 “Trombonist of the Year” for the record-breaking 15th time, and he’s topped Downbeat Critics Poll Poll on trombone for an unprecedented six times (2020, 2018, 2016, 2014, 2013 & 2012). Recent

awards include the “Louie Award”, the International Trombone Award, and the Satchmo Award, among others. Wycliffe is a prolific recording artist and is extremely popular for his unmatched signature sound, plunger technique, and unique vocals. He can be heard on hundreds of recordings, soundtracks, live DVD’s and documentaries, and has an extensive catalog of original compositions that span the various timbres of jazz and chamber music. His arrangement of the theme song to NPR’s “All Things Considered” is heard daily across the globe.

In addition to a successful solo career, Gordon tours regularly, leading the International All Stars at festivals and performing arts centers worldwide. Gordon is also one of America’s most persuasive and committed music educators and is highly sought after as a clinician and guest speaker.

Wycliffe Gordon is a Yamaha Performing Artist and has his own line of Wycliffe Gordon Pro Signature Mouthpieces by Pickett Brass.



COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

FRIDAY, APRIL 25 | 4:30PM & 7:30PM



In the history of Jazz music, there is only one bandleader that has the distinction of having his orchestra still performing sold-out concerts all over the world, with members personally chosen by him, for nearly 40 years after his passing. Pianist and bandleader William James “Count” Basie was and still is an American institution that personifies the grandeur and excellence of Jazz. **The Count Basie Orchestra**, today directed by Scotty Barnhart, has won every respected jazz poll in the world at least once, won 18 Grammy Awards, performed for Kings, Queens, and other world Royalty, appeared in several movies, television shows, at every major jazz festival and major concert hall in the world. The most recent honor is a 2024 Grammy Win of Best Large Jazz Ensemble for “Basie Swings the Blues”! Other honors include their 2022 Grammy Nomination for Live At Birdland, a 2018 Grammy Nomination for All About That Basie, which features special guests Stevie Wonder, Jon Faddis, and Take 6 among others, and the 2018 Downbeat Readers Poll Award as the #1 Jazz Orchestra in the world. Their critically acclaimed release in 2015 of A Very Swingin’ Basie Christmas! is the very first holiday album in the 80-year history of the orchestra. Released on Concord Music, it went to #1 on the Jazz charts and sold out on Amazon! Special guests include vocalists Johnny Mathis, Ledisi, our own Carmen Bradford and pianist Ellis Marsalis. A BBC TV produced documentary on Mr. Basie and the orchestra entitled Count Basie: Through His Own Eyes premiered on PBS in the US and UK in 2019 coinciding with the orchestra’s 85th Anniversary. It features interviews by Quincy Jones, Scotty Barnhart, Dee Askew, John Williams, and several other important band members and associates of Mr. Basie and the orchestra.

Some of the greatest soloists, composers, arrangers, and vocalists in jazz history such as Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Frank Foster, Thad Jones, Sonny Payne, Freddie Green, Snooky Young, Frank Wess, and Joe Williams, became international stars once they began working with the legendary Count Basie Orchestra. This great 18-member orchestra is still continuing the excellent history started by Basie of stomping and shouting the blues, as well as refining those musical particulars that allow for the deepest and most moving of swing.

SAMUEL TORRES

FRIDAY, APRIL 25 | 4:30PM & 7:30PM



Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, based in Brooklyn, NY, celebrated Latin Grammy Award-winning percussionist and composer **Samuel Torres** thrives at the intersection of Afro-Latin rhythms, Latin jazz, and contemporary classical music. “...intelligent, sophisticated and explosive.” – JazzTimes Magazine

Torres has performed, arranged, produced and/or recorded with the “who’s who” of the jazz, Latin pop and the classical world, including such luminaries as Tito Puente, Paquito D’Rivera, Yo-Yo Ma, Chick Corea, Alejandro Sanz, Ricky Martin, Don Byron, Richard Bona, Arturo Sandoval, Lila Downs, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Angelique Kidjo, Marc Anthony, Rubén

Blades, Fonseca, Andrés Cepeda, Thalía, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Bridget Kibbey, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Nashville Symphony, and his country’s own international superstar, Shakira.

He has been featured as a composer and soloist with classical orchestras such as Berlin Symphoniker, City of London Sinfonia, Bogotá Philharmonic, Medellín Philharmonic, Delaware University Orchestra, Berklee Composition Orchestra, Gainesville Chamber Orchestra, and the Cali Philharmonic.

Torres won the Latin Grammy Award for the Best Classical Record with his album ‘Regreso,’ a concerto for congas and symphony orchestra in 2019. He is a three-time recipient of the New Jazz Works Grant by Chamber Music America. Torres received 2nd place at the Thelonious Monk Jazz Hand Percussion Competition in 2000. In 2023, he earned his master’s degree in classical composition from the prestigious Manhattan School of Music, where he was honored with the Nicolas Flagello Award for his outstanding achievements as a composer.

SULLIVAN FORTNER

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:30PM



For more than a decade, **Sullivan Fortner** has been stretching deep-rooted talents as a pianist, composer, band leader and uncompromising individualist. The GRAMMY Award-winning artist and educator out of New Orleans received international praise as both key player and producer for his collaborative work on *The Window*, alongside Cecile McLorin Salvant, and earned a 2023 GRAMMY nomination for his provocative arrangement of “Optimistic Voices/ No Love Dying” from her 2022 release *Ghost Song*.

In addition to his celebrated releases as a co-leader and collaborator, as a solo leader he has issued *Aria* (2015), *Moments Preserved* (2018) and *Solo Game* (2024) to effusive critical acclaim, the lattermost receiving 4-star reviews in *DownBeat* and France’s *Telerama Magazine*.

“[Sullivan] is one of the best pianists in the world today and he has all of the musical attributes I love: creativity, technique always in the service of expression, joy and humor, fearlessness and pianistic mastery,” says album producer, GRAMMY-nominated artist Fred Hersch. Fortner looks forward to releasing his forthcoming trio recording *Southern Nights* in 2025, which features Peter Washington and Marcus Gilmore.

Winner of the 2024 *DownBeat* Critics Poll for Rising Star Jazz Group: Sullivan Fortner Trio, the prolific artist soon earned the Western Jazz Presenters grant, empowering him to lead his trio — which features Tyrone Allen and Kayvon Gordon — on a coastal tour of the U.S. through Albuquerque, New Mexico, Portland, Oregon and Oakland and Monterey, California. Over the past decade, he has enjoyed creative associations with such diverse voices as Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, Diane Reeves, Etienne Charles and John Scofield; his frequent and longtime collaborators have included Ambrose Akinmusire, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Stefon Harris, Kassa Overall, Tivon Pennicott, Peter Bernstein, Nicholas Payton, Billy Hart, Gary Bartz, Chief Adjuah, Fred Hersch and the late Roy Hargrove. Recent collaborations include GRAMMY-nominated releases *Dear Love* (Empress Legacy) and *Generations* from leaders Jazzmeia Horn and The Baylor Project, respectively.

SARAH HANAHAN

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:30PM



Sarah Hanahan is an up-and-coming jazz saxophonist in New York City. Sarah is a graduate of the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at the Hartt School of Music where she received her Bachelors degree in 2019, as well as The Juilliard School where she received her Masters degree in 2022. She has had the privilege of studying with some of the greats of our time including Abraham Burton, Nat Reeves, Steve Davis, Billy Drummond, and Marc Cary.

Recently, Sarah has been working with many renowned musicians such as Jeff “Tain” Watts, Nat Reeves, Peter Martin, Steve Davis, Billy Hart, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jason Moran, Marc Cary and many others.

Sarah plays regularly with her own band in venues around NYC, including Smalls Jazz Club, Dizzy’s Club, Smoke Jazz Club, Birdland Jazz Club, The Django, and more. She also recently had the opportunity to play for the 2023 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert at the Kennedy Center honoring Sue Mingus with the Mingus Dynasty Band. Sarah tours both nationwide and internationally with Ulysses Owens Jr. and Generation Y, Sherrie Miracle and the Diva Orchestra, Joe Farnsworth, and the Grammy award-winning Mingus Big Band.

Sarah was recently featured in the first-ever class of NPR Jazz Night in America’s Youngbloods. The series features “five up-and-coming jazz geniuses who are revolutionizing their genre” - all of whom are under the age of 30.

Hanahan’s debut album, *Among Giants*, is OUT NOW! Streaming on all platforms and available for purchase. The album features a powerhouse rhythm section of Marc Cary, Nat Reeves, and Jeff “Tain” Watts.

WAYNE BERGERON

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:30PM



Wayne Bergeron is enjoying a career as one of the most sought-after musicians in the world. Studio sessions, film dates, international touring, jazz concerts, guest appearances, and clinics keep him busy not only in his hometown of Los Angeles but worldwide.

Bergeron first caught the ear of many when he landed the lead trumpet chair with Maynard Ferguson's band in 1986. Bergeron demonstrates daily why Maynard remarked, "Wayne is the most musical lead trumpet player I've had on my band."

As a sideman, Bergeron's list of recording credits reads like a "who's who" in contemporary jazz and

pop, running the stylistic gamut from Ray Charles to Green Day. Other names include Katy Perry, Beyoncé, Barbra Streisand, Michael Buble, Indina Menzel, Leslie Oden Jr, Natalie Cole, Celine Dion, Seal, Diana Krall, Christina Aguilera, Dianne Reeves, The Mars Volta, Rosemary Cloony, Diane Schuur, Barry Manilow, Kenny G., and David Benoit.

Bergeron has worked on over 500 TV & motion picture soundtracks. A partial list of film credits includes Red Notice, Turning Red, Soul, Bob's Burgers, Ford vs. Ferrari, Toy Story 4, Frozen 1 & 2, The Lion King (2019), The Secret Life of Pets, Crazy Rich Asians, Sing 1&2, Moana, Frozen 1 & 2, Toy Story 3, High School Musical 3, Superman Returns, The Simpson's Movie, Dreamgirls, Hairspray, Spiderman 1 & 2, Team America and South Park.

Bergeron's featured trumpet solos can be heard on the motion pictures West Side Story (2021 Steven Spielberg), La La Land, Sing, The Incredibles 1 & 2, Rocky Balboa, The Secret Life of Pets 2, Minions, Minions 2:The Rise of Gru, Spies in Disguise, Jersey Boys, Despicable Me, Aladdin King of Thieves, and many others.

Numerous TV credits include Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, SAG Awards, NBC, ESPN & TNT sports themes, Grammy Awards, Animaniacs Reboot, Family Guy, American Dad, Simpson's, Wonderful World of Mickey Mouse, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, America's Funniest Home Videos, Phineas & Ferb, House of Mouse, Buzz Lightyear, and Hey Arnold.

Bergeron's greatest love is playing lead in big bands. He has recorded and played with some of Los Angeles' most respected bands including Quincy Jones, Gordon Goodwin, Pat Williams, Sammy Nestico, Jack Sheldon, Chris Walden, Tom Kubis, and Bob Florence.

Perhaps Grammy-winning composer and bandleader Gordon Goodwin said it best, "Wayne is a once in a lifetime lead trumpet player."

JAZZ FESTIVAL ALL-STARS

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 4:30PM

SAXOPHONE

Drew Zaremba*
Sarah Hanahan
Don Aliquo
Andrew Janak*
Glenn Kostur

TRUMPET

Wayne Bergeron
Miles Roth*
Nadje Noordhuis
Clay Jenkins

TROMBONE

Jonathan Bumpus
Zach Rich
Paul McKee
Daniel Cosio*

RHYTHM SECTION

Dana Landry*
Steve Kovalcheck*
Erik Applegate*
Jim White*

**UNC Jazz Faculty*



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UNC'S COMPASS JAZZ ORCHESTRA



The Compass Jazz Orchestra at the University of Northern Colorado is considered to be one of the premier college big bands in the country. They were recognized in DownBeat Magazine's Student Music Awards ten of the last thirteen years, most recently in 2023. Nine of these were as 'Winner' in the Graduate Large Ensemble Category.

Following a tour of Romania, two excursions to China, and multiple invitations to appear at Jazz Education Network Conferences, the group was invited to perform in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 2023 at its most acclaimed concert hall, Teatro Nacional Eduardo Brito. This visit was timed perfectly for UNC as we are celebrating the launch of our new undergraduate degree in Latinx Music, the first of its kind in the nation. A highlight of 2024 included a nighttime featured performance with the great vocalist Carmen Bradford at the Jazz Education Network Conference in New Orleans.

Compass Jazz Orchestra's repertoire focuses on new music: original compositions and reinterpretations of jazz classics. Their next CD, *Carmen Sings Carmen: Celebrating the Music of Carmen McRae*, will be released in May. Featuring Carmen Bradford of the Count Basie Orchestra, this album includes some of McRae's most well known pieces, which were arranged by UNC faculty, students, and alumni. Bradford is already performing five of these arrangements with the Basie Orchestra.

SAXOPHONE

Christian Longoria
Cade Guitierrez
David Bernot
Hendrik Viljoen
Edward Moncada

TRUMPET

Andrew Wilson
Jules Colombel
Payson Bouchard
Skyler Mendell

TROMBONE

Jonathan Bumpus
James Standish
Alex Hoskins
Raymond Arango

RHYTHM SECTION

Gavin Allen-Dunn
Nathan Borton
Bodin Chomposri
Tony Manoguerra

DIRECTOR

Dana Landry

nocoVO



NoCoVo is UNC'S premier vocal jazz ensemble. Directed by Marion Powers, the group strives to uphold and further the longstanding tradition of vocal jazz groups, and performs works from the historical repertoire as well as new arrangements and original compositions. Vocal Lab was created by Kerry Marsh, then directed by Brennan Baglio, and follows in the footsteps of groundbreaking and Grammy-nominated UNC groups including the Axidentals, Sus4, and Et Cetera, all directed by Gene Aitken. Alums of UNC's vocal jazz ensembles have gone on to prominence in professional groups including Manhattan Transfer, M-Pact, and The Lumineers, to positions with companies including Disney Resorts, to featured positions in movies including La La Land and TV shows including Jimmy Fallon, and to teaching and leadership positions at well-regarded vocal jazz programs at Howard University, Millikin University, and the University of Adelaide, Australia.

VOCALS

Hannah Rodriguez
Jillian Creamer
Grace Lusk
Ella Savage
Summer Johnson
Astrid Garcia
Tyler Cox
Hunter Crow
Tristan Cox
Cole Freyler

PIANO

Gavin Allen-Dunn

BASS

Bodin Chompoosri

GUITAR

Nathan Borton

DRUMS

Tony Manoguerra

DIRECTOR

Marion Powers

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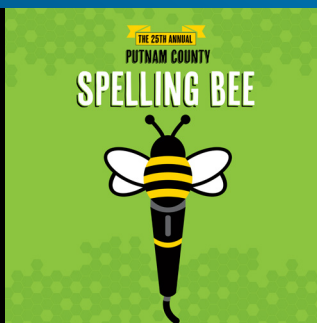
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Andrew Janak, Saxophone
Steve Kovalcheck, Guitar and Improvisation
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