

PROVIDING RESOURCES TO IOWA'S JAZZ EDUCATORS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kelli Swehla

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year from Jazz Educators of Iowa!

In this newsletter, you'll find some information about the All-State Jazz Band directors and the audition etudes. You'll also find some information about our Middle School

Jazz Combo Camps as well as our first-ever Iowa Jazz Girls Day to be held at Marion High School. I hope you'll take advantage of these opportunities for your students.

I wanted to remind you of our staff here to serve you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Kelli Swehla, President - president@jeiowa.org;

Christopher Strohmaier, President-Elect, cstrohmaier@waukeeschools.org

Steve Shanley, Vice-President - steve.shanley@gmail.com

Jennifer Tiede, Secretary - secretary@jeiowa.org

Jeff Robillard, Treasurer - treasurer@jeiowa.org

Elizabeth Hand, Media - media@jeiowa.org

Michael Prichard, Webmaster - webmaster@jeiowa.org

Finally, as you start putting together your first concert program, remember to utilize our inclusive artwork found on our resources page. I'll leave you with the [first article](#) I wrote for JEI way back when to hopefully bring you a chuckle as you are programming for your first performance. There are also so many resources in your peers - don't forget to reach out to each other for help and to check-in.

Best wishes to you as you begin your preparations for your jazz choirs and bands this year!

Sincerely,

Kelli Swehla

ALL-IOWA MIDDLE SCHOOL JAZZ BAND

Congratulations to students participating in the 2024 All-Iowa Middle School Jazz Band!

Students will rehearse and perform on November 16th at Coe College
under the direction of Jeff Robilliard.

Saxophones

Alto: Henry Place, Pella
Alto: Marion Spolaore, Excelsior
Tenor: Skyler Chanhdavong, Carlisle
Tenor: Harikesh Thiyagarajan, Oak Ridge
Bari: Daniel Schuett, Prairie Point

Trumpets

Cory Slifka, Harding
Chan Phong Ton, Prairie Point
Jeremiah VanWyk, North Mahaska
Olivia Janda, Oak Ridge
Kai Enderlin, DCG Oak View

Trombones

Ian Perreault, St. Joseph Catholic School Marion
Ezra O'Connor, Southeast
Rhys Phillips, Oak View
Brody Sanderson, Denver
Clarisse Laurent, Oak Ridge

Rhythm

Piano: Erica Gengler, Oak Ridge
Vibes: Hudson Thirtyacre, Solon
Bass: Kyler Lyons, Pella
Drums: Zach Meyer, Regis
Drums: Aidan Telisak, Excelsior

2025 ALL-STATE JAZZ DIRECTORS



1A/2A

BETHANY ROBINSON

2022 GRAMMY Music Educator Award Finalist and
[Yamaha Performing Artist](#) Bethany Robinson currently
serves as the Director of Jazz at Purdue University (July,
2024) after serving as a Jazz Director in the Noblesville
(IN) School District.

In 2011, Bethany received her first Lilly Teacher Creativity
Grant, and traveled to New Orleans and New York City,

exploring the current trends of jazz in those two cities. She experienced dozens of jazz shows, attended the Band Director Academy at Jazz at Lincoln Center, composed her first piece for big band, and came home to Noblesville High School with a whole new concept of jazz pedagogy at the secondary level. Upon returning from this experience, her jazz program at Noblesville expanded from 1 to 6 high school big bands, and the top band made regular appearances at the ISSMA Indiana Jazz State Finals, placing first in 2023, first place finishes at both Ball State and Purdue University Jazz Festivals, and was a 2-time finalist for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Essentially Ellington Festival and Competition.

In 2014, Bethany was named "Indiana Jazz Educator of the Year" by the Indianapolis Jazz Foundation. In 2015, she was named "Teacher of the Year" for Noblesville Schools, the 11th largest public high school in Indiana. In 2016, Bethany was a Semi-Finalist for Indiana Teacher of the Year. She is a 2022 Grammy Music Educator Award Finalist, 4x nominee, and was named one of the [2022 Jazz Heroes by the Jazz Journalists Association](#), which honors advocates who have had a significant impact in their local communities. Bethany was also recently named the 2023 "High School Music Educator of the Year" by the Indiana Music Educator Association.

Bethany currently serves as Chair of the [National Association for Music Education Jazz Council](#) (NAfME), [Jazz Education Network](#) NAfME Liaison Board Member, and President of the [Indiana Jazz Educators Association](#). During her time as IJEA President, she spearheaded efforts to create the All-District Jazz Program, a Junior All-State Jazz Ensemble, began a partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center, and partnered with IJF Artistic Director Rob Dixon to feature the Indiana All-State Jazz Combo at the annual Indy Jazz Fest.

In 2018, Bethany was a part of the inaugural Indiana Jazz Girls Day, traveling around the state playing bass at concerts and workshops with New York City Musicians Leni Stern, Jamie Baum, and Austria-based Monika Herzig. She continues to travel with this group annually in the spring, playing bass and serving as a clinician at workshops around the state of Indiana, inspiring young jazz musicians to be leaders on the bandstand.

Bethany received her second Lilly Teacher Creativity Grant, and spent the summer of 2019 exploring the Brazilian cities of Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, taking in the sounds of choro, Bossa nova, and samba while exploring her mother's childhood home, creating music for her students, and collaborating with local Brazilian musicians.

Bethany has been a featured presenter for music education students at Ball State University, Butler University, Vanderbilt University, for community members at the Center for Performing Arts/Palladium (Carmel, Indiana), and has adjudicated events including the Benny Golson Jazz Festival at Butler University, the Clark Terry Jazz Festival at Southeast Missouri State University, and the Western Australian Schools' Jazz Festival, and the Elizabeth City State University Max Roach Centennial. She has also adjudicated the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Newark Academy New Jersey Essentially Ellington Regionals as a representative for Jazz at Lincoln Center. In September 2021, Bethany was a keynote speaker for the Australia National Band and Orchestra Conference, speaking on topics like building jazz culture, teaching jazz for those new to jazz, and building leaders through the Jazz Girls Day Event. Bethany was also a presenter at the 2022 Indiana Music Educators Conference, the [2022 International Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic](#) in Chicago, IL, the Oklahoma Bandmasters Summer Convention, and was the keynote

speaker for the 2023 New York State Summer Music Conference. In 2024 Bethany led workshops at the Music For All National Concert Band Festival and workshops and clinics in Perth, Western Australia. Bethany also served as the chief adjudicator for the Victoria Schools' Jazz Festival in Melbourne, and in December will be the Guest Conductor for the 2024 New York All State Jazz Ensemble.

As an avid performer on upright bass, electric bass, and vocals Bethany has performed over the years at the Indy jazz Fest, Indianapolis Jazz Kitchen, The Center for the Performing Arts, Carmel Jazz Fest, the Indianapolis Zoo Jazz Series, Zoobliation, and Irish Fest with many artists including Everett Greene, Sarah Scharbrough, and Katherine Nagy, and has opened for YAMAHA Artist Dave Koz.



3A

ANNIE BOOTH

Annie Booth is a versatile and award-winning composer, arranger, and jazz pianist. She has received international recognition for her work as a composer/arranger with awards and grants from the likes of Chamber Music America, ASCAP, the International Alliance for Women in Music, Downbeat Magazine, the International Society of Jazz Arrangers & Composers, and many more.

Her writing spans from small group jazz to large jazz ensemble to chamber and symphonic works. She has been commissioned to compose new, original works by the University of New Hampshire Jazz Studies, the University of North Florida Concert Band, Reno Jazz Festival, Stratus Chamber Orchestra, the Colorado Jazz Repertory

Orchestra (CJOR), the University of Denver, and many others. Her unique large scale chamber jazz suite, *Flowers of Evil*, is an otherworldly song cycle of original music set to the beautifully dark poetry of 19th century French poet, Charles Baudelaire. The project was released on CD and digital platforms worldwide in October 2023.

As a bandleader/performer, Annie leads several projects including the Annie Booth Trio, the Annie Booth Sextet, and the Annie Booth Big Band. She has released seven albums as a bandleader and has appeared on more than a dozen as a side-musician. Her latest release with her trio — featuring longtime musical collaborators Patrick McDevitt (bass) and Alejandro Castaño (drums) — is a collection of her innovative interpretations of the Beatles catalogue, entitled *Here, There and Everywhere: The Beatles Songbook (Live)*.

Annie Booth is a respected jazz educator and is currently on faculty at the Jazz and Commercial Music Program at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music. She has been a guest director of All-State Jazz Ensembles across the country including South Dakota (2023), California (2025) and Iowa (2025) and has appeared as a guest artist-educator/conductor at dozens of institutions including the University of New Hampshire, the University of North Texas, the Reno Jazz Festival, Fresno State Jazz Festival, the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival, the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, Seattle JazzEd, and many more. For nearly a decade she has worked with students in the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts (CCJA) directing combos, teaching at summer camps, and leading the SheBop Young Women in Jazz Workshop, which she created and about which she wrote her pedagogy-focused

master's thesis. Booth holds a Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance & Pedagogy, Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Piano Performance, and Minor in French Language degree from the University of Colorado-Boulder

In 2023, she and fellow composer/arranger Alan Baylock launched Brava Jazz Publishing, the only outlet of its kind that supports and champions women composers and arrangers in jazz by creating a platform for their music to be widely distributed and published.



4A

AYN INSERTO

"There's an energetic creative force on the horizon named Ayn Inserto, and... she's Maria Schneider on steroids."
Harvey Siders, Jazz Times.

Ayn Inserto is a groundbreaking composer who is emerging as one of the preeminent voices of her generation. She received her Master of Music degree in Jazz Composition from the New England Conservatory and is a winner of the IAJE/ASCAP Emerging Composer Commission honoring Frank Foster and the ASCAP Young Jazz Composers' Awards. She was picked by Bob Brookmeyer to study jazz composition as his protege. Her music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center Shanghai, Dizzy's Club (Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC), the Berklee Performance Center, Boston Symphony Hall, JEN Conferences, Reno Jazz Festival, Billy Higgins Jazz Festival, New England Conservatory of Music, Brown University, Montreux Jazz Festival, the Umbria Jazz

Festival, McGill University, Senigallia, Italy, Terni Jazz Festival, the Sant' Elpidio Jazz Festival, and the Fano Jazz Festival. Inserto has been commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the NYO Jazz Ensemble, The Jazz Education Network, ASCAP/IAJE, the Commission Project for JazzMN, Madison Technical College, Amherst College, Cal State University East Bay, Los Medanos College, Foxboro High School, Harvard Jazz Band, Marin Catholic High School, Fairfield High School, and Jennifer Wharton. She has given masterclasses and clinics at the Panama Jazz Festival, Brown University, IMEP Paris College of Music, International College of Music in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Seoul Jazz Academy, Tokyo School of Music, Singapore Polytechnic, Arcevia Jazz Seminar, Rossini Conservatory of Music, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra from London, UK and the Sydney Conservatorium.

In 2022, she was the musical director of the Frankfurt Radio Big Band (HR Big Band) for performances featuring Linda May Han Oh. Along with Jim McNeely, she orchestrated and arranged the concert featuring Linda's music.

Inserto has served as a panelist for the Jazz Improv Convention with Dr. Billy Taylor in New York, the International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers, Women Jazz Composers: Empowering Equal Voices in the Large Ensemble Landscape, as well as for the Tribute to Bob Brookmeyer at New England Conservatory. She also has been a clinician for the JENerations Jazz Festival, an adjudicator for the Berklee High School Jazz Festival, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship, the Massachusetts Council for the Arts Composition Fellowship, and the International Alliance for Women in

Music Jazz Composition Contest. She conducted the MMEA All-State Jazz Band with a program of women composers. She is a mentor for the Women in Jazz Organization and a member of the Board of Directors for the Jazz Education Network.

She's been an adjudicator for the Jack Rudin Championship at Jazz at Lincoln Center alongside Randy Brecker, Jeff Hamilton, Carlos Henriquez and Wynton Marsalis, as well as an initial adjudicator for the finalists for the 2023 Essentially Ellington competition presented by JALC. Her music is also published by ejazzlines and in the New Standards: 101 Lead Sheets By Women, a publication spearheaded by Terri Lyne Carrington and the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice.

Her big band, the Ayn Inserto Jazz Orchestra, has recorded three albums with special guests Bob Brookmeyer, John Fedchock, George Garzone and Sean Jones. The ensemble has garnered many positive reviews such as Downbeat Editor's Pick, The Boston Globe 2018 Best Jazz Albums, Top Ten Recordings of 2018 (Cadence Magazine) and the Jazz Journalists Association Best of 2018 (Large Ensemble) List. She currently resides in Boston where she is the Assistant Chair of Harmony and Jazz Composition at Berklee College of Music and is a Jazz Composers Present Artist.

"The bandleader conducts an agile, 17-piece ensemble made up of peers, friends, longtime collaborators and even family... Inserto has crafted a program that feels completely natural as big band music and includes five of her compositions. Some lesser orchestrators nowadays

falter when they seize music originally penned for a combo and clumsily rework it with an arrangement that's actually ill-suited for a large ensemble. But Inserto—who studied with Bob Brookmeyer (1929-2011)—delivers a program that gracefully exploits the strengths of big band instrumentation, as evidenced by her two-part suite titled "Part I: Ze Teach" and "Part II: And Me." Elsewhere, Inserto offers a superb arrangement of Jones' "BJ's Tune," providing a showcase for the trumpeter's sumptuous tone. This album strikes the perfect balance between entertaining artistry and finely crafted arrangements that could be studied closely in the classroom." Bobby Reed, DownBeat Magazine, Down A Rabbit Hole Review (2018)

ALL-STATE JAZZ ETUDES

All-State Jazz Etudes Are Now Live!

ETUDES

AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO SUBMIT

JAZZ GIRLS DAY

Please make plans to join Dr. Colleen Clark and her staff from the University of South Carolina for the inaugural Iowa Jazz Girls Day!

Please pass along [THIS](#) poster/QR code to your jazzers.



School of Music
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

JAZZ GIRLS DAY[®]

2024-2025



IOWA
MAY 31, 2025

MARION HIGH SCHOOL
MARION, IA



**SCAN TO
REGISTER
TODAY!**
PARTICIPATION
IS FREE!

JAZZ GIRLS DAY[®] is an
open invitation to middle and high
school girls for a day of masterclasses,
connection, concert and jam session.



Jazz
School of Music
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



MIDDLE SCHOOL COMBO CAMPS

Watch out for emails through your district to register!

Waukee Site: Monday, October 28 (Registration Is Closed)

Iowa City Site: Monday, March 31 at Southeast Middle School

Cedar Rapids Site: April 18 at Excelsior Middle School

REMINDERS



Invite Your Friends To Become Members of JEI!

QUICK LINKS

Past Newsletters

Clinicians

Resources



Stay up-to-date with current activities and future events by following us on your favorite social media channels.

CONTACT US

President | president@jeiowa.org

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Media | media@jeiowa.org

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