

Leigh Pilzer  
Saxophonist • Arranger • Educator

Leigh Pilzer is a Washington DC-based saxophonist. She has led her small group at many of DC's top jazz venues including Blues Alley, Twins Jazz, Westminster Presbyterian, the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Jazz at the Garden, the Mansion at Strathmore, and the Takoma Park JazzFest, to name just a few. She is the baritone saxophonist for the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, and has toured both nationally and internationally with both groups. In addition, she often performs with the National Symphony Orchestra in concert at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and on the orchestra's nationally televised PBS holiday specials.

Leigh is a gifted composer and arranger whose work is in the libraries of the SJMO, DIVA, the Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra, the DC-area premier military jazz ensembles, and college and professional jazz ensembles and brass quintets throughout the country. A number of her arrangements can be heard on recordings by DIVA, including her original composition "East Coast Andy," the opening track on *The DIVA Jazz Orchestra 25th Anniversary Project* (2018). Other arranging credits include horn section writing for recordings by Chuck Brown and Eva Cassidy and orchestrations for the critically acclaimed show *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life*.

Leigh holds a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Composition and Arranging from the Berklee College of Music; Master's degrees in both Jazz Studies and Saxophone Performance from The University of Maryland, College Park; and a doctorate in Saxophone Performance with a jazz emphasis from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. An experienced educator, she has served on faculty at the University of Maryland, Towson University, and George Mason University, teaching Jazz Theory; Jazz Arranging; Jazz History; and Fundamentals of Rock, Blues, and Jazz; and has presented numerous clinics, workshops, and repertory lecture concerts.

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