

Leigh Pilzer  
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## EDUCATION

- 2020 **Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance** with Jazz Emphasis. George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Saxophone study with James Carroll, Tyler Kuebler, Xavier Perez, and Richard Parrell.
- 2009–2012 Coursework while enrolled in doctoral program in Musicology, Music Theory major/Music History minor. The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.
- 2005 **Master of Music in Performance** (Wind and Percussion: saxophone). University of Maryland, College Park, MD. Saxophone study with Dale Underwood.
- 2001 **Master of Music in Performance** (Jazz). University of Maryland, College Park, MD. Saxophone study with Chris Vadala and Dale Underwood.
- 1988 **Bachelor of Music in Jazz Composition and Arranging**, magna cum laude. Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA. Saxophone study with Berke McKelvey, Jimmy Mosher, and Joe Viola; composition and arranging study with Barrie Nettles, Ken Pullig, Herb Pomeroy and Greg Hopkins.

## PERFORMING EXPERIENCE (selection)

- Big band Alan Baylock Jazz Orchestra; Blues Alley Big Band; Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra; The DIVA Jazz Orchestra (national and international tours); Eric Felten Jazz Orchestra; Bruce Gates Jazz Consortium Big Band; Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra; Bill Potts Big Band; Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (national and international tours); Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro UFRJazz (featured soloist and arranger)
- Leigh Pilzer and Friends  
7<sup>th</sup> Annual Washington Women in Jazz Festival at Allyworld (Takoma Park, MD); The Phillips Collection for DC JazzFest (DC); National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden “Jazz in the Garden” (DC); Friday Jazz Funkout at JoJo (DC)
- Carol and Company  
Small’s Jazz Club (New York, NY); 55 Bar (New York, NY); Washington Heights Jazz Festival (New York, NY); Twins Jazz (DC)
- Jen Krupa–Leigh Pilzer Quintet  
49 West (Annapolis, MD); All Saints Lutheran Church Arts Program (Bowie, MD); Anne Arundel Community College “World Class Jazz” (Arnold, MD); Artisphere (Arlington, VA); Atlas Performing Arts Center (DC); Blues Alley (DC); Decatur House “Jazz on Jackson” (DC); Germano’s (Baltimore, MD); Jazz Appreciation Month event launch, Smithsonian Institution (DC); The Mansion at Strathmore “Art After Hours” (Rockville, MD); National Association for Music Education conference (Baltimore, MD); National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden “Jazz in the Garden” (DC); Ovation Jazz Club (Houston, TX); Performance Music Series, University of Scranton (Scranton, PA); San Jacinto College North (Houston, TX); Takoma Park Jazz Festival (Takoma Park, MD); Twins Jazz (DC)
- Major acts Patti Austin; Carmen Bradford; Ann Hampton Callaway; Barbara Carroll; Diahann Carroll; Rosemary Clooney; Natalie Cole; Harry Connick, Jr.; Jamie Cullum, Mercedes Ellington; Michael Feinstein; Nnenna Freelon; Maurice Hines; Cleo Laine and John Dankworth; Manhattan Transfer; Johnny Mathis; Bernadette Peters; John Pizzarelli; Lou Rawls; Martha Reeves; Diane Schuur; Marlena Shaw; Mel Torme; Tommy Tune; Miss Nancy Wilson

## DISCOGRAPHY

|      |                                      |  |
|------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2019 | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>DIVA + The Boys</i>                                     |
| 2019 | Magpie                               | <i>A Tiding</i>  |
| 2019 | Kelly Bell Band                      | <i>Know My Name</i>  |
| 2019 | Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra      | <i>Bohemiana, Vol. 2</i>                                   |
| 2018 | Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra      | <i>Bohemiana, Vol. 1</i>                                   |
| 2017 | Bumper Jacksons                      | <i>Many Paths</i>  |
|      | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project</i>                 |
| 2016 | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>Special Kay</i>   |
|      | Leigh Pilzer                         | <i>Strunkin'</i>   |
| 2015 | Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes       | <i>Bullettes and Friends</i>                               |
| 2014 | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>A Swingin' Life</i>                                     |
|      | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>Macy's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Spectacular</i> |
|      | Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes       | <i>Bullettes Play Basie!</i>                               |
|      | Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes       | <i>It Don't Mean a Thing</i>                               |
| 2013 | Don Junker Big Band                  | <i>Junkyard Dog</i>  |
|      | Bryan Lee                            | <i>Play One for Me</i>                                     |
|      | Magpie                               | <i>Of Changes and Dreams</i>                               |
|      | Ursula Ricks                         | <i>My Street</i>   |
| 2012 | Dovetail Ensemble                    | <i>Old Doors/New Worlds</i>                                |
|      | Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet            | <i>Hustlin' for a Gig</i>                                  |
| 2010 | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>Johnny Mandel: The Man and His Music</i>                |
|      | Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes       | <i>Introducing... Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes</i>       |
| 2008 | Eva Cassidy                          | <i>Somewhere</i>   |
|      | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>Live from Jazz at Lincoln Center</i>                    |
| 2007 | Aelita                               | <i>Swing Around The World</i>                              |
|      | John Blount                          | <i>Better Days Ahead</i>                                   |
|      | Jen Krupa–Leigh Pilzer Quintet       | <i>JLQ</i>   |
|      | Brooks Tegner Big Band               | <i>That's It</i>   |
| 2005 | The DIVA Jazz Orchestra              | <i>TNT—A Tommy Newsom Tribute</i>                          |
| 2001 | Chuck Brown                          | <i>The Spirit of Christmas</i>                             |
| 2000 | Niki Lee                             | <i>Here</i>  |
|      | Dana Bishop Sanders                  | <i>Beyond These Walls</i>                                  |
| 1999 | Lynn Roberts and Big Band “Reunion”  | <i>Swingin' at the Senior Prom</i>                         |
| 1998 | Drums Project on the 3               | <i>Groovin' High</i>                                       |
|      | Lynn Roberts and Big Band “Reunion”  | <i>The Men In My Life</i>                                  |
| 1997 | Eva Cassidy                          | <i>Eva By Heart</i>  |
|      | Bruce Gates Jazz Consortium Big Band | <i>Joyous Reunion</i>                                      |
|      | The Orioles                          | <i>The Door Is Still Open</i>                              |
| 1996 | Moja Nya                             | <i>A Moment In Meditation</i>                              |
| 1994 | Chuck Brown                          | <i>Hah Man</i>   |
|      | Bruce Gates Jazz Consortium Big Band | <i>Forced Air Heat</i>                                     |

## ARRANGEMENTS (performed and/or recorded—selection)

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Big band      | <b>Professional ensembles:</b> Bohemian Caverns Jazz Orchestra; Blues Alley Big Band; The DIVA Jazz Orchestra; Bruce Gates Jazz Consortium Big Band; Shannon Gunn and the Bullettes; Bill Potts Big Band, Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra, Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra<br><b>Military ensembles:</b> "The President's Own" Marine Band; Army Blues Jazz Ensemble; Army Field Band Jazz Ambassadors; United States Navy Band Commodores Jazz Ensemble<br><b>Colleges/high schools:</b> Conservatório Dramático e Musical "Dr. Carlos de Campos" de Tatuí (São Paulo, Brazil); George Mason University, Landesjugendjazzorchester (Brandenburg, Germany); Montgomery County Honors Jazz Ensemble; Smith College; Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Brazil); Universität Kaiserslautern (Germany); University of Maryland |
| Brass quintet | Bayfield Brass (Annapolis, MD); Calliope Brass (New York, NY); Prism Brass (Washington, DC); Quintessential Brass (Boston, MA); United States Army Field Band Embassy Brass; United States Intermilitary Brass Ensemble at the International Women's Brass Conference; Annual Holiday Brass Concert (Baltimore, MD)  |
| Horn section  | Chuck Brown; Eva Cassidy; Niki Lee; Tom Lucas  |
| Show          | <i>Maurice Hines Tappin' Thru Life</i> (transcription of big band arrangements with subsequent orchestration for nine-piece jazz ensemble, music preparation)  |

## LECTURE RECITALS and PRESENTATIONS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 5/2019 | "Gerry Mulligan, Compositional Improviser: Sequence and Development in 'Line for Lyons'," poster presentation, School of Music Gala Celebration, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA  |
| 2/2018 | "Doing Musical Detective Work: Finding and Editing Jazz Repertory Source Material," Beyond the Notes Musicology lecture series, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA   |
| 1/2018 | "Gerry Mulligan Meets Johnny Hodges and Ben Webster," lecture recital, 40 <sup>th</sup> Annual International Saxophone Symposium, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA   |
| 1/2017 | "Writing Thaddish: Evolution of a Big Band Arrangement," 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz Education Network Conference, New Orleans, LA   |
| 3/2016 | "Thaddish: Evolution of a Big Band Arrangement," George Mason University, Fairfax, VA  |
| 3/2015 | "Tribute to Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker," lecture recital, Washington Women in Jazz Festival, Hill-Center Concert Series, Washington, DC   |
| 3/2014 | "The Music of Melba Liston," lecture recital, Washington Women in Jazz Festival Quintet, Take-5!-series, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC   |
| 5/2013 | "The Music of The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, Mary Lou Williams, and Melba Liston," lecture recital, Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra Quintet, Millennium Stage, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC |
| 3/2013 | "Introduction to the Great Women of Jazz," lecture recital, Washington Women in Jazz Festival, Hill-Center, Washington, DC   |
| 7/2011 | "Collaboration in Jazz, Featuring the Music of Gerry Mulligan," lecture recital, Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra Quintet: National Museum of Natural History; National Jazz Workshop, Shenandoah University                             |
| 1/2003 | "Tribute to the Jazz Baritone Greats," lecture recital, U.S. Navy Band Saxophone Symposium, George Mason University  |

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 2019–2020 Graduate Lecturer, George Mason University. Teaching responsibilities:  
**Fundamentals of Rock, Blues, and Jazz** MUSI 106. Developed distance learning course open to undergraduates, course accepted as Mason Core. Music fundamentals combined with history and style analysis of Rock, Blues, and Jazz Music.
- 2005–2015 Lecturer, University of Maryland College Park. Teaching responsibilities:  
**Theory of Jazz** MUSC455/655 (formerly MUSC455/699J) Open to junior, senior, and graduate music majors. Prerequisite: completion of three semesters of traditional music theory. Harmonic analysis and reharmonization techniques. Schenker-style analysis is used to trace voice-leading within standard jazz chord progressions for an understanding of common substitutions. Discussion and analysis of jazz melodic phrasing and ornamentation. An introduction to Jazz Arranging. Fall, 2005–2011.  
**Jazz Arranging** MUSC456/656 (formerly MUSC448N/699N) Open to junior, senior, and graduate music majors. Prerequisite: Theory of Jazz. A comprehensive approach to jazz arranging. Listening, discussion, and practical application of concepts including, but necessarily not limited to, chord scale theory, voicing techniques, part and score layout, and formal construction of an arrangement. Spring, 2006–2012.  
**Jazz: Then and Now** MUSC436 Open to undergraduate and graduate music and non-music majors. A survey of major styles and influential artists in the history of jazz. (Spring, 2008 and Spring, 2015 only)
- 2008–2009 Adjunct faculty, Towson University. Teaching responsibilities:  
**Jazz History for Non-Majors** MUSC123 General education, open to undergraduate non-music majors. Stylistic survey of major currents in the history of jazz. Upon successful completion of this course, the student should have an overview of jazz chronology, be able to describe major stylistic trends of 20th century jazz and recognize them by sound, and be familiar with the contributions and characteristics of significant performers.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2015–2018 College of Visual and Performing Arts, Presidential Scholarship, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
- Fall 2002 Music Theory & Composition Division, University of Maryland College Park  
1999–2001 Jazz Studies Department, University of Maryland College Park

## OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE (clinics, masterclasses, and adjudication)

- 11/2019 Education event: Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Ensemble for students from Hua Ao Primary School, Forbidden City Concert Hall, Beijing, China. Academic level: primary school.
- 3/2019 Guest clinician: “CHiCa Power,” Jazz House Kids, Montclair, NJ. Academic level: mixed.
- 2/2019 **Masterclass:** Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA. Academic level: middle school.
- 3/2018 **Saxophone masterclass:** The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, 38<sup>th</sup> Annual New York State Band Directors Association Symposium, Syracuse, NY. Academic level: middle/high school.
- 2/2018 **Clinic:** “Music Theory & Score Interpretation: East Coast Andy,” The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA. Academic level: undergraduate.
- 12/2017 **Masterclass:** Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, Community Music School of Springfield (MA). Academic level: middle school.
- 11/2017 **Clinic:** section playing, The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, University of Scranton. Academic level: college/adult.
- 3/2017 **Clinic:** “Soloing in the Big Band: Strategies for Success,” The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Beaver Creek (OH) Weekend of Jazz. Academic level: high school.

- 4/2016 **Clinic:** “Soloing in the Big Band,” George Mason University. Differences between combo and big band soloing, considerations involved with and strategies for successful solos in a big band setting. Academic level: undergraduate/graduate.
- 3/2016 **Adjudication:** Young Artist Showcase, Washington Women in Jazz Festival.
- 1/2016 **Saxophone clinic:** The DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Purdue Jazz Festival. Academic level: high school/college.
- 5/2014 **Clinic:** “Listen Here! Effective Techniques for Section Playing and Soloing,” Anne Arundel Community College Jazz Series. Discussion of importance of listening across the band to blend in the section/ensemble context, to comp effectively, and to integrate solos into a big band arrangement or combo setting. Academic level: college.
- 4/2014 **Adjudication:** Big Band Jam!, Washington, DC. Academic level: high school/college.
- 4/2012 **Adjudication:** Big Band Jam!, Washington, DC. Academic level: high school/college.
- 2/2011 **Guest clinician and soloist:** Niskayuna (NY) High School Jazz Festival. Rehearsal of middle school jazz band, high school stage band, jazz ensemble, and studio singers; performance with high school jazz ensemble.
- 3/2010 **Adjudication:** Boyertown (PA) Jazz Festival. Academic level: middle, high school.
- 2/2006 **Clinic:** “Soloing in the Big Band,” DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Frank Mantooth Jazz Festival. Differences between combo and big band soloing, considerations involved with and strategies for successful solos in a big band setting. Academic level: high school/college.
- 6/2004 **George Mason University Summer Jazz Workshop.** Improvisation, Jazz Ensemble II. Academic level: high school/college/adult.
- 6/2004 **Clinic:** “Playing in the Big Band Saxophone Section,” DIVA Jazz Orchestra, New York Summer Music Festival. Responsibilities of the big band section player. Academic level: High school/college.
- 2003 **Washington Archdiocesan Honors Band.** Saxophone auditions. Academic level: high school.
- 2001 **Montgomery County (MD) Summer Jazz Consortium.** Techniques of Combo Playing, Improvisation. Academic level: high school.
- 6/2002 **Baritone Saxophone Master Class,** Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Equipment, elements of style, breath control, and vibrato for jazz and classical baritone saxophone. Academic level: college.
- 1997–1998 **Montgomery County (MD) Honors Jazz Ensemble.** Saxophone auditions. Academic level: high school.
- 1996–1998 **Maryland All-State Jazz Ensemble.** Saxophone auditions. Academic level: high school.
- 1994, 1998 **Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools Big Band Festival.** Academic level: high school.
- 1995, 1997 **Maryland IAJE State Big Band Festival.** Academic level: high school.
- 1996 **Montgomery County (MD) Summer Jazz Consortium.** Arranging, Techniques of Combo Playing, Improvisation, Jazz Ensemble III. Academic level: high school.
- 1987–1989 **Blues Alley Youth Orchestra,** Washington, DC. Selection of members by audition, selection of repertory, ensemble rehearsal, direction of performances at Blues Alley. Academic level: high school.

## AWARDS/HONORS

- 2020 Achievement Award, Graduate Academic Studies, George Mason University
- 2017 "Best Baritone Saxophonist," Jazzies 2017, thedistrictnow.com
- 2016 "Best Baritone Saxophonist," The Year in Jazz, Washington City Paper
- 2014 "Best Baritone Saxophonist" (tie), The Jazzies: D.C.'s Best Jazz, Washington City Paper
- 2013 "Best Baritone Saxophonist," The Jazzies: D.C.'s Best Jazz, Washington City Paper
- 2001 George "Doc" Ross Memorial Award for superior performance in Jazz Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park
- 2000 IAJE Sisters in Jazz Collegiate Quintet Alternate
- 2000 Inducted as honorary brother, Gamma Xi Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi, Honorary Fraternity for College and University Bandmembers, in recognition of having performed outstanding service for the University of Maryland Bands, Fraternity and/or the art of music