

# MESA STATE COLLEGE

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO ►►

## FALL 2010 CONCERT SCHEDULE

### September

17 Friday · 7:30 pm

**Music Faculty Gala**

22 Wednesday · 7:30 pm

**Sean Flanigan, trombone**

### October

1 Friday · 7:30 pm

**Las Americas Piano Trio**

7 Thursday · 7:30 pm

**Kristi Ballif, flute**

11 Monday · 7:30 pm

**Symphony Orchestra**

14 Thursday · 7:30 pm

**Fall Choral Concert**

22 Friday · 7:30 pm

**Wind Symphony presents**

**"Sasparilla!"**

28 Thursday · 7:30 pm

**Jazz Ensemble**

30 Saturday · 11:00 am

**Faculty Woodwind Quintet**

*First United Methodist Church*



## NOT JUST ANOTHER PIANO FESTIVAL

By Arthur Houle

Pianists up to the age of 19 who are seeking a different kind of competition experience are invited to participate in the Festival for Creative Pianists, a unique and highly innovative piano festival to be held in the Mesa State College Moss Performing Arts Center Recital Hall on April 7 & 8, 2011. The festival will begin with a kick-off evening program on April 6, featuring Dr. John Salmon, our annual judge from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, performing solo classical piano repertoire as well as his own jazz compositions with the John Salmon Trio. Complete information about the festival can be found at [www.pianofestival.org](http://www.pianofestival.org).

Thirteen First Prizes of \$100 will be offered for demonstrations of repertoire excellence and various creative skills. Through the generosity of our newest sponsors, Amber and Jay Seaton, we are also offering a very special prize of \$500 to recognize the best original composition.

The festival encourages students to showcase all kinds of skills and genres at the piano – classical music, original compositions, jazz, ragtime, popular music, underrepresented music by female composers, improvisations, etc. Students perform up to 15 minutes of solo, concerto or duet music (any style, of their choosing), after which three judges provide them with constructive written and verbal feedback in the form of a mini master class. CONT. ON PG 4



## **BEST OF THE WEST MUSIC FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY!**

The Best of the West (BOTW) Music Festival will celebrate ten years of great music making when over 180 high school students descend on the Moss Performing Arts Center December 3rd and 4th. The guest conductor, Eugene Corporon, who was the festival's first guest conductor, returns to lead the BOTW Wind Symphony in two days of rehearsal culminating in a final concert on December 4th at 3:30 p.m. in Robinson Theater. Conducting the BOTW Symphonic Band is Sara Wynes, Assistant Director from Cherry Creek High School. The guest artist this year, performing both a recital on the Guest Artist Recital Series and a concerto with the MSC Wind Symphony is Anna Marie Wytko, saxophone. Our composer in residence for 2010 is John Mackey, an award winning composer whose music is performed world wide. His newly commissioned piece he wrote for the MSC Wind Symphony is entitled, "Hymn to a Blue Hour" and will be given its world premiere on December 3rd at 7:30 p.m. in Robinson Theater, with Mackey in attendance. Please join us for a weekend of exciting music!



## **FALL 2010 CONCERT SCHEDULE**

### **November**

5 Friday • 7:30 pm

**Teun Fetz, Darin Kamstra,  
and Rick Kurasz, percussion**

6 Saturday • 4:00 pm

**Western Colorado  
Percussion Festival Final Concert**

8 Monday • 7:30 pm

**"A Brass Menagerie"  
Faculty Brass Quintet**

15 Monday • 7:30 pm

**Student Chamber Ensembles**

17 Wednesday • 7:30 pm

**Mary Lindsey Bailey, oboe**  
22 Monday • 7:30 pm  
**High School Select Choir  
with MSC Chamber Choir &  
Grand Valley Children's Choir**  
*GJHS Auditorium*

### **December**

3 Friday • 7:30 pm

**Wind Symphony**

4 Saturday • 3:30 pm

**Best of the West**

12 Sunday • 3:00 pm

**Holiday Concert**  
**World Premiere with**  
**Gwyneth Walker,**  
**composer-in-residence**





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**FALL 2010  
MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWS****WELCOME  
MSC's Newest  
Music Faculty Members****Brita Fay, pianist**

holds her Master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music and Bachelor's degree from California State University, Fullerton. Fay is the winner of numerous awards and competitions in Los Angeles, New York City, and Western Europe, and is equally at home as a soloist, adjudicator, collaborator, clinician, and pedagogue. Fay was the subject of a music education film sponsored by the Chinese Government, and has served as a collaborator for demo projects at Universal Studios, Los Angeles. In addition to accompanying and teaching piano at Mesa State College, Brita is the founder of Sera Schools ([www.seraschools.com](http://www.seraschools.com)), which serves students in the Vail Valley and Mesa County with after-school and early childhood music programs.

**Barbara Pytlewski, bassoon**

began her serious study of the bassoon as a scholarship student of legendary bassoon teacher, Simon Kovar. She attended the Univ. of Southern Calif. School of Music on a full performance scholarship and graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Performance. While in Los Angeles, she was principal bassoon of the American Youth Symphony and principal bassoon of the Beverly Hills Symphony. She has performed in numerous musical theatre orchestras and chamber music groups and has recorded for National Geographic soundtracks and the soundtrack for the movie "The Son of Mask", sequel to Jim Carrey's "The Mask".

**GUEST ARTIST RECITAL SERIES  
THE MERLING TRIO  
RECITAL HALL • NOVEMBER 12**

The Merling Trio is recognized as one of today's premier ensembles. A truly international trio, it brings together musicians from Polish, Japanese, and Dutch backgrounds. The Merling Trio has been hailed as a brilliantly distinguished group endowed with remarkable gifts of communication, magnificent precision, and an impeccable blend of sound. The trio made its New York debut in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 1993, and was named a finalist for the Naumburg Foundation Chamber Music Award in 1994.

CALL THE BOX OFFICE AT 248-1604 FOR TICKETS

**CALL**800.982.MESA ext. 1604 or  
970.248.1604[mesastate.edu/moss/boxoffice.html](http://mesastate.edu/moss/boxoffice.html)

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Kate Seaton, age 8 (from Grand Junction), made festival history in March 2010 by being the youngest student ever enrolled to win a First Prize. Kate has an infectious ebullient free spirit and is undaunted by blindness. She played one of her semi-improvised compositions, *The Incredible Spies*, on a digital piano (with cool brass settings, of course, to depict her intrepid spies), thereby taking top prize in the original composition category. On the other end of the age and style spectrum, Katherine Leclerc, age 18, (from Glenbeulah, Wisconsin) earned a total of four first prizes for her moving performance of a hymn arrangement as well as her demonstrations of excellence in Baroque music (Scarlatti), lyricism, and classical embellishing on repeats. Two pianists from Fruita each won two first prizes - Jordan Haren, age 12, and Abigail Heaton, age 14. Abigail was also recently honored by the Grand Junction Symphony, which awarded her the first annual Crystal Baton prize and performed one of her pieces. In 2009, duo pianists Alie Yorgason and Elise Peterson collectively scooped an all-time record of five first prizes with their duo and solo performances of Mozart, Rachmaninoff, and Libertango by the Argentine tango composer Ástor Piazzolla.

The genesis of this festival began over a decade ago when I began to question whether the typical piano competition was always the ideal framework to motivate, educate, and validate young students. In 2000, I was put in charge of a festival that awarded a First, Second and Third Prize. The judges had a tortuously difficult time deciding on the First and Second Prize winners; it was practically a tie. After the event, I tried to impress upon the Second Prize winner that his performance was truly spectacular. The student, looking glum and devastated, was unconvinced, especially since he had earned Second Prize in previous festivals. In his mind, he kept falling short of that all-important and singularly validating First Prize. "Will you be returning next year?" I asked. "No," he replied emphatically. His experiences with piano competitions obviously left a bitter scar, despite every effort to convince him that he was not a "loser," and that the difference between First and Second Prize is sometimes virtually meaningless.

For me, this was the last straw. I vowed to either abolish the festival or revamp it entirely. A vision for a new kind of competition began to take shape. It centered on three challenges:

- Could an event be focused more on fostering well-rounded musicianship and less on cutthroat competition between students?
- Could more than one First Prize be offered, for maximum motivation? (The winner-take-all approach works wonderfully for the 'winner,' but what about the vastly outnumbered 'losers?') Do we need a "second" prize, "third" prize, etc.?
- Could prizes recognize more than one kind of excellence? Could a festival validate more than just note-perfect, autonomic performances? Could we encourage creativity, originality, risk-taking and spontaneity as well?

With a two-page blueprint for just such an event in hand, I attended the 2000 World Piano Pedagogy Fall Conference in Las Vegas and enlisted the enthusiastic support of major piano manufacturers to help spearhead the First Annual Festival for Creative Pianists in 2001. By 2003, prizes had reached a total value of \$20,000; this included a piano, which was awarded to Joshua Archibald Seiffer, a gifted fledgling composer who went on to graduate from Stanford University with a degree in composition in the Spring of 2010.

In 2008, the festival found a new, permanent home at Mesa State College. Although we continue to offer many prizes, the main focus is on education and sharing in the joy of making and performing music. Participants are required to sit in on the adjudications of at least three other students. Above all, contestants are urged to develop and showcase their unique talents and perform with individuality, personality, exuberance, and spontaneity.

Judges are carefully chosen for their eclectic talents and ability to provide learned, positive feedback. We assure the participants that they are all winners because of their hard work, enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. The hundreds of video clips posted online provide an excellent snapshot of this novel event. Moreover, the festival's website offers a wealth of educational information (ranging from very accessible to scholarly) on how to improvise and embellish in classical and jazz styles, compose, or simply learn more about the greatest composers of traditional piano music repertory. Online applications are now being accepted; enrollment is open, but limited to 20 students.