



Western
Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

**FRIDAYS AT 12:30 SERIES
CONSPIRATUS BRASS**

Friday, October 17, 2025

12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall and [via livestream](#)

Kiirsi Maunula Johnson, *horn*

Jim Johnson, *trumpet*

Emilie Hsu, *piano*

Blue & Orange (2025)

Green & Brown

Purple & Gold

Cait Nishimura

(b. 1991)

Southern Signs (2018)

James Naigus

(b. 1987)

The Lion and the Mouse (2018)

Barbara York

(1949-2020)

Kodachrome (2024)

Erica Procunier

(b. 1983)

Bushwakker Brewpub (2002)

Elizabeth Raum

(b. 1945)

I. Stubblejumper

V. MacGregor's Wee Heavy

Music changes lives. So do our donors.

Philanthropic gifts from music lovers, like you, provide essential support for the Don Wright Faculty of Music and its students. To help us continue to enrich our community through the power of music, please [consider making a donation online](#) or call Carole Metron to discuss giving options at 519-661-2111 ext. 85695..

Canadian hornist Dr. **Kiirsi Maunula Johnson** is the horn professor at the University of Akron, where she was recently the recipient of the 2023 Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences 'Outstanding Teaching' award. She also serves as a Guest Lecturer of Horn at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM). An active clinician, chamber musician, and soloist, she has performed and presented on national and international stages for the International Horn Society, Ohio Music Educators Conference (OMEA), Music Fest Canada National Conference, and the CBDNA National Conference. Recently, she was a featured soloist with the University of Akron Wind Symphony, and in 2018 premiered Michael Conway Baker's Remembrances for solo horn and brass ensemble at Memorial University, Canada.

An advocate of new music, Dr. Maunula Johnson is co-founder of Conspiratus Brass, which celebrates the promotion and commission of Canadian and American repertoire for the trumpet, horn, and piano. Together, they have commissioned half of the repertoire written for this instrumentation, and through generous grant support, they released their first album of newly commissioned works in April 2020. Dr. Maunula Johnson previously served as the Visiting Assistant Professor of Horn at the Crane School of Music (SUNY, Potsdam) and holds degrees from Florida State University, the University of Cincinnati (CCM), and Western University.

Dr. **Jim Johnson** grew up in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He earned his D.M. in Trumpet Performance from The Florida State University under the guidance of Dr. Christopher Moore, his M.M. in Trumpet Performance from Kansas State University with Dr. Gary Mortenson and his B.S. in Music Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania under Dr. Kevin Eisensmith.

Before coming to The University of Akron, Dr. Johnson served as the Principal Trumpet of the Salina Symphony Orchestra in Salina, Kansas and the Kansas State University Faculty Brass Quintet. He performs with Conspiratus Brass duo, of which he is a founding member.

He has performed with the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra (Tallahassee, FL), Albany Symphony Orchestra (Albany, GA), and Sinfonia Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra (Destin, FL). Dr. Johnson is also an accomplished arranger as well, having his music performed at the National Trumpet Competition, the William Adam International Trumpet Festival, the Kansas Music Educators Association All-State Conference, and at the Haus Marteau Brass Chamber Workshop in Lichtenberg, Germany.

Conspiratus Brass is a versatile brass duo founded by Kiirsi Maunula Johnson, horn and Jim Johnson, trumpet. They regularly collaborate with colleagues on piano in the promotion and commission of contemporary brass chamber repertoire for trumpet, horn, and piano.

With generous grant support from the Meir Rimmon Award and Kansas State University, they have commissioned half of the repertoire for trumpet, horn, and piano, with a focus on works by Canadian and American composers, including Barbara York, Kevin McKee, Cait Nishimura, James Naigus, Erica Procnier, Drew Phillips, and Robert Denham. Conspiratus Brass released their first album in April 2020 on Spotify and Apple Music.

Through regular recitals and clinics, Conspiratus Brass shares the works of contemporary North American composers with the newest generation of musicians across the United States and Canada.

Emilie Hsu is a versatile and passionate collaborative pianist whose work spans performance, education, and artistic support in classical and contemporary music. With a career rooted in partnership and an ear finely tuned to nuance and expression, Emilie has become a sought-after presence on recital stages and in academic institutions alike.

Emilie currently serves as the Coordinator of Collaborative Piano at the University of Akron, where she guides the next generation of musicians in the art of musicianship and collaboration. She also holds the position of staff accompanist at the College of Wooster and Kent State University.

An erstwhile educator, Emilie has taught piano at schools including Aurora School of Music and Ursuline College and worked with young artists at programs such as the Interlochen Summer Camp and Brevard Music Festival.

Emilie holds a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied under Anita Pontremoli and worked closely with renowned musicians including Joshua Smith and Peter Salaff. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of South Carolina, graduating summa cum laude from the South Carolina Honors College. While at the university, she studied with Dr. Joseph Rackers. Deeply committed to excellent music, interdisciplinary work, and supporting vocal and instrumental partners, Emilie continues to explore the boundaries of collaboration, both in the classroom and on stage.