



EDUCATION GUIDE



Friday, September 29, 2017
12:30pm

Tickets: \$5.50 per person

Recommended for Grades 5 through 12

ABT Student Matinee series sponsored by



Alberta Bair Theater for the Performing Arts
2801 Third Avenue North • Billings, Montana 59101
406-256-8915
www.albertabairtheater.org

ABOUT

“Jazz is my vehicle for telling stories, bringing lightness into a heavy world, and making people tap their feet.”

Kristin Korb

There are few bassists who can sing and there are even fewer who can do it well. **Kristin Korb** is one of those artists who make you forget that she is playing the bass when you hear her crystalline voice. Inspired by the days when music was romantic and made you want to dance, Kristin and her trio embody that spirit and carry their audiences along for the ride.

Born in Billings, Montana, Kristin moved with her family to Idaho while she was in kindergarten. Throughout elementary school, she was always curious about music. Kristin studied guitar, violin, and piano. Then, one day in sixth grade, she heard the East Jr. High Mad Jazz Singers. It changed her life. Everyone was smiling, having fun, and moving to the music. They were amazing.

She wanted to be in the band. Being in the band meant that she needed to learn how to play the electric bass.

Kristin’s family moved back to Billings in time for her to start her sophomore year at Billings West High School. By that point, Kristin was on fire with the music and got involved in everything she could from choir to orchestra (bass) to pep band and jazz band (electric bass).

Kristin earned her Bachelors in Music Education from Eastern Montana College (now MSU Billings) and then moved to San Diego, California to continue her studies at the University of California, San Diego (Masters of Music in Classical Bass Performance). While studying classical technique, she was out playing jazz all over San Diego. One night, she met the great jazz bassist Ray Brown and her life changed again. The result was a CD and the springboard into her jazz career that she is living today.

Teaching has also been a part of her career. She has been on the faculty of Grossmont College, Central Washington University, Azusa Pacific University, and the University of Southern California. While on tour, she enjoys spending time with students and helping them have more fun in the music.

After almost twenty years in Southern California, Kristin fell in love, married her Viking, and moved to Copenhagen, Denmark. Since 2011, she has been touring all over the world, expanding her musical partnerships, and loving the journey every step of the way. When she’s not on the road, she enjoys working out at the gym, being the family salad ninja, and hanging out with her family.

Andy Langham - Piano

Andy Langham studied Jazz Performance at The University of North Texas. Since relocating to Los Angeles a number of years ago, he has toured with just about everyone from Natalie Cole to Christian McBride and the New York Voices. Currently Andy is a member of Poncho Sanchez's Latin Jazz Band and can be seen touring all over the world with Poncho. When he's not on the road, Langham can be found teaching Jazz Piano at California State University, Long Beach.

Ryan Korb - Drums

Ryan is the go-to drummer in Wisconsin for all kinds of great musicians traveling through the state. After music school, the Montana native sought out some of the most influential musicians in the country to study drumming and jazz. Drum set great Jeff Hamilton and master Afro-Cuban musician Michael Spiro have been two of his greatest mentors and inspirations.

Ryan has spent extensive time studying music abroad in India and Cuba. Ryan now co-leads the Afro-Cuban drum trio, Africa->West. The trio plays original compositions based on traditional West African and Cuban music. In addition to their residency at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music in Cleveland, Ohio, the group has released four recordings.

As a sideman, Ryan has performed with Aretha Franklin, Frank Sinatra, Jr., Bill Mays, Russell Malone, Byron Stripling, John Fedchock, Llew Matthews, Tamir Hendelman, Valerie Naranjo (SNL orchestra), and Barry Olsen. In addition to drum set, Ryan has performed as percussionist on the touring Broadway productions of Wicked, Spamalot, and others. Ryan has played on numerous recordings and has been seen at many jazz festivals and venues internationally. He is also on faculty at Baldwin Wallace University, Lawrence University, and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Ryan also happens to be Kristin's brother. They grew up playing music together when it was more of a competitive sport than a collaborative activity. They've both grown up over the years, but one can still see the sibling banter happening on the bandstand.

JAZZ IS A TEAM SPORT

Each of us in the band has our own role to fill to make sure the band functions properly.

- Piano (or guitar) – Is in charge of the harmonies. Listening to what's happening around them, the harmony player plays chords at different times to support whoever is playing the melody. As you listen to the various examples, pay attention to how that changes when the pianist plays a solo.
- Bass – Is the heartbeat of the band. The bass player needs to be that steady heartbeat for the band (coordinated with the drummer). At the same time, the notes the bassist plays connect with the harmonies played by the pianist or guitarist.
- Drums – Adds spice to the group. The drummer needs to feel and connect with the bass player's pulse and add to that by selecting various sticks or brushes and playing them on the various drums and cymbals. A good drummer can add loads of intensity to a band without playing loud.
- Rhythm Section – When you put piano (guitar), bass and drums together, they make up the rhythm section. While they can all take their own solos at various times, their job as a team is to support the soloist. It means a lot of listening to what the soloist has to say and respond in ways that makes the soloist feel comfortable.
- Horns, strings, singers: These are the primary soloists when they are in a band. They are responsible for setting the speed of a song (tempo) and what key it will be played in. They can also manage arrangements and indicate when a song starts and stops.

As you watch the video clips coming up, notice how the different groups work together.

- *What verbal or non-verbal cues do you notice between the musicians?*
- *With each cue you notice, what do you think the musician is trying to communicate?*

A LITTLE ABOUT THE CONCERT

The music you'll be hearing is jazz tradition mixed with elements of Brazilian, pop, and folk music. The term "jazz" is a huge umbrella for the many styles that have developed in American music over more than one hundred years.

Jazz started in the late 1800s in New Orleans as African and European traditions mixed. The first blues came from slaves singing in the plantations. The music was used to confront hardships head on, work through them, and

come out on the other side feeling better. Jazz has experienced all kinds of style periods: Blues, Dixieland, Swing (Big Bands), Bebop, Cool, Hard Bop, Free Jazz, Fusion, and more. Regardless of the various permutations that have occurred over time, one element has always been there: **improvisation**.

TELLING YOUR OWN STORY - IMPROVISATION

Do you ever have a melody running through your mind? Do you ever find yourself humming something that you haven't heard somewhere else? You could be a jazz musician.

****Take 30 seconds right now. Hum (Yes. Everyone, at the same time) a little melody to yourself. How do you feel after doing that? A little silly? Happier? Share your thoughts.***

One of the things that makes jazz "jazz" is improvisation - spontaneous composition. As musicians, we take ideas from the original melody of a song and then twist it, bend it, and develop our own ideas around it. It is our own personal commentary on the song we're playing. Because we're playing with others in the band, it becomes a full conversation between the different instruments. Instead of responding with words (like you do when you're joking around with your friends), we respond with notes, rhythms, and even groans or laughs if we hear something we like.

One of the first things I found out about jazz was that I could express myself and my ideas through improvisation. As a singer, you don't even have to put words to it. You just make up crazy syllables and make up your own melodies over what the band is playing. They call it "scat singing". You can sing or play all your emotions in the music. It is an incredible feeling to express yourself this way.

****One of my favorite scat singers is the great Ella Fitzgerald. Check out her version of "How High the Moon" (:23-2:41) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbhp2A7b10s>***

- *Watch Ella's response when the drummer plays a hit (rhythm) with her.*
- *What parts do you think are pre-planned or composed?*
- *What parts do you think are improvised?*

All instruments can improvise. In jazz, we try to blend what is composed or arranged with improvisation. If it is a song you know and you can't sing along with a part of it, chances are that it is improvised.

During the concert: As you watch and hear us play, do you see us looking at each other?

- What are we telling each other?
- What do you notice in how we listen to each other and respond to what we hear?
- Do our responses change based on the feeling of the song? How so?

ARRANGEMENTS ARE AWESOME

One of the things that jazz musicians like to do is take songs from popular culture and then create new arrangements around them to give them a new feel. In the early days, musicians used songs from musicals. Today, anything is fair game.

***Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" can be heard in at least three different jazz versions:**

- **Big Band (Paul Anka on vocals)** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_MzRxDUeMI
 - ◇ *This is a part of a whole CD he did covering rock tunes.*
- **Ben Williams (solo bass)**
 - ◇ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHk5JnEkR8Y>
- **The Bad Plus (piano trio – piano, bass, drums)**
 - ◇ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j2l0HsFyvw>

Listen to the first three minutes of these three versions.

- *Can you hear the original version that connects the three arrangements?*
- *How much improvisation is used in each version?*
- *What's the same about the presentations?*
- *What's different about them?*

You'll be hearing the next two songs during our concert. To get a sense of what the arrangements might mean, it helps to know what the original versions sounded like when they were the "popular music" back in the 1930s and '40s.

Jeepers Creepers

"Jeepers Creepers" was written in 1938 for a movie called *Going Places*. The music was written by Harry Warren and the lyrics were by Johnny Mercer. This is the original version of it from the film. Louis Armstrong (our iconic Father of Jazz) plays the trainer who takes care of a wild race horse named Jeepers Creepers. The only way the horse can be calmed down is by Louis singing and playing for him.

Louis Armstrong (2:30) sings "Jeepers Creepers" to a horse in 1938

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSxshj-tdcE>

- Louis starts off with the verse until 1:35. The chorus (the part of the song that we'll be playing) starts when Louis sings "Jeepers Creepers"

Many artists over the years have made their cover versions of "Jeepers Creepers".

- Can you find a different version of it on YouTube? The horror movie series doesn't count. HINT: Search for "Jeepers Creepers Jazz"
- How do you feel about it?
- What makes it different?
- Are there elements in the music that you like better than others?
 - ◇ Melody
 - ◇ Rhythm (groove)
 - ◇ Harmony
 - ◇ Ensemble (solo instrument or different kinds of instruments in the band)
 - ◇ Recording quality (Does it sound scratchy and old or electric and new?)

Kristin's version (5:20)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBpystjNhdw>
- Besides missing the horse, how is this version different?
- Can you hear the melody within the piano solo (1:46-2:15)?
- What is the interaction of the band? Do they like each other? Are they listening to each other? How can you tell?
- What kind of physical cues do the musicians give each other? What do you think the cues mean?

Don't Get Around Much Anymore

This is a classic jazz tune that has been around since 1940. It was composed by one of the great jazz band leaders and composers Duke Ellington. It was originally called "Never No Lament" but the title changed when Bob Russell added lyrics to it in 1942. This is one of those tunes that you need to know if you're going to be a jazz musician. What you do with the song, however, is up to you.

Here is a short version of Ella Fitzgerald singing it with Duke Ellington on piano (2:40).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmUjmoaR70M>

- Duke takes a short piano solo (improvisation at 1:20). When Ella sings again, notice how she changes the melody and some of the lyrics. (She was known to have a bit of a memory problem when it came to lyrics. Most often, she would improvise around it and still sound cool even when she was actually making mistakes on live TV.)

Personally, I have a bit of a love/hate relationship with the song. It has been done so much over the years, it can feel tired and overdone. For my arrangement of it, I looked to the nature of the lyrics. They're actually kind of sad. It is a break up song talking about how things are different after a breakup and I've stopped going out. Duke Ellington wrote this song as a "happy sounding" sad song. With our arrangement, we changed it from a major key (happy) to minor (sad) and changed the groove from medium swing to a funky feel and a little bit slower (4:55)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f5-O9_sVbE

- Can you hear the relationship between the two versions?
- Do you feel different hearing the different versions? How so?
- Who is improvising in this version? Do the solos fit the mood?

What questions do you have for Kristin or the band?
Email Kristin at kkorb@kristinkorb.com and get your answers before the concert.

