

Bassoons Across Nebraska Bio for Educator/Clinician Events



The clinicians for the session are members of the bassoon collective, Bassoons Across Nebraska, members of the Omaha and Lincoln Symphony bassoon sections. They will present attendees with information about recruiting and retaining bassoon students, troubleshooting instruments and reeds, they will demonstrate proper playing techniques, and discuss appropriate literature for beginning/intermediate bassoonists. The Bassoons can also examine instruments that are brought in by instructors and offer suggestions for repairing/replacing instruments and accessories.

Karen Sandene: An Omaha native, Karen Sandene is an active performer in the Omaha/Lincoln classical music community, playing bassoon and contrabassoon with the Omaha and Lincoln Symphony Orchestras, the Abendmusik Orchestra and the Nebraska Symphony Chamber Orchestra. She also freelances with other area musical organizations and teaches instrumental music in several Title I schools for the Lincoln Public Schools. Karen has led in the creation of several chamber music groups, including the Third Chair Chamber Players and the New Music Agency (an ensemble devoted to the performance of contemporary music). Karen is the co-founder of Bassoons Across Nebraska, an organization created to highlight and promote the bassoon to audiences throughout the state. Karen is also active in the American Federation of Musicians, serving on the board of Local 463 in Lincoln, and holding the title of Secretary for the Regional Orchestra Players' Association, an organization serving eighty-five member orchestras from across the nation.





Dr. Jeffrey McCray: A Colorado native, was appointed as Assistant Professor of Bassoon in 2007 at the University of Nebraska. Dr. McCray is the principal bassoonist of the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. He performs with the Moran Woodwind Quintet, and frequently leads wind sectionals with the UNL Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. McCray holds a bachelor's degree in bassoon performance and a master's degree in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University, where he studied with Robert Barris and Victor Yampolsky. Additionally, he earned a master's degree in bassoon performance from Temple University. In 2007, Dr. McCray completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Michigan State University.

An advocate of contemporary music, Dr. McCray has appeared as both bassoonist and conductor in contemporary music concerts throughout the United States. Dr. McCray regularly performs at the annual conferences of the International Double-Reed Society and gives recitals and masterclasses throughout the Midwest.



James Compton: A native of Long Beach California, James discovered the bassoon in the seventh grade. He received a Bachelors of Music from the University of Southern California and also studied at The Juilliard School in New York City. Prior to joining the Omaha Symphony, James was the Principal Bassoonist for the Oklahoma Symphony. As Principal Bassoonist of

the Omaha Symphony James has been a featured soloist on several occasions, most recently on the 2014 Vivaldi Spectacular, performing Vivaldi's E Minor concerto. Jim also serves on the faculty at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and is a founding member of the group Bassoons across Nebraska.

Joyce Besch: Joyce Besch teaches bassoon at Nebraska Wesleyan University and is currently third bassoon/contrabassoon in Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra. Joyce also performs with Nebraska Symphony Chamber Orchestra and Lincoln Municipal Band and is a member of Great Plains Chamber Winds.

Before coming to Lincoln, Joyce was an active freelance bassoonist in Toronto, Ontario, where



she played with the Niagara Symphony, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Windsor Symphony and Oshawa-Durham Symphony. Among her more notable bassoon performances includes playing "Happy Trails" on the radio show A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor.

Joyce has studied bassoon with Laine Bryce and Carole Mason-Smith in St. Paul, MN; Yoshi Tominaga in Salzburg, Austria; and Linda Harwell in Baltimore, MD. She has received degrees from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota (B.A. Music Ed.), and from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University (M.M. Performance). While at the College of St. Catherine, Joyce was a two-time winner of the CSC Concerto competition, allowing her to perform as a soloist with members of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.



Nicholas Nelson joined the Omaha Symphony as Assistant Principal and Second Bassoon in September of 2016. He has held positions with the Youngstown, Firelands, and Ashland Symphonies in Ohio, the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He has also performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic, Austin Symphony, and l'Orchestre de la Francophonie. He holds degrees from the University of Texas, Northwestern University, and Cleveland Institute of Music where he studied with Kristin Wolfe Jensen, Christopher Millard, and John Clouser respectively.