

# The 2026



**Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

For Middle School, High School, and University Jazz Ensembles, and  
General Public

REGISTER AT <https://music.mtsu.edu/jazzfest/>

**ARTISTS & CLINICIANS**

INNOVATIVE INTERNATIONAL SAXOPHONIST AND COMPOSER

**Jesús Santandreu**

GUEST CLINICIAN

**Chester Thompson**

MTSU JAZZ ENSEMBLE 1, 2 AND JAZZ COMBOS

AND

the MTSU Faculty

Don Aliquo, saxophone

Jamey Simmons, trumpet

Desmond Ng, trombone

Julia Rich, voice

Jon Cowherd, piano

Jack Aylor, bass

Miles Damaso, drums



**TO: Middle Tennessee music students, directors, and general public**

Greetings to you. The MTSU School of Music and the Illinois Jacquet Foundation invite you and your students to participate in the **2026 MTSU Illinois Jacquet Jazz Festival on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

The day long festival is full of outstanding educational components including:

- **Middle School, High School, and University jazz ensemble and combo performances** for a panel of highly respected jazz educators/adjudicators in a non-competitive format, but with comment sheets/ratings, and a post-performance clinic for each band. Past clinicians have included Casey Brefka, Cord Martin, Roland Barber, Pat Coil, Gary Wittner, and Imer Santiago.
- Morning **performances and clinics** by MTSU student combos, jazz ensembles, and area school ensembles with faculty and respected clinicians.
- **11:30 am Performance by MTSU Jazz Ensemble 2**, Don Aliquo, Director
- **1:00 Performance of the Establishment Big Band**, a semi-professional area big band under the direction of Greg Cox.
- **2:15 Guest faculty clinic *the Art of Small Group Jazz Performance*** by the **MTSU Faculty Jazztet**, Miles Damaso (drums), Jack Aylor (bass), Jon Cowherd (piano), Desmond Ng (trombone), Jamey Simmons (trumpet), Don Aliquo (saxophone) and Julia Rich (voice). Topics include soloist/rhythm section interaction, improvising tips, jazz styles, song form, basic arranging, and musicality.
- **3:30 p.m. guest clinic by innovative jazz saxophonist/composer Jesús Santandreu.** A veteran of the European jazz scene, Jesús will discuss his career as a working jazz musician and educator, give saxophone insights, and the details of jazz style and improvisation. For details about Mr. Santandreu see his biography below.
- **4:30 p.m. Awards ceremony** recognizing **Outstanding Musicianship Awards**, an **Outstanding Soloist Award**, and **Outstanding Ensemble Award(s)** selected by festival adjudicators, with one or more ensembles chosen to perform on the Saturday evening concert.
- **5:30 p.m. Concert** featuring **MTSU Jazz Ensemble I**, and award-winning **saxophonist Jesús Santandreu.** With registration, all ensembles receive tickets for students, directors, and parents.

Registration for the festival is at <https://music.mtsu.edu/jazzfest/>. **Application fee is \$250 for Jazz Ensembles and \$100 for each additional ensemble.** For further information, contact Jamey Simmons, [James.Simmons@mtsu.edu](mailto:James.Simmons@mtsu.edu). **REGISTRATION FOR THE EVENT WILL BE OPEN UNTIL FRIDAY, MARCH 6<sup>TH</sup>.**

The festival honors the legacy of tenor saxophonist/band leader **ILLINOIS JACQUET**, who rose to prominence in the 1940s with the big bands of Count Basie and Lionel Hampton. To learn more about the Illinois Jacquet Foundation go to <https://illinoisjacquetfoundation.org/>. We hope that you and your students will join us in this celebration of America's great art form at Middle Tennessee State University. Best wishes for continuing success in your programs.

Sincerely,



Jamey Simmons  
Director of Jazz Studies  
Middle Tennessee State University School of Music  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
[James.Simmons@mtsu.edu](mailto:James.Simmons@mtsu.edu) (615) 898-2724

## Schedule of Events

Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026

All LIVE events occur in the Wright and Saunders music buildings on the MTSU campus.

- 9:00 am - 12:30 **Visiting ensembles perform** in Hinton Hall, clinics to follow in IRH
- 9:00 am - 12:30 **MTSU and visiting combos perform** in Saunders room 101, clinics to follow in SFA 303
- 11:30 **MTSU Jazz Ensemble 2**, Don Aliquo, Director, Hinton Hall
- 1:00 **The Establishment Big Band**, Greg Cox, Director, Hinton Hall
- 2:15 **Jazz faculty clinic and Q+A** - *the Art of Small Group Jazz Performance*, Hinton Hall
- 3:30 **Guest jazz clinic by saxophonist Jesús Santandreu**, Hinton Hall
- 4:30 Announcement of **Outstanding Musician Awards**, Outstanding Soloist, and Outstanding Ensemble(s) Awards
- 5:30 **Concert: saxophonist Jesús Santandreu with MTSU Jazz Ensemble I**, Jamey Simmons, Director, Hinton Hall

## 2026 MTSU ILLINOIS JACQUET JAZZ FESTIVAL APPLICATION

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ DIRECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ENSEMBLE: (big band) \_\_\_\_\_ (combo) \_\_\_\_\_ (complete separate repertoire sheet for each ensemble)

SCHOOL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: (school) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell or home) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

EQUIPMENT: Middle Tennessee State University will provide the following equipment for warm-up and performance spaces:

Chairs & stands – set up assistance will be provided. Guitar & bass amplifiers; drum set (cymbals and hi-hat clutch not included), vibraphone, tuned acoustic piano, and PA system for a vocalist. Risers for trumpets and trombones will be provided in the performance space but not the clinic space. NOTE: Drummers should use their own cymbals in performances and clinics.

PLEASE LIST ANY ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT NEEDS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**REPERTOIRE for (name of ensemble)\_\_\_\_\_**

1. Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Composer/Arranger: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloists (name/instrument): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Composer/Arranger: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloists (name/instrument): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Composer/Arranger: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloists (name/instrument): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE: LIMIT YOUR SELECTIONS TO A MAXIMUM OF THREE WORKS.**

**Please include a personnel roster/schematic for each ensemble with your application.**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE is Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Application fee is \$250 for Jazz Ensembles/Combos and \$100 for each additional ensemble.**

**RETURN THIS FORM AND FEE TO:**

**MTSU JAZZ FESTIVAL**

**MTSU Box 47**

**Murfreesboro, TN 37132**

**Or scan and send to**

**[James.Simmons@mtsu.edu](mailto:James.Simmons@mtsu.edu)**

**FAX: 615 898 5037    telephone: 615 898 2724**

# 2026 MTSU ILLINOIS JACQUET JAZZ FESTIVAL

## INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

- 1. APPLICATION DEADLINE** is Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 2. ENTRY FEE:** **\$250** for one ensemble; **\$100** for each additional ensemble per school. Please make checks payable to MTSU SCHOOL OF MUSIC upon arrival.
- 3. SATURDAY "ROAD MAP"**. After check-in in the Wright Music lobby, an MTSU student will meet and guide all ensembles from arrival to the conclusion of their performance and clinic. Each ensemble is allotted 25 minutes for on-stage set up, tuning and performing and 25 minutes for an immediate workshop with a clinician.
- 4. PLEASE LIMIT SELECTIONS TO THREE PIECES!** Each group should perform works in a variety of styles (swing, ballad, funk, Latin, etc.).
- 5. SATURDAY POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:**
  - Each ensemble will receive an immediate clinic after the performance.
  - Ensembles may be given the opportunity to play as a part of the 5:30 p.m. festival concert in Hinton Hall.
  - Various activities will take place throughout the day, including sessions by MTSU JAZZ FACULTY, Jesús Santandreu and MTSU STUDENT GROUPS.
- 6. EQUIPMENT STORAGE:** Locked storage space for school/personal equipment will be provided. However, MTSU is not liable for any school or student equipment.
- 7. ADJUDICATION:** All ensembles will receive written, and/or mp3 comments and a certificate for participation. The emphasis is upon education. The adjudicators' comments will be mailed to each ensemble if they not picked up after the performance.
- 8. CITATIONS/PERFORMANCE AWARDS:** The clinicians will select students to receive Outstanding Musicianship and Outstanding Soloist citations and will select one or more ensembles to perform on the evening concert. All students should plan to attend the 4:30 p.m. awards ceremony in Hinton Hall for recognition by our festival benefactor Dr. Pamela Jacquet-Davis.
- 9. EQUIPMENT:** MTSU will provide all equipment (stands, amps, drums, percussion, keyboards, etc.) in warm up and performance rooms. Drummers must provide their own cymbals, snare drum, hi-hat clutch, and bass drum pedal. Guarded storage space of school/personal equipment will be provided.
- 10. GENERAL INFORMATION:** All big bands must perform in the "stacked" format. A campus map, parking and food information and a scheduling update will be sent to you upon receipt of your application.

**QUESTIONS:** Contact Jamey Simmons

615-898-2724; [James.Simmons@mtsu.edu](mailto:James.Simmons@mtsu.edu)

## 2026 MTSU ILLINOIS JACQUET JAZZ FESTIVAL GUEST ARTIST/CLINICIAN BIOGRAPHIES



### **JESÚS SANTANDREU, saxophone and composer**

**Jesús Santandreu** stands as one of the most versatile and active figures on the Spanish jazz and symphonic scenes. His career, forged on both sides of the Atlantic, is backed by an elite academic background: he graduated *Magna Cum Laude* from Berklee College of Music, holds a Master's in Conducting from Middle Tennessee State University, and a Master's in Musical Research from the International University of Valencia.

As a composer his compositional voice transcends borders, with a catalog of symphonic works premiered and performed in Brazil, the USA, Portugal, Germany, China, Taiwan, and Colombia. Renowned ensembles such as the Bläserphilharmonie Heilbronn (Germany) and the Dunshan Symphonic Wind Orchestra (China)—where he served as Composer-in-Residence—have featured his work in their programming. Additionally, several of his compositions have been selected as mandatory pieces for national band competitions in Spain, solidifying his place in contemporary repertoire.

As a conductor, his career has led him to lead the Valencia Symphony Orchestra, the Valencia Municipal Symphonic Band, and numerous big bands.

With extensive pedagogical experience, he serves as Professor of Jazz Saxophone at the "Joaquín Rodrigo" Conservatorio Superior de Música de Valencia, where he has also directed the jazz orchestra since 2017. He has been a guest professor at institutions in Portugal, China, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States.

His recording output is vast and highly acclaimed. As a leader, notable albums include *Compendium* (winner of the 2018 Carles Santos Prize), *Out of the Cage*, and *Sound Colors*. As a collaborator, he has participated in award-winning albums such as *Este también* (Best Album of the Year in Spain 2000 and Grammy pre-nomination) and *A jazzar no cinema portugueses* (Best Album of the Year in Portugal 2003).



### **CHESTER THOMPSON, drummer**

**Chester Thompson** is a renowned drummer/percussionist, highly regarded for his ability to move seamlessly between multiple genres. Thompson's known best for his work with Genesis and Phil Collins, with whom he shared the worldwide stage, as well as time in the studio, for over 30 years. Other notable legends Chester performed or recorded with include Frank Zappa, Weather Report, John Fogerty, Santana, Michael McDonald, Freddie Hubbard, Ahmad Jamal, Kirk Whalum, Taj Mahal & Keb' Mo'. He had the privilege recently of recording on the 2018 Grammy Award winning CD called TajMo. Born and raised

in Baltimore, Chester started playing in local nightclubs at age 13. Between tours, Thompson's adventures brought him to live in cities including Los Angeles, London, and his current home of Nashville.

Chester just recorded his latest album, *Steppin'*, at Sweetwater Music as part of their Recording Workshop Series. It was released on May 1, 2019. The album features Alphonso Johnson on bass, Joe Davidian on piano and keyboards, Rod McGaha on trumpet and flugelhorn, and Tony Carpenter on percussion.

Over the past 20 years when Chester was not performing live, doing sessions, clinics, or writing, he spent his time teaching percussion lessons in the Greater Nashville Area. In addition, from 1998-2018 he served as an Adjunct Professor at Belmont University in Nashville, TN teaching drum set and can be found regularly teaching classes at the Nashville Jazz Workshop. In 2008, Thompson was honored with the Sabian Lifetime Achievement Award at the 32nd Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC). This award recognizes the contributions of the most highly regarded leaders in percussion education. Having surpassed the boundaries of musical genres, his performance and recording experiences have influenced over three decades of music and musicians. Chester Thompson currently endorses DW Drums and Sabian Cymbals.

**MTSU Faculty Member Clinicians are found at <https://music.mtsu.edu/faculty-fields/>**