Dear Jazz Educator,

We are excited to announce our 38th annual jazz festival, entering its second year as the **Butch Miles Jazz Festival!** Those of you that attended last year for the inaugural BMJF were treated to a fantastic concert full of special guests that all paid tribute to Butch. Butch Miles was a huge part in shaping Texas State jazz in his 14 years as jazz drum set instructor, and his legacy with the Count Basie Orchestra, Mel Torme, Dave Brubeck, and countless others is something we want to preserve and keep in the minds of the next generations of jazz musicians. We hope you’ll be able to join us as we continue to celebrate Butch and continue the long-standing tradition of Texas State jazz!

This year’s festival will be held on **Saturday, February 7th, 2026** on the beautiful Texas State University campus. In addition to our excellent facilities, including a just-completed renovation to Evans Auditorium, our outstanding adjudicators, clinicians, and performers promise to make this a memorable experience. As a non-competitive event, The Hill Country Jazz Festival does not select winners but does recognize exemplary big bands, combos, and individual instrumentalists with “Outstanding Performance Awards.” We have also added the Butch Miles Outstanding Jazz Musician Award for the top overall performer.

We are excited to announce that this year’s guest artist(s) will be drummer **Gregg Bissonette** and trombonist **Steve Wiest**! Gregg attended North Texas State University, playing in the One O’clock Band for two years. After graduation, he landed the drum gig with Maynard Ferguson. After that he played with Gino Vanelli and Tania Maria’s latin jazz band before landing his most high profile gig- David Lee Roth. Gregg’s diverse career has seen him play with the Buddy Rich Band, Toto, Joe Satriani, Ray Charles, Steve Bailey and Victor Wooten, and Andrea Bocelli, just to name a few. Steve Wiest is a Grammy-nominated trombonist and composer with multiple albums to his name as both a leader and sideman. He started as a young soloist and composer for Maynard Ferguson, and later toured with Doc Severinsen and The Tonight Show Orchestra. Steve is also a distinguished figure in jazz education, best known for his tenure as director of the One O’clock Lab Band at the University of North Texas. While there, the ensemble earned two Grammy nominations- one for Best Large Jazz Ensemble and another for Best Instrumental Composition for his original work, Ice-Nine. He also received a Grammy nomination for his arrangement of Bésame Mucho, featured on Maynard Ferguson’s final album, The One and Only. After UNT, Wiest served as Co-Chair of Jazz Studies at the University of Denver’s Lamont School of Music

Bands will perform throughout the day on Saturday, February 8th in Evans Auditorium and the Performing Arts Center. At 5 p.m., there will be an hour-long clinic presented by Gregg Bissonette. Immediately following the clinic, the Jazz Ensemble will take the stage at Evans Auditorium.

This year we continue to offer an online registration and payment option! The link to do so is <https://secure.touchnet.com/C24322_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=3669&SINGLESTORE=true> and we will have it linked from our website as well ([www.txst.edu/jazzstudies/butchmilesjazzfestival/butchmilesjazzfestival-school-registration.html](http://www.txst.edu/jazzstudies/butchmilesjazzfestival/butchmilesjazzfestival-school-registration.html)). This should make it easier for many schools to control their registration and payment. For those schools wishing to still do paper registration and checks, the registration form is attached! Jazz ensembles wishing to participate in the Hill Country Jazz Festival should **complete the registration and fee of $200 by January 16th.**

In addition to the above activities, **an all-star big band will play a free concert** on Friday, February 6th, at 7:30 p.m. in Evans Auditorium as part of our Eddie Durham Celebration. The band will feature Count Basie Orchestra tenor saxophonist Doug Lawrence, former Frank Sinatra saxophonist Mike Smith, members of the Texas State jazz faculty, and Texas State alumni. The evening will also include a talk by Director of the National Jazz Museum Loren Schoenberg. We hope you can attend bothevents, but **all school performances are only on Saturday, February 7th.**

I look forward to your participation!

Dr. Utah Hamrick

Director of Jazz Studies

utah.hamrick@txstate.edu

**2026 Hill Country Jazz Festival Application Form**

Name of Ensemble: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Represented: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_\_ Zip:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Musicians: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print or Type Name of Director

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Please include the non-refundable **application fee of $200**. This application and fee must be received by January 16. Directors will be notified of performance time by January 28.

Make checks payable to “Texas State University – Jazz” and mail to:

Dr. Utah Hamrick

School of Music

Texas State University

601 University Dr.

San Marcos, TX 78666