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Lawrence University

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# Jazz Celebration Weekend Welcomes Kurt Elling Quartet, Maria Schneider Orchestra

*Posted on: October 26th, 2012 by Rick Peterson*

It's encore time for two multi-award winning artists making return appearances at Lawrence University for the college's 32nd annual Jazz Celebration Weekend.

The Grammy Award-winning Kurt Elling Quartet opens the two-concert weekend Friday, Nov. 2 with the world-renowned Maria Schneider Orchestra closing the weekend Saturday, Nov. 3. Both concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Lawrence Memorial Chapel.

## **13-Time Male Vocalist of the Year Winner**



**Kurt Elling**

No less an authority than the New York Times has hailed Elling as “the standout male vocalist of our time.” He will combine his vocal virtuosity with the talents of the Lawrence University Jazz

Ensemble. In addition to a 2009 Grammy Award for his “Dedicated To You: Kurt Elling Sings The Music Of Coltrane And Hartman” CD, Elling has won the DownBeat Critics Poll “Male Vocalist of the Year” Award an unprecedented 13 years in a row (2000-2012). He holds the distinction of having each of his first nine albums earn a Grammy Award nomination.

This will be Elling’s second Jazz Celebration Weekend appearance, having first performed here in 2003.

“I’m thrilled that one of my vocal jazz heroes will be making another visit to Lawrence,” said Phillip Swan, associate professor of music and co-director of choral studies at Lawrence. “Kurt’s improvisational skill and musical creativity continues to draw me to his recordings and live performances. I’m really looking forward to hearing him collaborate with the LU Jazz Ensemble. The combination of those two forces will create a memorable musical experience.”

Elling’s latest release, 2012’s “1619 Broadway – The Brill Building Project,” pays tribute to the New York workplace where dozens of composers and lyricists generated some of America’s most popular music over the course of four decades.

His prolific career includes collaborations with diverse artists ranging from Chicago blues legend Buddy Guy, seven-time Grammy Award-winning jazz singer Al Jarreau and Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan. He has written multi-disciplinary works for The Steppenwolf Theatre and the City of Chicago and was the featured performer at the Obama administration’s first state dinner.



## **Maria Schneider**

Composer and conductor Maria Schneider's ascent to international jazz acclaim began shortly after forming her 17-member orchestra in 1993. A weekly performer at Visiones in Greenwich Village early on, the orchestra has since become a staple at concert venues around the world, earning 2005's "Large Jazz Ensemble of the Year" award from the Jazz Journalists Association.

### **The 21st Century's Premier Composer for Large Jazz Ensemble**

Schneider, who closed out Lawrence's 2006-07 Jazz Series with a June concert, scored an awards trifecta in 2005 for "Concert in the Garden," earning composer of the year, arranger of the year and best jazz recording honors from the DownBeat Magazine Critics Poll and the Jazz Journalist Association.

An unabashed fan, Fred Sturm, Lawrence's own award-winning composer and conductor who collaborated with Schneider in the creation of "Maria Schneider: Evanescence," a 1995 Universal

Edition text featuring her original scores, calls Schneider, “the premier composer of music for the large jazz ensemble in the 21st century, and her Jazz Orchestra is among the finest big bands in the world today.”

“Maria’s original works contain the most artistic renderings of melody, harmony, orchestration, and structure created by composers in all jazz-related genres over the past decade,” said Sturm, director of jazz studies and improvisation music at Lawrence and founder of Jazz Celebration Weekend. “Her scores and recordings have dramatically impacted the evolution of the jazz composition art form worldwide.”

Schneider’s extensive list of compositions includes commissions by the Danish Radio Orchestra, Metropole Orchestra, Stuttgart Jazz Orchestra, Orchestre National de Jazz, Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra, Monterey Jazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association.

In addition to the two headline concerts, Lawrence will host more than 30 university, high school and middle school ensembles on Saturday that will participate in daytime performances, educational clinics and master classes with some of the finest jazz educators from across the country.