

Jesse Jones

Jesse Jones is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and luthier. His music lurks on the liminal lines between folk, bluegrass, the classical tradition, and the European avant-guard. Described as “striking,...elegant and poised,” in the New York Times, “engaging,...eerie, and well-written” in the Los Angeles Times, “fascinating,” and possessed of “the melodic earthiness of Britten” (New York Classical Review), Jones’s numerous compositions are wide-ranging in style, instrumentation, and affect.

A professional, touring musician in the genre-hopping EZRA Quartet, Jones is equally at home on mandolin-, guitar-, and banjo-family instruments, and also plays various keyboard instruments. He has even been known to sing on rare occasions, usually after sips of whisky.

Jones is featured as both a composer and instrumentalist on no fewer than 16 commercially-released albums, across 6 different labels, several of which are all-Jones compilations. He has appeared with orchestras, mandolin in hand, has been featured at numerous folk and bluegrass festivals across the states, and even played on the nationally-broadcast “A Prairie Home Companion With Garrison Keillor” in the early 2000’s.

Jones has won multiple prizes and awards, including the Rome Prize, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Heckscher Foundation Prize in Composition, and an opera fellowship with Aldeburgh Music’s Jerwood Foundation. From the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Jones was awarded the Charles Ives Scholarship, the Goddard Lieberon Fellowship, and The Walter Hinrichsen Award.

Jones holds a DMA in music composition from Cornell University where his primary teachers were Steven Stucky, Kevin Ernste, and Roberto Sierra.

Jones currently resides with his family in Ohio, where he teaches at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music as Associate Professor of Composition. In his spare time, Jones enjoys building musical instruments, reading, painting, and smoking a pipe.

Jacob Jolliff

Jacob Jolliff was born into a musical family in Newberg, Oregon. His dad started him on the mandolin at age seven and required him to practice ten minutes a day. But after six months of practicing this minimal amount, something clicked, and almost overnight he started putting in several hours of intense practice daily. And this hasn't really changed in the last 20 years.

Throughout middle school and high school, Jacob picked in a bluegrass gospel band with his father. They played festivals and churches throughout the northwestern United States, and became a staple at the Sunday morning gospel shows. During this time he had the opportunity to meet and play with many of his heroes, including Ronnie McCoury, David Grisman, and Chris Thile. Though Jacob was mostly self-taught to this point, lessons with great players such as these kept him inspired and moving forward.

When he was 18, Jacob was awarded a full scholarship to The Berklee College of Music in Boston. He moved to Massachusetts to start school in 2007, along with a lot of the other young musicians he had grown up with. There he studied under the late mandolin great John McGann, who was a huge influence. Under John's supervision, he spent many six-hour practice days working on a variety of styles from bluegrass to jazz to celtic music. In 2008, during his sophomore year of college, he joined the New England based roots music band, Joy Kills Sorrow. Over the next few years the group toured extensively throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, playing hundreds of clubs, theaters, and festivals. Because of the group's rigorous schedule, it was a challenge for him to stay in school, but he still managed to graduate in 2011. Shortly after, in 2012, he won the National Mandolin Championship in Winfield, Kansas.

In 2014, after three records, hundreds of shows, and thousands of miles in a 15 passenger van, Joy Kills Sorrow went on an indefinite hiatus. Fortuitously, as this chapter of Jacob's musical journey ended, another important one began. Within a couple weeks of the band's last show, the young mandolinist got a call from the progressive bluegrass jam group, Yonder Mountain String Band. They had parted ways with their original mandolin player and were looking to try out someone new. Jacob went on his first tour with YMSB in June of that year. He immediately connected musically and personally with the band, and shortly after he became a full-time member. Jacob played with Yonder until the end of 2019, releasing three albums with the group.

Now in 2023, the mandolinist's main focus is The Jacob Jolliff Band. This ensemble is a group of virtuosic pickers that play Jacob's original instrumentals, as well as showcase his singing. They tour nationally in the US and have also travelled to Scotland and Australia to perform. The group has released two albums, "Instrumentals Vol. 1" in 2018 and "The Jacob Jolliff Band" in 2022.

In 2022, Jacob was called on by world famous banjo player, Béla Fleck, to tour as part of My Bluegrass Heart. He performed around the country alongside Béla and some of the very best musicians in the genre: Bryan Sutton, Cody Kilby, Justin Moses, Mark Schatz, Michael Cleveland, Stuart Duncan and Billy Contreras.

Craig Butterfield

Craig Butterfield is professor of double bass and jazz studies at the University of South Carolina where he directs one of the largest double bass programs in the Southeast. American Record Guide has said "Craig Butterfield is nothing short of magnificent. I haven't heard such expressive playing and virtuosic command since Gary Karr. His tone is gorgeous, his intonation rock-solid, and his phrasing expressive and flexible." Soundboard magazine stated, "Butterfield can make his instrument dance and sing with an effortless which is hard to credit. (He must have a bionic left forearm). Not only can he inhabit the range of a cello, but he can make it light and lyrical when needed."

Comfortable in many styles of music, Butterfield has performed extensively as a jazz artist as well as a classical soloist and clinician. During 2004 and 2005, he toured with the legendary jazz trumpet player Maynard Ferguson. As a member of Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau band, he performed in some of the most famous venues in the world, including the Blue Note in New York, Ronnie Scott's in London, and the Bangkok Cultural Arts center as a special guest of the King of Thailand. A week at Ronnie Scott's in London was recorded and released as Maynard Ferguson's final live CD release titled "MF Horn 6." He has been a guest artist at the San Miguel International jazz festival in Mexico as well as the Ollin Kan world music festival in Mexico City, and has toured as a performer and clinician throughout South Korea and Japan. Butterfield has been active in the studio as well, appearing on many jazz CDs as both a performer and as a producer.

In the classical field, Craig Butterfield has performed concertos and given master classes and recitals as a soloist in many concert halls and universities throughout the United States. Butterfield's main performing ensemble, Dez Cordas, a duo with guitarist Matthew Slotkin, has released two CDs in the past two years. "dances songs inventions" is available on Centaur Records and "Gone Away" is available on Summit Records. A recording featuring the Franck Violin Sonata with pianist Charles Fugo was also published by Centaur Records in 2011. Butterfield has been invited to perform recitals as a guest artist at the semiannual International Society of Bassists convention, the American String Teachers Association and the Violin Society of America.

Max Allard

Max Allard is a banjoist, multi-instrumentalist and composer from Chicago. His musical influences span from bluegrass to electronic music. Max's solo debut album, *Odes / Codes* was released in January 2022 and produced by Jayme Stone. He followed that in 2023 with his release of *March Maxness, 31 Tracks in 31 Days*.

From January 2023 to January 2024, Max recorded three different albums belonging to a trilogy project by composer Jesse Jones. They feature Jesse on his own instruments, mandolinist Jacob Jolliff, contrabassist Craig Butterfield, pianist Xak Bjerken, composer Elizabeth Ogonek, and musical polymath Mark Stewart. The albums are comprised of compositions written by Jones, Butterfield, and Allard.

"A new mature and poetic voice on the 5 string banjo. Beautiful compositions and a very nice touch."
—Béla Fleck

Max Allard has been composing and learning music for as long as he can remember: figuring out tunes on his toy instruments, or making music from half filled water glasses or pots and pans. After many years of asking for a piano, he finally got one at the age of six. But Max vividly remembers picking up the banjo at eleven and the guitar a few years later.

Max was hired by composer Warren Leming to reimagine his 2001 album *A Rich Man's War and a Poor Man's Fight* with new instrumentation. Max and his brother Otto Allard arranged the 15 tracks they play on, and they worked to help usher this project through production. The project Warren Leming's *A Rich Man's War and a Poor Man's Fight: Songs and Tunes Inspired by the Civil War* was released in April 2020. Max scored the 2021 documentary film *Hog Haven*, directed by Christopher Beeson. Max's music was also used to score the Illinois Public Media documentary *County Fair*.

Max has performed all over Chicago as a solo artist and in a duo with his brother Otto Allard. He toured the midwest with the Minneapolis based progressive bluegrass band *Barbaro*. Max is the winner of the 2018 *RockyGrass Banjo Competition* and the 2019 *FreshGrass Banjo Award*. In 2022, Max was awarded the inaugural J.D. Crowe Scholarship from the IBMA Foundation. Max has studied extensively with banjo greats including Béla Fleck, Tony Trischka, Noam Pikelny, Alan Munde, Greg Liszt, Ryan Cavanaugh, and Alison Brown, among others. Max is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in composition at Oberlin Conservatory.