



Cassidy Lester is the Executive Director of Symphony of the Mountains. She is a percussionist, educator, and interdisciplinary artist from Kingsport, TN. Since 2021, she has been on percussion staff with the East Tennessee State University Marching Buccaneers. Previously, she was an Adjunct Professor at Northeast State Community College, as well as the Director of Jazz Ensembles and Assistant Director of Percussion at Elizabethton High School. Cassidy currently serves as the Vice-President for the Tennessee Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society and is a member of the PAS Diversity Alliance.

Cassidy's clinic "Reshaping the Narrative: Building a Gender-Inclusive Future for Performers and Teachers," was recently accepted to be presented at the 2025 KMEA Professional Development Conference. In 2023, she presented "She Can Drum Too: Encouraging Gender Inclusion" at the 64th Annual TMEA Music Education Conference. She also presented "Forward, but Not Fast Enough: An Update on the Underwhelming Progress of Female inclusion in Percussion" at the 2022 National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy. Her presentations focused on research from her 2020 thesis titled, *Whence Comes the Lady Percussionist? The Changing Role of Females in Professional Percussion Positions in the United States, 2011-2020*.

Cassidy performs regularly with Symphony of the Mountains, Aleph Percussion Group, Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, and other regional ensembles. She is a graduate of East Tennessee State University where she received a Master's degree in Business Administration, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance.

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