

2013 Season

## Colloquium Bios and Abstracts

### Jeff Albert

Jeff Albert is a musician, music technologist, and educator. He is an Assistant Professor of Music Industry Technology at Loyola University New Orleans, and in May of 2013, he became the first graduate of the PhD program in Experimental Music and Digital Media at Louisiana State University, where his teachers included Stephen David Beck and Jesse Allison. He also holds degrees from Loyola University - New Orleans, and the University of New Orleans, and has served on the faculty of Xavier University of Louisiana and the University of New Orleans. Jeff's areas of research include the intersections of improvisation and technology, performance paradigms for live computer music, and audio pedagogy.

Albert was named a Rising Star Trombonist in the 2011 & 2012 Downbeat Critics Polls, and performs regularly in the New Orleans area, and throughout the US and Europe. In 2013, the Paris based record label Rogue Art released his CD, *The Tree on the Mound*, which features Kidd Jordan, Hamid Drake, and Joshua Abrams. In addition to leading the Jeff Albert Quartet, Jeff is a member of Hamid Drake's Bindu-Reggaeology band, and co-lead the Lucky 7s with fellow trombonist Jeb Bishop. Jeff has performed with many great improvisers, including Georg Graewe, Tobias Delius, Dave Rempis, Jeff Parker, and many others. He has been a member of the bands of New Orleans greats George Porter and Wardell Querzergue, backed artists like Stevie Wonder and Bonnie Raitt, and performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and the New Orleans Opera.

Jeff has given presentations at the conferences of the Society for ElectroAcoustic Music in the United States, the Symposium for Laptop Ensembles and Orchestras, the International Society for Improvised Music, the Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, and the inaugural Symposium on Integrated Composition Improvisation and Technology. His article "Improvisation as Tool and Intention: Organizational Approaches in Laptop Orchestras and Their Effect on Personal Musical Practices" was published December of 2012 in *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation*. Jeff is the founder and chief instigator of the Open Ears Music Series, a board member of the New Orleans International Sound Exchange, and writes the blog *Scratch My Brain*.

### ***Valued Features of Improvised Musical Interactions (or What I learned from my computerized improvisation partner)***

For the fan of improvised music, few things hold the same fascination as watching two people create a musical experience from nothing more than their actions in the moment, and possibly some common cultural or musical experience. What is it about these interactions that gives them value? Why do we like to hear and watch these

dialogues and negotiations?

The Interactive Musical Partner (IMP) is a piece of software, that I developed, that plays musical duos with an improvising human. IMP's musical output is algorithmically generated based on programmable Musical Personality Settings (MPS) and the musical input from the human partner. During a musical episode, all of the communication between IMP and the human is through sound. During the ongoing process of developing and testing IMP, I have learned a lot about what I appreciate in improvised interactions, both as a participant and an observer.

Playing with IMP can be similar to improvising with a human partner in some ways. The feeling I get when the music connects is the same as when I connect with a human improviser. When it doesn't connect, the feeling is much more cold with IMP, than with a similarly unsuccessful interaction with a human partner. Listening to and watching someone else play with IMP is also similar in ways to hearing/watching human-to-human musical interactions. I find myself cheering for certain outcomes, and feeling joyous surprise or disappointment when those hopes or expectations are thwarted in happy or unfortunate ways.

Performing with, and observing others perform with, IMP is an excellent way to discern the specific types of interactions that we value, because they become obvious in their absence. We realize that gentle shadings of pitch are an important technique in our improvised musical communications when we suddenly crave their presence. The confidence building affirmation of a musical gesture played back verbatim seems even more valuable when it is missing.

This case study uses the experience of programming and developing IMP as a platform for evaluating and identifying the interactions that we find valuable in improvised musical settings. It can be presented in standard 15-minute "talk with slides and media" presentation format, or alternatively could include a performance with IMP by the author, and/or other improvisers who may be present at the colloquium.

### **Charlie Bramley**

Charlie Bramley is a 2nd year PhD student based within the School of Arts and Cultures, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, under supervision by Dr. William Edmondson and Dr. Elaine Campbell. My thesis explores to what extent particular models of improvised practice can be thought of as revolutionary socio-musical activism that critiques dominant conceptions of musicality through micro-communities of existentialist-anarchist thought and practice. In particular, significant attention is paid to the role that ideology, power and politics play in these dominant conceptions of musicality. I argue that historically, there has been a strong tendency to want to privatise and contain the musical environment through rigid and restrictive rules for inclusion; that this situation might be getting worse, not better; that various attempts at inclusivity, widening participation and musical 'freedom' have maintained the same core components of exclusion; and that it is only by thinking beyond inclusivity

as a concept that improvisation can begin to make sense as revolutionary socio-musical activism which draws upon key components of existentialist and anarchist thought and practice.

On a personal level, since I have not had any explicit musical training (and have been labelled 'unmusical'), I benefited from a widening participation agenda that allowed me an unusual route into higher education in music. I was then incredibly fortunate to receive AHRC (Arts Humanities Research Council) funding for my PhD study. I would not be in this position had it not been for that funding. I wanted to draw attention to this, because without the initial attempt to widen participation, my voice and my perspective would not have found an outlet within a discipline that routinely maintains exclusive binaries between musical and unmusical. Once within the department of music, I discovered improvisation, and this practice gave me an outlet for expressing myself musically in ways I hadn't previously considered possible. I now perform regularly, and have developed practical workshops and events that promote improvised music and aim to encourage those people who consider themselves 'unmusical' to perform in these groups. I therefore place the most value on socially-engaged research which moves beyond the orthodox domains of preserved academic environments, and in particular, on forms of improvised practice-led research which attempt to unravel dominant conceptions of music by creating open access music-making spaces.

### ***Micro-Revolutions of Unmusical, Improvised Activism in Newcastle Upon Tyne***

This research seeks to offer alternatives to the overwhelming pervasiveness of dominant tendencies within most musical environments to privatise and contain music-making through a stratification of musical knowledge into two clear binaries: 'musical' and 'unmusical'. I will present various case studies of improvised practice and community projects that have emerged within Newcastle upon Tyne that reflect a desire to move beyond this binary and from the narrow elitism of scenes associated with what has patronisingly been called 'difficult music'. At the core of such activism is an attempt to encourage people with minimal music-making experience to self-define (and be responsible for) their musical engagement through a type of improvisation that uses the intersect between free-jazz and free-improvisation as a departure point for an 'unmusical' improvisation that allows the individuals involved to participate in the creation and responsibility of alternative musical knowledge(s).

The overarching concern here will be to articulate an unmusical challenge to dominant musical ideology; how sound translates into 'musical' knowledge and how these interpretations are used to distinguish between those who 'can' and those who 'cannot' in both orthodox and so-called 'revolutionary' musical environments, thus maintaining the stubborn inertia of the dominant musical-social order. The basis for these ideas within discourses around free-jazz arise from a belief that at its most controversial, it holds the keys to a door, that once unlocked, would open music up in a far more meaningful way than anything emerging from the European avant-garde, precisely because it expresses a glimpse of collective improvisation that conceives of

freedom, not as separate from memory, emotion, life, but irresistibly immersed in the connections between living bodies. However, free-jazz is typically subjected to a representative hermeneutics, which assumes that whatever the music says, it says it because of what the musical codes and structures mean in themselves, and from this assumption, lends the conclusion that the social situation of free-jazz musicians is reducible to, and maps directly onto, that structuralist meaning. While I understand some of the reasons free-jazz may be referred to as 'difficult' or 'violent', I think this imposes a representational, structural essentialism that restricts from view what is perhaps the most revolutionary (and socially relevant) characteristic of free-jazz; its irresistible accessibility. I want to argue that it is precisely those elements that are described as 'difficult' (the energetic movement away from structuralist composition) that also 'let me in' as an 'untrained' listener, as opposed to 'easy-listening' jazz, where I am suffocated with codes I cannot decipher.

I feel it is urgent, that in order for improvisation to be considered relevant as a catalyst for social change, or transcultural engagement, it needs to maximise its activist potential for a dismantling of the music for musicians culture that dominates our structuralist conceptions of musical meaning, and realise its possibility for provoking micro-revolutions of 'unmusicals' everywhere. Improvisation's most pivotal social impact is not its elitist insider discussions about its relation to structural musical knowledge, but as a departure point for conversations about alternative musical knowledge(s).

## **Gust Burns**

Gust Burns (b. 1978) is a pianist, improviser, and composer. Originally from Tacoma, WA, he has lived in Seattle for the past twelve years. During that time, he has become known for his virtuosic and critical voice as an improviser at the piano. Burns also performs and composes with custom-made dub-plate records and turntable. For eight years (2004-10) Burns served as director of the Seattle Improvised Music Festival, the longest-running festival of Improvised Music in North America. He now serves as co-director of the festival. Burns co-founded and is a member of Gallery 1412, a cooperatively run music space in Seattle that is dedicated to improvised and experimental music. Burns is currently a candidate in the Music/Sound MFA program at Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY.

### ***review studies: not-listening on stage with non-sounding***

Titled *review studies: not-listening on stage with non-sounding*, the presentation grows out of a body of work I am involved with as a musician, improviser, and gallery artist. I recently exhibited several sound pieces at Gallery4Culture in Seattle.

This exhibition was titled *review studies* and included: (1) a field recording of myself improvising a recitation of record reviews from 1937 and 1939 editions of DownBeat magazine while located in the Chuckanut Mountain Range, (2) an acetate 'dub-plate' vinyl record of myself in a recording studio improvising a recitation of record reviews from a 1968 edition of *Rolling Stone* magazine, and (3) a text assemblage comprised of reviews of records by Cecil Taylor, Horace Andy, and Roscoe Mitchell, the

corresponding record specifications, personnel, and other information, and selections from Thoreau's *Journal*.

The aim of this show, if I can fabricate one (fragmented) aim that attempts to voice at least many of the concerns that went into its creation, was to stage a dissemination of a characteristically not-listening text, through a voice, *into a listening environment*, or, into a listening. By executing this staging or enactment, I sought to get *not-listening* and *the sound of listening* in the same place. Put them on stage together.

At the Guelph Colloquium, I would like to share and contextualize this work as an interdisciplinary presentation. My approach is to summarize the concerns and issues that led to the work, contextualize and connect some of the concepts that inform the work, such as listening/understanding, the environment, silence/non-sound, sound and affect, and share an audio excerpt from the work. The excerpt will be taken from the recording of DownBeat reviews in the Chuckanut Mountains, titled *downbeat 1937 and 1939 on chuckanut ridge and lost lake trails*.

Ultimately, it is my aspiration to begin to offer an answer to the conundrum that Jean-Luc Nancy offers in the beginning of his essay *Listening*:  
*Is listening something of which philosophy is capable? Or—we'll insist a little, despite everything, at the risk of exaggerating the point—hasn't philosophy superimposed upon listening, beforehand and of necessity, or else substituted for listening, something else that might be more on the order of understanding?*

## Rebecca Caines

Dr Rebecca Caines is an award-winning interdisciplinary artist and scholar. Her artistic practice, teaching and research work crosses between creative technologies (including sound art, new media, and augmentation), contemporary performance and improvisation, site-specific art practices, and community-engaged art. She is currently playing a lead role in developing the new Creative Technologies area at the University of Regina, which is an exciting initiative crossing between Fine Arts, Computer Science and Engineering. She is a co-applicant on the 2.5 million dollar SSHRC Partnership The International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI), directing the new Regina Improvisation Studies Centre (RISC). She also convenes the Faculty research group REACT (Research into Art and Creative Technology) and coordinates the Arduino and Technology Crafting Group, a weekly informal drop-in working group for practical technology-based art projects open to Faculty and students. Her recent practice-based research projects include Community Sound [e]Scapes: Northern Ontario, a collaborative sound art, video and new media project in remote First Nations communities (with K-Net Services and Ed Video Media Arts); and The University of Regina iPad Orchestra, a creative project exploring improvised music with the iPad and other tablets and mobile devices (with David Gerhard and Pauline Minevich). She has convened large-scale community projects in Australia, Northern Ireland and Canada, and serves on the board for Common Weal



Community Arts, Knowhere Productions, and Holophon Audio Arts. She has published internationally, including a number of journal articles and book chapters and is currently completing a co-edited book on improvisation entitled *Spontaneous Acts: The Improvisation Studies Reader*, with Ajay Heble for Routledge.

### ***The Shadow of the Crow: Profound Uncertainty in Improvised Community-based New Media***

In 2013, a team of artists from Guelph, Ontario and Regina, Saskatchewan travelled to North Spirit Lake First Nation to collaborate on an online video and audio art project with community organization K-Net Services. K-Net is a branch of Keewaytinook-Okimakanak-KO (Northern Chiefs), a non-political organization serving seven First Nations communities across remote Northern Ontario. The North Spirit Lake visit was the culmination of almost two years of conversations, workshops, video conferences and other connections that brought together artists, IT experts, high school students and teachers, mental health counsellors and Elders from First Nations and non-First Nations backgrounds to explore experimental audio and video practices and creative community cultural development. The project was funded by the Canada Council for the Arts through Guelph media arts collective Ed Video. From the tiny charter plane as we flew in, just for a moment, I thought I saw a cloud shadow shaped like a giant crow, stretched out across the landscape of lakes, marsh, trees and ice below me. The crow is an important symbol across KO communities. Then it was gone, and I laughed at myself, absurdly white and alien to this place in so many ways, seeking for moments of connection through creative expression, trying to make patterns in this landscape that is shaped by so many living practices, ice-roads, traditional trap-lines and walking routes, family and national blood lines and territories, mining and construction plans, charter plane flight paths, absences, and returns. It is a landscape that is also scarred by histories of colonization, denial, exploitation, abuse.

In this paper, I argue that in all aspects of making this project, all participants entered a profoundly uncertain improvisation that was marked, as all improvisations are, by uneven power, social and cultural histories, economics and realities. From our safety net of economic support, expensive equipment, superb hosting by K-Net and communities on visits, and our own privileged backgrounds, the external team worked creatively with our local partners, participants, translators, friends and strangers to explore fragile, fragmented communities and landscapes through improvisatory planning sessions, conversations, soundwalks, listening exercises, audio recording, photography, filming, audio and video editing, interviews, home visits, and community meetings, some of which will be showcased as part of this presentation. In this paper, I map the momentary, collaborative patterns we made from landscape, symbol, story, relationship; trained and inspired as we were by improvising traditions from different First Nations and non First Nations cultures; attempting to “go fragile” (Mattin), to create communities on untenable difference (Lingis, Agamben), and to improvise together under the shadow of the crow, despite, and with, difference and disparity. I argue that this faulty, optimistic project shows that to engage with the improvisatory in both project design and creative practice is to understand difference, error, failure, risk, successful collaboration and hope as complementary

parts of ethical, cross-cultural partnerships. It also demands we take up the problematic, vulnerable state of uncertainty as active, productive and vital.

## **Sandy Evans**

She leads the Sandy Evans Trio and Sextet, and co-leads the internationally acclaimed Clarion Fracture Zone. She is a member of MARA!, The Catholics, the Australian Art Orchestra, Ten Part Invention, australYSIS, Kim Sanders and Friends and SNAP. In 2004, together with composer Tony Gorman she launched the critically acclaimed 8 piece ensemble GEST8.

Sandy's suite "When The Sky Cries Rainbows", recorded for ABC Jazztrack won the AIR Award for Best Independent Jazz CD in 2011.

Sandy has a keen interest in Indian classical music and is a student of Sarangan Sriranganathan. Sandy is currently undertaking a PhD at Macquarie University, researching Carnatic Jazz Intercultural music. The CD Cosmic Waves recorded with Sruthi Laya as part of her research is released in India on Underscore Records. Sandy performed with the AAO Two Oceans ensemble in India for the HinduFest 2012. In 2011 Sandy performed in Sydney and Melbourne with Padmashree Hariharan in the concert "Sruthi".

She collaborates regularly with Sydney-based Indian musicians Sarangan Sriranganathan and Bobby Singh.

With percussionist Tony Lewis and koto player Satsuki Odamura, she co-leads the innovative world music trio Waratah. She is a featured soloist on Andrew Robson's CD of music by Thomas Tallis "Bearing the Bell".

Sandy delivered the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Address for the New Music Network in December 2008.

Her composition Testimony about the life and music of Charlie Parker with poetry by the Pulitzer prize winning American poet Yusef Komunyakaa has been a highlight of her career. Testimony, commissioned originally by ABC Radio, was premiered by The AAO in the Concert Hall at The Sydney Opera House for The Sydney Festival in January 2002. Testimony will be released in the US in 2013 through Wesleyan University Press. She has composed a major work commissioned by the Sydney Opera House: The Beatitudes, for the Sydney Children's Choir, 6 vocal soloists and a 25 piece ensemble of young musicians.

Sandy is an experienced teacher and inaugurated a Jazz Improvisation Course for Young Women run annually by SIMA. She was the director of this course until 2010. She performed in the award winning show, The Theft of Sita, touring with the company in Australia, America and Europe.

She played Ross Edward's Dawn Mantras on the roof of the Sydney Opera House at the dawn of the new millennium. In 2000 she also performed at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics in Sydney.

She is a graduate of the Jazz Studies Course at the NSW Conservatorium of Music. She has also studied in the US, Germany, Hungary and the UK with the assistance of an Australia Council study grant.

She has played with and written for some of the most important groups in Australian jazz since the early 1980s including Great White Noise, The Bruce Cale Orchestra, the KMA Orchestra, Kristen Cornwell Quintet, the Bernie McGann Trio, Judy Bailey, the Gai Bryant Quartet and Jeremy Sawkins. Her group Women and Children First was a ground-breaking ensemble during the 1980s, undertaking an epic seven month tour by bus around the whole of Australia. While living in Scotland in 1987, she played with the saxophone quartet SAXTC and the rhythm and blues band Tam White and The Dexters.

She has toured extensively in Australia, Europe, Canada and Asia. Some highlights have been the Chicago Jazz festival, the North Sea Jazz Festival, WOMAD, the Brecon Festival, the Outside In festival, the Edinburgh Festival, Montreal and Vancouver Jazz festivals, the Knitting Factory (NY) the Wangaratta Jazz Festival, the Manly Jazz Festival, Sydney and Melbourne Jazz Festivals, the Brisbane Biennial, the Adelaide Festival, Jazz Yatra (India), the Sidmouth Folk Festival and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. She has toured Russia, China, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Germany, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, India, Fiji, Western Samoa, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea and Hong Kong. She has been featured in several television programs for the ABC and Scottish television as well as radio broadcasts on the ABC, BBC and WDR (Germany). She appears in the Australian jazz documentaries Beyond el Rocco and Dr Jazz.

She has been featured on over 30 albums.

### ***Meetings At The Table of Time: An Australian Saxophonist and Carnatic Improvisers in Dialogue***

Diverse musical, cultural and aesthetic components converge when jazz and Carnatic (South Indian) improvisers collaborate. How do musicians negotiate the complex web of difference and similarity in improvisatory practice that emerges? Excitement about the possibilities of new sounds, processes, and feelings drives this exploratory creative process. Mutual respect and trust are the foundation for the ensuing improvised dialogue. Spontaneous interaction might take the form of a conversation, an argument, a game, a competition, a challenge, a resolution, a display of skill, an expression of emotion, an affirmation of identity, an expression of difference, a confirmation of shared traits. Improvised dialogue also occurs on a conceptual level between musical systems as musicians decide how, and to what degree, to apply the conventions of their own traditions to the intercultural situation.



This paper explores improvised dialogue between Australian and South Indian musicians through shared creative practice projects from my perspective as a Sydney-based saxophonist. A dynamic translocal site for intercultural musical exchange has evolved from the Australian Art Orchestra's (AAO) 16-year collaboration with Carnatic mridangam virtuoso Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani. Improvisation as a bridge for understanding and co-operation between diverse groups of creative musicians is investigated in 3 case studies arising from this collaboration: 'Cosmic Waves', 'Seven Stories of Dreams', and 'Meetings at the Table of Time'.

In these case studies, musical processes and materials like metric modulation, arudis and korvais (rhythmic cadences), pentatonic scales, and improvisation as conversation in unmetred playing (alap), are explored as surfaces for musical dialogue between Carnatic and jazz improvisers.

My creative practice is positioned in the richly nuanced context of the Australian jazz scene. The absence of a dominant parent tradition (other than indigenous music), and Australia's geographic isolation from the Western world, has arguably given Australian musicians the freedom to explore and experiment without fear of 'much punishment' (Sydney trumpeter Phil Slater in Shand 2009). Australia's proximity to Asia has also encouraged many Australian improvisers to investigate Asian music.

There is a tension inherent in intercultural music between the certainty of familiar materials and processes, and the questioning and reordering of established models and techniques. Through engagement as improvisers knowledge of each other's traditions develops, thereby expanding artistic choice and facilitating confident interaction across stylistic and cultural borders.

Responses to Guru Karaakkudi Mani's performances with the AAO in India last year, suggest that improvised musical dialogue can be a powerful signifier for human interaction and the building of community. 'What the ICE (Information technology, Communication and Entertainment) sector could not do in this country, a simple maestro of music, rather percussion, achieved with a sleight of his expert hand.' (The Hindu, Hyderabad, Kumar 2012)

## **Aaron Heisler**

Aaron Yale Heisler recently completed a Ph.D. in English at the University of Toronto. His essays have appeared in *Modernism/modernity* and *Philological Quarterly*.

## ***Coltrane's Pursuit of Elegance***

By the time of his death in 1967, John Coltrane's status as an icon of the American civil rights era, and of the burgeoning literary Black Arts Movement, was already secure. Following his death, Coltrane, as the public face of the jazz avant-garde, an embodiment of uncompromising African-American artistic self-expression, would become an almost obligatory subject of elegiac writing for a generation of authors that included such influential figures as A. B. Spellman, Jayne Cortez, Amiri Baraka,

and Michael S. Harper. Coltrane's legacy is more and more being recognized by critics of contemporary African-American literature: the current standard reference work, the Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature, includes an entry for Coltrane, affirming his "major impact on literary artists who came of age in the 1960s." But despite his increasingly acknowledged literary significance, Coltrane's own small corpus of poetry and prose has attracted little critical attention in its own right. There has been little by way of effort, that is, to situate Coltrane's writing in specifically literary, or even specifically discursive, contexts—or to limn, for instance, his poetry's involvement with historically and culturally specific issues beyond his music and its oft-remarked "spirituality." This despite the fact that Coltrane's writings were closely studied by those authors who would, in large part, be responsible for shaping the saxophonist's extramusical legacy. To the Black Arts Movement, Coltrane's writings represented crucial constitutional documents of a mission to spread cultural knowledge and cultural action through sound.

This paper will concentrate on the seemingly contradictory ideas about the value of aesthetic form, and its relationship to social and political practice, expressed in Coltrane's published writings—which include poetry, autobiography, statements of artistic purpose, and correspondence. Reading these documents in light of the cultural environment in which Coltrane received his early education, where artistic discipline was promoted as a path to racial uplift, I hope to reveal not only some of the aesthetic and social values motivating his work as a musician, but also aspects of the role he played in mediating the aesthetic values in which he was raised for the generation of artists on whom he had such a singular influence in the 1960s. The productive tension between Coltrane's engrained preoccupation with artistic "elegance" and "positive taste," on the one hand, and his just as strongly expressed promotion of "freedom" as an artistic ideal, on the other, positions him as a crucial transitional figure in the history of African-American art, bridging the institutionalized African-American cultural movements of the early 20th century—such as the Harlem Renaissance—and the more formally radical, politically revolutionary movements of later decades. This tension, so central to Coltrane's historical significance as an artist, registers in almost all of his published writing, as well as in some of his most seminal musical works, such as his famous devotional suite *A Love Supreme* (1964) and his contentious album of Great American Songbook standards, *Ballads* (1962). In revealing unexpected but intimate connections between movements associated with dramatically different historical contexts, these texts can help fill in some of the gaps in our narratives about the transitions that took place at the vanguard of African-American art and literature between the 1940s and the 1960s. And, given the ever-increasing importance of the Coltrane legacy to the ways in which jazz is presented to the public, these works also hold lessons for new cultural movements in which creative improvisation and social activism intersect.

### **Michael Kaler**

Michael Kaler is currently a doctoral student (ABD) in ethnomusicology at York University, working on the development of improvisational traditions in rock under

the supervision of Prof. Rob Bowman. Kaler has been active in the southern Ontario music scene for several decades, performing as a bassist, vocalist and bouzouki player in rock, folk, punk, improv and world music bands, as well as working at Toronto experimental music venue Somewhere There. He completed a first doctorate in religious studies at Université Laval in 2006, and has published widely on gnosticism, early Christianity, the Grateful Dead, and the relations between music and religion, as well as teaching at the University of Toronto, McMaster University, and York University.

### ***Two Streams or One River: The Starfires and Improvisational Divisions***

The Starfires are an improvising folk/rock band from Toronto that has been active since May 2010, and has played a variety of venues, ranging from residencies at experimental music hotspot Somewhere There, to rock clubs, to outdoor festivals. In its origins, membership, and artistic goals, the Starfires represents an attempt to break down arbitrary, if by now traditional, separations in the world of improvised music through bringing together approaches and aesthetic standards characteristic of psychedelic rock and folk improvisation, on the one hand, and free jazz and free improvisation on the other.

In this paper, I will discuss the artistic and social divisions that exist between these streams of improvisatory tradition and their associated communities, as well as some of the efforts that have been made in the past several decades to overcome the divisions. Through discussion of the Starfires' music, the backgrounds of its members, and interviews with past and present band members, I will highlight the approaches that the Starfires have developed to integrate these two imperatives and avail themselves of the advantages of both, in the process modelling for their audience the benefits to be gained through the refusal of artificial divisions of a potentially unified social practice.

### **Mark Laver**

Mark Laver is an ICASP Post-Doctoral Fellow, based at the University of Guelph, researching intersections between musical improvisation and business management. His work is forthcoming or published in several academic and non-academic journals, including *Popular Music*, *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, *SAGAR*, *Discourses*, *The Recorder*, and *Canadian Musician*. He completed his PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto. His dissertation research (funded by a Joseph Armand Bombardier scholarship from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council) focused on the use of jazz in advertising. Mark is also a busy working saxophonist, and has performed with leading jazz and improvising musicians such as Lee Konitz, Phil Nimmons, NEXUS, Dong Won Kim, and Eddie Prévost.

### ***The Share: Improvising Community***

Improvisation has long been an uncomfortable subject for music educators. In a

curricular and pedagogical paradigm that often emphasizes music notation—logocentric performance classes that historically prioritize reading and writing music, and history classes that so often characterize music history as an evolving sequence of notated musical texts—improvisation has often been at best an afterthought in music classes.

In the last two decades, however, a growing number of music educators and researchers have begun to look to improvisation in developing innovative classes and reinventing their pedagogical methods. Much of this work has focused on how curricula and pedagogical methods that foreground improvisation can teach students not only to be better musicians, but also to be more engaged members of their communities. Noted improvisation scholars such as Ajay Heble, Daniel Fischlin, Gabriel Solis, Christopher Small, and others have argued that improvisation can subtend a critical acuity and an ethic of deep empathy towards alternative voices. With this in mind, many teachers engaging with improvisatory methodologies search for ways to bring learning outside of the classroom by developing applied projects that bring students (as well as educators) into contact with communities. Indeed, such teachers and scholars have argued that the improvisational pedagogical ethic demands engagement with communities outside of the traditional sites of institutionalized education.

This paper discusses the use of improvisation-based outreach workshops and events as tools to critique constructed binaries and break down barriers between the university and the community, students and teachers, professionals and amateurs, audiences and performers, and otherwise bifurcated community demographics. I focus in particular on an October 2012 event called "The Share" - a cross-generational community music and dance happening in Guelph, designed and composed by 2012 Improvisers in Residence Scott Thomson and Susanna Hood. Based on my participation in that event and my interviews with Thomson, Hood, and a variety of other participants, I argue that "The Share" represents an innovative approach to engaging resources from institutions and communities: one that uses improvisation to empower and inspire participants, destabilize ossified pedagogical hierarchies, envision new kinds of communities, and enact healthier and happier ways of being together.

## **David Lee**

David Lee is a double bassist, and a writer whose latest book is the novel *Commander Zero*, published by Tightrope Books of Toronto. His other books include *The Battle of the Five Spot: Ornette Coleman and the New York Jazz Field* and *Stopping Time: Paul Bley and the Transformation of Jazz*. He is currently a PhD student in Literary Studies and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph.

## ***A Place Where Anything Could Happen: Improvised Music and Canadian Modernism, 1974 -1988***

A small but intense community of improvisers flourished in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s, years that produced a wealth of original local music and performance. During

that time, Toronto improvising musicians collaborated with other local artists such as The Four Horsemen, The Artists Jazz Band, dramatists Eugene Stickland, D.D. Kugler and Michele George, and dancer/choreographers Claudia Moore, Karen Duplessis and Robert Desrosiers. Toronto musicians also performed with such visitors as Leo Smith, Joe McPhee, Peter Kowald, Julius Hemphill, Barre Phillips, Derek Bailey and Roscoe Mitchell. It was in effect a substantial grassroots movement (which is to say that it was carried out, at best, on the margins of government or institutional support) that reached out to other improvisers throughout Canada, the US and Europe, but it is documented only in a few commercially-issued LPS, back issues of Coda Magazine and many hours of cassette tapes in private collections.

I am interested, throughout these collaborations, in the unity of purpose that brought together artists from different backgrounds, in many different settings and situations with, by and large, remarkably little conflict. My question is, was there a central unifying aesthetic that made these collaborations seem inevitable at the time? In its simplest form, could it be defined as a modernist aesthetic—or in its mix of styles and disciplines, would it be better to call it postmodernist? A historical overview of this time and place gives us a chance to test these terms which are so popular, but which vary in definition among scholars—to see if they are actually of any use to us in understanding what happened.

One key to relating music to a broader historical movement might be the breadth and variety of venues in which it was heard. The Artists Jazz Band, for example, served as a common ground in which abstract expressionist painters and professional jazz and rock musicians made music together, and for years it rehearsed and performed at the Isaacs Gallery, Av Isaacs pioneering space for new visual art, listened to by collectors, journalists and fellow visual artists. Similarly, in the early 1980s such Queen Street West venues as the Rivoli and the Cameron Tavern hosted performances by the performance poetry quartet The Four Horsemen and the improvising musical group the Bill Smith Ensemble, bringing improvised performance to high-profile centres of art and fashion.

Improvised music, for its performers, was seen as a place where anything could happen, but the “anything” varied according to artists, groups and venues. In order to do what they did, what choices did these artists make, and why did they make them? These seem like questions worth asking in order to introduce a study of this seminal period of Canadian musical history.

## **Brian Lefresne**

Brian Lefresne is a second-year doctoral student in the School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. The primary focus of his research is the performativity and aesthetics of African-American artistic collectives in post-War America with specific focus on Sun Ra and the Arkestra.

***"A Spectacle of Resistance": Sun Ra, Bakhtin, and the Carnival***

Concerts by jazz musician and poet Sun Ra and his ensemble, The Arkestra, maintain a unique place in the history of jazz performance. These elaborate performances, dubbed myth-rituals, fuse Egyptian iconography with the distinctive imagery of interstellar space travel; seamlessly blend traditional swing and big band numbers with what can best be described as moments of atonal and free improvisation; and mix synchronous displays of expressive aural, visual, and physical art with the wide array of musical forms previously mentioned. This multitude of signs, references, and allusions has confounded critics, scholars, and audiences for the last quarter of the twentieth-century. In this talk, I will present a critical approach to these concert performances that bring to the fore the possibility of social action and engagement embedded within them as well as contextualize Ra's concert performances within the broader historical narrative of African-American performance practices of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century.

Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, in his seminal work *Rabelais and His World: Carnival and Grotesque*, argues that carnivals function as sites of commentary on and resistance to official structures of power, or in his words, the carnival provides an example of a “a second life outside of officialdom” (6). The carnival is a discursive site of counter-commentary to orthodox discourses associated with officialdom. More specifically, the carnival forms a social space that allows for the formation of new self subjectivity free from the cultural norms of hegemonic power bases. I deploy Bakhtin's writings on the carnivalesque and laughter as a critical paradigm to examine two recordings of performances by Ra and the Arkestra from the early 1970's - a recording from a concert in 1971 Paris, *The Paris Tapes 1971*, and a set of recordings from the 1972 through 1974 Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival entitled *Wake Up Angels*. Through this approach, in conjunction with our understanding of the visual aspects of these performances, I hope to demonstrate that the myth-rituals are carnivalesque sites of resistance where both audience members and participants engage with ideas of social change and agency. Furthermore, through a Bakhtinian lens, I argue that Ra's spectacles of resistance are not cultural anomalies, but instead share deep structural and aesthetic similarities with tented circus shows of the American South, street performances by New Orleans ragtime musicians, and W. E. B. Du Bois's pageant *The Star of Ethiopia*.

### **Roger Mantie and Andrew Goodrich**

Andrew Goodrich currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Music Education at Boston University where he teaches qualitative research, jazz history, directs the Boston University Big Band, and supervises doctoral dissertations.

Roger Mantie is an assistant professor at Boston University, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in instrumental methods, jazz, research, and the history and philosophy of music education. His research interests lie in the area of leisure and recreation and their intersections with music and music education.

### ***Jammin' at the Margins: The Educator's Dilemma***

What does it mean to be an artist? Or rather, what does the word “artist” mean?



Labeling theory holds that identities, both personal and social, are negotiated through language and are a product of the individual's interaction with given communities. According to Becker's (1963) extension of the work of Everett Hughes, the term master trait refers to one key trait that distinguishes people from those who belong in the group from those who do not. That is, the master trait is an effect of the norms of a given community that determine insider/outsider status. Auxiliary traits are assumptions that people have based upon their perception of the master trait. In this presentation we share our experiences as music educators and jazz musicians who find ourselves constantly "jammin' at the margins," leading "mestizian" existences, never feeling at home in the education or jazz worlds, never possessing a master trait in any of the communities in which we circulate. Specifically, we interrogate how, far from being benign, the title or label of "artist" is an effect of power reflecting the desire of a community to further its status and material benefits. Vestiges of the Romantic "artist" continue to generate auxiliary traits such as genius, individualism, inspiration, and truth. The word "artist" can thus be viewed as part of a deliberate attempt to gain prestige, power, and respectability—a reaction against, for example, the artist's former status as a kept minion of the court. To employ the word "artist" is thus to lay claim to symbolic and cultural capital that maintains a hierarchical relationship and a social division between artist and non-artist.

We speak as academics who hold music education faculty positions in a conservatory-style School of Music. As "music educators," we are regarded, to use Becker's term, as deviants who do not conform to the expectations of what constitutes an artist in our community of peers. Although we consider ourselves to be musicians (jazz, classical, other), and we do teach jazz and courses about jazz, the artistic community does not consider us artists because we do not regularly perform in high-profile settings with already recognized "artists." According to normative conventions in the jazz (and music) worlds, it is acceptable (desirable) for artists to teach, but educators cannot, by definition, be artists.

Although there are multiple issues that might be addressed, our presentation concentrates on two. First, we interrogate notions of professionalism, vocationalism, competence, status, standards, credentialing, authority, and legitimacy, attempting to demonstrate how discourses that advance the label of the "artist" (such as holding a "world artist summit"—observe the implicit spatial hierarchy!) sustain an intended relationship that seeks to elevate artists above non-artists. Second, using our own experiences we attempt to illustrate how genuine discussions about social responsibility and transcultural understanding must begin with self-study, interrogating the ways in which various communities generate master trait-like binaries: artist/teacher, player/educator, professional/amateur, improvisation/notation, etc. Are events like the Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, for example, about cultural democracy, where the artistic efforts of all are valued, appreciated, and celebrated, or about the democratization of culture, where experts and authorities (the "artists") paternalistically operate to make the world a better place through "cultural uplift"? We are hopeful that through illustrating our experiences of marginalization we might raise awareness of how all communities are

complicit in structures of exclusion and alienation.

### **Reva Marin**

Reva Marin is a PhD student in Humanities at York University in Toronto. She is currently writing her dissertation, “Representations of Interracialism and American Identity in 20th c. ‘White’ Jazz Autobiography.”

### ***“Went Up Over the Levee”: Stories of Immersion in African American Music and Culture by White Jazz Autobiographers***

New Orleans jazz musician Wingy Manone ends his autobiography, *Trumpet on the Wing*, by paying homage to African American music as the foundation from which his own playing sprang: “I ain’t never been sorry that I went up over the levee and listened to the only kind of music that’s really solid, and caught it. And kept on playin’ it all my life” (239). Manone’s quote exemplifies a pattern found in many of the autobiographies written by “white” (i.e., non-African-American) jazz musicians whose careers spanned the 1920s through the 1970s and beyond—a pattern by which these autobiographers come to understand the need for immersion in African American music and the culture that surrounds it as a requirement for achieving a certain legitimacy or authenticity as a jazz musician. This process of immersion may take various forms, including seeking an African American jazz musician as a mentor or teacher (Wilber 1988; Asher 1992; Shaw 1979), participating in interracial jam sessions and performances (LaPorta 2001; Pepper 1994; Asher 1992), attempting to emulate African American performers or bands through close study of recordings and live performances (Manone 1964; Hodes 1992; Freeman 1989), and living with or among African Americans (Mezzrow 2009).

That such a pattern is discernible within texts that range so widely—in terms of time, geography, and the various styles of jazz with which the autobiographers are associated—is itself notable. But what sorts of meanings may we ascribe to these accounts of interracial experiences at a time during which segregation, either by law or by practice, largely determined the extent or degree of public or private “mixing” between African Americans and whites in the United States? Were these white musicians practicing a form of civil rights activism through their willingness to disrupt, challenge, or circumvent prevailing codes of conduct? As cultural historian Burton W. Peretti suggests in his study of early jazz, “Jazz was a biracial music, but the society that fostered it was violently opposed to biraciality. . . . Jazz musicians did not seek the assignment of hurdling the barriers of race, but they nevertheless were compelled to face them and to confound them on many occasions” (177).

According to Peretti, the white musicians’ passion for jazz, rather than their sense of social responsibility, was the initial and primary motivation in their search for learning experiences within African American communities (209-10). Yet an inordinate focus on the intentions, rather than the actions, of these musicians may miss the point; rather, as this paper will attempt to illustrate, the narratological scope of autobiography permits a particularly rich and nuanced interpretation of the

contribution of these white jazz autobiographers to interracial progress as they recount their experiences in interracial musical and cultural settings.

### **Charity Marsh**

Dr Charity Marsh is the Canada Research Chair in Interactive Media and Popular Music in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Regina. She is also Director of the Interactive Media and Performance (IMP) Labs, which include the Centre for Indigenous Hip Hop and Community Research, as well as the Popular Music and Mobile Media Lab.

### ***Kinnie Starr Declares Sovereignty: Intersections of an Indigenous, Feminist, Activist, and Hip Hop Politics***

“I’m not comfortable being a flag. I can hold up the flag but I don’t want to be a flag.” (Kinnie Starr)

In Fall 2012 Kinnie Starr launched an on-line campaign to raise funds to support the manufacturing, marketing, and release of her new record *Kiss It*. Offering numerous “perks” - everything from digital downloads, vinyl, her book *How I Learned to Run*, to personal yoga instruction, joint songwriting ventures, recording sessions, and private shows - Starr offered a meaningful return for one’s investment in, and support of her artwork, challenging her fans to think differently about the process of producing and releasing an album. Starr explains, “I entered the music business when there was real money changing hands. There’s still real money changing hands, but it’s pretty much at the top tiers now [...] because there’s so little money changing hands in the music business [as artists] we need to be very innovative and think outside the box.”

In this paper I argue that Kinnie Starr’s 2013 album *Kiss It* offers significant insight into the multiple ways that her Indigenous, feminist, activist, and hip hop politics intersect. In this paper I offer one interpretation of how with *Kiss It* Kinnie Starr confronts ongoing systemic barriers in the still male dominated music industry and in particular in the genre of hip hop through her conceptualization of sovereignty. I also address how she challenges conventional music industry models for producing and releasing an album (and the power imbalance inherent within) through the use of a crowdfunding campaign. Integral to this conversation are also the ways in which Kinnie addresses “the pervasiveness of pornography and what [she feels] this has done to the relationship that women and young girls have to their sexuality” particularly evident in the title track of the album. The song “Kiss It” is a significant example which demonstrate some of Kinnie Starr’s public and productive strategies for challenging some of the most prevalent contradictions faced by women in today’s music industry. It is an element that sets her apart from her peers and one of the very things that draws me back to her work again and again. Whether rapping about conflict resolution, sexuality and desire, the water crisis, land ownership and the recent Idle No More movement, or coming to terms with shifting histories and the discomforts and pleasures of living in one’s own skin, Kinnie Starr “transforms [conventional models] to her own use in order to meet her own cultural and political

needs” (Wilson and Stewart). Her music provides a provocative and compelling political commentary on contemporary culture.

### **Kevin McNeilly**

Dr. McNeilly was a coordinator of Comin’ Out Swingin’: Sexualities in Improvisation and Power Play: Improvisation and Sport colloquia held in November 2007 and February 2009 at the University of British Columbia, where he teaches Cultural Studies in the English Department. He published “friend / to any / word: Steve Lacy Scores Tom Raworth” in *Mosaic* 42.1 (2009), as well as numerous essays on poetry, critical theory, television and improvised music. He is currently at work on a study of Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett and the poetics of listening. He holds a doctorate from Queen’s University, and was a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia.

### ***Carnets de Routes Improvisées: Transcultural Encounters in the work of Guy Le Querrec and the Romano-Sclavis-Texier Trio***

Sponsored by French cultural institutions, the improvising trio of clarinetist Louis Sclavis, bassist Henri Texier and drummer Aldo Romano formed in early 1990 to undertake a tour of central Africa, including performances in Chad, Gabon, Congo, Cameroon and Guinea. Other tours would follow in 1993 and 1997. Despite both appearance and funding support, this group wasn’t engaged in officially-sanctioned cultural promotion, but had been conceived as an artistic and cultural project by Magnum photographer Guy Le Querrec, who appears to have wanted to chronicle in images the encounters of European jazz musicians with mostly rural African audiences. Le Querrec had already taken numerous photographic trips to North Africa—in 1969-71, 1978 and 1984, for example—trips that had produced significant images in his portfolio concentrating on both the troubling appropriations of ethnographic image-making and the complex challenges and impediments to transcultural understanding. His work with the Romano-Sclavis-Texier trio, now seen in retrospect, constitutes a deliberate post-colonial cultural intervention, a re-engagement by both aesthetic and documentary tactics in parts of the world from which colonial France had withdrawn. Le Querrec curates this particular tour of leading voices in French free jazz—he is listed on the recordings as a fourth member of the trio, not merely as a courtesy but as an active if tacit participant in the performances—for two main reasons. First, Le Querrec is one of the preeminent jazz photographers in Europe, and several of his collections centre on historic images of canonical jazz musicians. A 1997 show in Paris saw musicians (including Texier and Sclavis) improvising to projections of Le Querrec’s work; the show’s title, *Jazz comme un Image*, suggests how closely Le Querrec links his photography to improvisational musical (and visual) practices, a connection he further clarifies in an artist’s statement for the performance:

*Être jazz c’est avant tout une manière de vivre, de se promener sur le fil du hasard pour aller à la rencontre d’un imaginaire qui contient toujours l’improvisation, la curiosité, qui oblige à écouter les autres, à les voir, à être disponible pour mieux les*

*raconter en manifestant sa propre poésie.*

This complex sense of likeness, at play in the overlap between *rencontrer* and *raconter*, to encounter and to give account, traces itself back in the context of French colonialism and ethnography to the Dakar-Djibouti expedition of 1931-33, and particularly the poetic-documentary writing of Michel Leiris in *L'Afrique fantôme* and *L'Âge d'Homme*, the latter of which in particular focuses on the Afrological substrata of jazz. Second, both the trio's music and Le Querrec's photography investigate the give-and-take, the tensions between re-appropriation and creative misprision inherent in this jazz-based transcultural model. The music on the three compact discs released by the trio (*Carnet de Routes*, 1995; *Suite Africaine*, 1999; *African Flashback*, 2006; each accompanied by booklets collating Le Querrec's photographs from their 1990, 1993 and 1997 tours) does not come from their live performances, which seem (apart from the photographs) to have gone undocumented, but consists of recordings in a French studio after the tours were done, improvised reactions to the photographs as well as compositions that emerged from their African experiences. The "poetry" of imaginative encounter that Le Querrec describes is enacted musically (and even visually) in the extemporaneous negotiations of difference, and the creative troubling of Eurocentrism, that these improvisations offer. Rather than reproduce the exoticism and even nostalgia that shapes late colonial, modernist ethnography, these audio-visual "records" investigate performatively how a transculturalism of shared differences, a contingent community of unlikeness, can be brought extemporaneously into being.

### **Alexandre Pierrepont**

Alexandre Pierrepont is a social and cultural anthropologist, specialized in the internal alterations (at the corner of otherness and togetherness) of the Western World and in the African American musical continuum as an alternative social institution. He is a writer, translator, and artistic adviser for labels and festivals, and also works as a poet with improvisers to create imaginative construction sets for old and new meanings to arise.

### ***The Society in and out of the AACM: "Unity and Diversity in the Secret Garden of Life"***

Members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) have been forming, deforming and transforming a music society since 1965—as a meeting and as a gathering, as a cooperative and as a syndicate, as a brotherhood and as an open and a secret society, as a socio-musical movement and as a school of the world. For all those indivisible reasons, the AACM exemplifies the double space filled by music, both as a social institution and as a social imaginative universe, in the world experience and practice of African-Americans. Based in Chicago, settled in New York, diffuse and diffused in North America and in Europe, through the "Black Atlantic," all along a train of local, national and international inclusions, and a train of associations and organisations, it holds a multidetermined, multidirectional and multidimensional music—a matrix of creativity—in the sonic image of each of its members and their



perceptions, their representations, their invention of reality and multiple identities.

## **Craig Pollard**

Craig Pollard is a practice lead PhD candidate at Newcastle University, working out of Culture Lab and the International Centre for Music Studies. His research interests include identity and self-definition in (and through) art, experimental pop music, and DIY subcultures. Craig makes music under the guise of alright lover and also plays in the minimal punk duo Rice Milk.

### ***Subversion is Fertile: Happenings, Fabulations and DIY***

'The path of resistance to oppressive power relations is not simply through struggle with dominant authorities but also through subversion of the categories we live by, an unfixing of identities and inauguration of a process of metamorphosis.'

If politics is to be understood, not in terms of mainstream political activity, but fundamentally as the way we relate to each other and interact with the world around us, then the way an individual lives their life, and the choices they make, must become inherently political acts. In this context, artists must consider the choices they make in their own creative practice. In this presentation I will consider this issue in relation to artists' interaction with established conventions of creating and consuming music and art. I aim to bring together overlapping themes from perhaps seemingly disparate research areas in order to present a theoretical spine that underpins my own creative practice and offers a means of creatively highlighting and questioning our interactions with conventions of art, technology, and the world in which we exist. In particular I will look at discourses surrounding the Happenings and writings of Allan Kaprow, cultural activity within do-it-yourself (DIY) subcultures, and the lesser known Deleuzian term, fabulation, as referred to in Ronald Bogue's book, *Deleuzian Fabulation and The Scars of History*.

Allan Kaprow is an American artist and writer best known for his association with the phenomenon of Happenings. Happenings were performative and participatory artworks often taking place outside of gallery or exhibition spaces, examples of which range from loosely guided walks through alleyways in New York to the day-to-day task of brushing one's teeth. A principle of DIY culture is that you create your own culture, and as such these subcultures can be defined by their overriding tendency to develop cultural activity that operates independently of dominant culture, and by their readiness to subvert aesthetic values of commercial popular music and other entertainment intended for mass consumption. Ronald Bogue presents fabulation as experimentation with pre-existing forms and conventions of language in the hope of 'destabilis[ing] the regularities of standard usage and thereby set[ting] in disequilibrium the sociopolitical forces that permeate 'proper' speech and enforce the status quo.'

By connecting overlapping themes from these areas, this presentation will fundamentally look at what it means to be an artist in the world. In addition it will consider various forms of subversion as means of creatively highlighting and



questioning our interactions with conventions of art, technology, and the world in which we exist while simultaneously dissecting and destabilising their mediating sociopolitical forces.

## **Nick Sorensen**

Over a period of 25 years Nick Sorensen has gained a wide range of professional experiences working in secondary schools in the UK, including six years as the headteacher of a large comprehensive school. He joined Bath Spa University in September 2008 as a Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership. He teaches postgraduate students studying on the MA in Leadership and Management course and undergraduates on the Education Studies degree course. He is also a jazz musician, playing alto and soprano saxophones, and regularly performs with the pianist John Law. His experience as a musician provides an understanding of improvisation that he seeks to apply within educational and social contexts. His research interests include the studying the improvisational nature of learning, teaching and leadership.

### ***The Teacher as Improvising Pedagogue: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Uncovering the Nature of Teacher Expertise***

One of the principal ways in which musical improvisation has impacted upon our understanding of organisations and the social world is through the metaphor of ‘the jazz band’. In a previous paper (Sorensen, 2013), which has been accepted for a special edition of Critical Studies in Improvisation, this metaphor has been critically evaluated across a wide range of contexts. Improvisation as a metaphor and model for social action offers the potential for democratic and dialogic relationships; where acting ‘with’ is offered as an alternative to acting ‘on’. Furthermore this paper explores the ethical implications, for leaders, when appropriating concepts derived from musical improvisation within non-musical contexts. The paper concludes with the view that we need to go beyond metaphor and argues for inter-disciplinary research on improvisation within musical and organizational contexts.

“The teacher as improvising pedagogue” is an extension of this discourse between musical improvisation and the social world; going beyond metaphor in favour of an inter-disciplinary approach to exploring how musical improvisation can illuminate social action. This paper reports on an on-going PhD research project (Sorensen, 2012) that is exploring the phenomenon of teacher expertise from a social constructivist perspective and based on the assumption that expertise is an essentially improvisatory activity characterised by “the complexity of what we do spontaneously, without prior deliberation, problem solving, interpretation, or other intellectual working out” (Shotter, 1994).

Drawing upon empirical studies of expert teachers in the UK this project uses a grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006) to articulate how teacher expertise is expressed in five different UK secondary schools. In this paper the emergent findings are compared to the processes and practices used in musical improvisation as a novel approach to articulating expertise in this particular social and professional domain.

The author draws on his own experience as an improvising musician to construct a critical dialogue between the practice of jazz and the improvisational nature of teacher expertise, using insights derived from musical improvisation to interrogate the grounded theory that has emerged from the research. The paper provides an understanding of the form and function of ‘minimal structures’, the nature of practice and preparation, social inter-relationships and the ethical and political implications of consciously working in an improvisatory way. This research is interdisciplinary in nature drawing upon a range of related academic fields. These include the critical study of improvisation, the emerging field of expertise and expert performance (Ericsson et al., 2006) and the study of advanced professional development of teachers (Sorensen and Coombs, 2010).

### **Alan Stanbridge**

Alan Stanbridge is an Associate Professor in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media at the University of Toronto, cross-appointed in graduate programs in Museum Studies and Music. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on popular music, jazz history, and cultural policy, and his research has been supported by a grant from SSHRC. He is currently working on a book entitled *Rhythm Changes: Jazz, Culture, Discourse*, to be published by Routledge. In a previous life, Stanbridge pursued a 15-year career in professional arts management and music promotion in the UK, during which time he held the post of Director of the Glasgow International Jazz Festival.

### ***All the Rest is Propaganda: Jazz, Class, and Race in British New Wave Cinema***

Karel Reisz’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) features a score by the English jazz composer and performer John Dankworth, and K.J. Donnelly has suggested that Dankworth’s “breezy and brash music was apt for this foundational film of the British new wave, further differentiating the film from British cinematic tradition”. But the use of jazz in this film, coupled with its key themes—working-class alienation, anger, adultery, and acquiescence—also set it apart from American cinematic tradition, and suggested a significantly broader signifying role for jazz in the movies.

In American movies of the 1950s and early 1960s, the use of jazz, whether as source or soundtrack music, tended to serve a preassigned semiotic role. Most often, jazz connoted the seamy underbelly of contemporary life, and the music became the ubiquitous soundtrack for movies featuring criminality and drug addiction. Jazz also served a similar function in an endless parade of police, detective, and private eye television series. But if the nature and character of the jazz and jazz-inspired music employed in American films became increasingly codified along the lines established by composers such as Henry Mancini and Elmer Bernstein, an examination of the music employed in British films of the same era reveals a considerably wider musical and semiotic range, and a willingness on the part of British composers to move beyond these American archetypes.

In addition to the prominent role of jazz in feature films such as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *Look Back in Anger* (1959), the extended semiotic potential is similarly evident in some of the early work in the Free Cinema documentary movement, which preceded, influenced, and, indeed, involved, many of the British New Wave film-makers, most notably Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson. In documentaries such as *Momma Don't Allow* (1956) and *We Are the Lambeth Boys* (1959), the latter featuring Dankworth's first film score, jazz occupies a unique—and uniquely British—role.

But Dankworth was not alone in exploring the broader possibilities afforded jazz in the British context, and the work of the neglected English composer Philip Green is similarly relevant here. Some of Green's most memorable work was with the directors Basil Dearden and Roy Ward Baker, and he employs jazz in a manner that offers a fascinating alternative to American stereotypes, encompassing issues of race and class in the context of the 'social problem' film and melodrama. In Dearden's *Sapphire* (1959), Green's music for the John Dankworth Orchestra accompanies a powerful story of racial bigotry in 1950s London; and in Baker's *Flame in the Streets* (1961)—another striking racial drama—Green offers a considerably more nuanced use of jazz than we hear in many American movies.

One immediate question in the British New Wave context is: "Why jazz?". Why jazz to accompany these peculiarly English, kitchen-sink dramas? Why jazz as the soundtrack to these films that confront racial and class-based tensions in an unblinking manner that still remains powerful today? In this paper, I address these questions in more detail, arguing that these distinctively English films represent a significant—and significantly political—break with the often firmly circumscribed role of jazz in dominant American models.

### **Marcel Swiboda**

Marcel Swiboda teaches in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds, UK and researches on topics in contemporary philosophy, improvisation studies and the cultural theory of technology and media, as well as the trans-disciplinary connections and crossovers between these fields.

### ***Dialoguing the Present: Improvisation and Collective 'Transformation' as Critical Responses to Contemporary Malaises***

In a recent book, published in translation as *What Makes Life Worth Living*, the philosopher Bernard Stiegler seeks to respond to many of the social, ethical and political challenges facing the contemporary moment through a renewal of the activity of dialogue:

Logos is always a dia-logos within which those who enter the dialogue co-individuate themselves—trans-form themselves, learn something—by dia-logging. This co-individuation can result in discord, in which case each participant is individuated with

the other, but against the other—as occurs, for example, in a game of tennis or chess. But co-individuation can also result in accord or agreement, in which case it enables the production of a concept that is shared by the interlocutors, who thus together produce a new locution through which they agree on a meaning [...].

Couched in the idiomatic language of French philosophy, Stiegler's point is ostensibly complex but in a certain sense is also quite simple: to exist as a human individual in the world always consists in a collective activity of 'dia-loguing'. Thus dialogical activity has the potential to initiate a process of collective 'trans-formation' and the 'discord'/'accord' dynamic that characterises dialogue as described here is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in improvisation-based activities, yet this area of activity is not anything that this philosopher explicitly invokes in his own attempts to characterise his understanding of 'co-individuation'.

This paper proposes to critically consider this return to dialogical activity as a mode of intellectual practice whose critical potential can be found embodied in musical improvisation-based practices, as well as in less specialised instances of everyday improvisation, for example, in conversation, or dialogue in its quotidian sense. The aim of the paper will hereby be to engage the cross-hatchings between improvisation and philosophy as areas of activity that are charged with a critical potential which is not limited to the rarified discourses associated with academic theorising per se, with a mind to establishing the common notions shared by these reciprocal and often overlapping modes of activity, as part of academic discourse but also, crucially, as facets of lived experience.

The need for such an engagement at this time is indicated by the myriad challenges leading to the systematic appropriation of the collective dialogical character of social being and also of the language of 'creativity', 'concepts' and 'culture', engendered by neoliberal global capitalism. This need is reemphasized by the corporatisation of educational institutions that subscribe to the agendas associated with neoliberal ideologies. As such this paper will seek to outline some of the possible ways in which the previously modes of practice-based activity—with reference to recent work in philosophy and improvisation studies - might be considered alongside each other as providing vehicles for new forms of concrete, participatory and critical engagement, with the potential to generate new discursive possibilities and with these the potential to meet some the impasses of the present through collective practical and intellectual 'trans-formation'.

### **Kimberly Teal**

Kimberly Hannon Teal earned her Ph.D. in historical musicology from the Eastman School of Music in 2012 where she also taught music history courses during the 2012-2013 academic year. Her research interests include jazz, improvisation, and the intersection of music and dance, especially as these issues relate to the process and experience of live performance. She currently works as the assistant editor for *Ethnomusicology*, the journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology.

### ***Outsiders Looking Out: The Stone and the Maintenance of Marginality***

This paper describes avant-garde icon John Zorn's New York City performance space, the Stone, as a musical space that is intentionally and persistently marginal. It examines the site's culture and aesthetic as based in a series of knowingly unresolved tensions between conflicting value sets, effectively locating the space on boundary lines that normally separate musical culture into more easily identifiable genres or camps. The combined effect of the Stone's physical space and policies is the creation of a venue that allows the transgressive margins valued by Zorn and his community to be acted out musically and socially. In particular, the creation of a space between the borders of tradition and radicalism is stretched through a constant play between looking to the past for inspiration and the desire to break new ground. The boundaries of community are another point of tension that defines the Stone, as issues of inclusivity and exclusivity are regularly in conflict. Finally, music at the Stone and the space itself are in a carefully constructed balancing act between the realms of visibility and disappearance as the musicians there strive to maintain a place for their work without letting it move inward from the experimental margins of the dominant culture. Considered in the light of performance theories by Peggy Phelan and Judith Butler, the cultural space the Stone ultimately occupies proves to be both rich with expressive potential and irreconcilably cut off from paths that would connect that potential to mainstream musical culture or the broader jazz community.

### **Chris Tonelli**

Dr. Chris Tonelli has held the positions of Visiting Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology and Popular Music Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Visiting Lecturer in Contemporary Music and Culture at the New Zealand School of Music. He completed his doctoral work at the University of California in their Critical Studies and Experimental Practices in Music program. He is interested in the theorization of musical imitation, transnational flows of music into and from Japan, and theories of the voice, particularly those related to unconventional vocality. He has been an active improvising soundsinger and sound poet for over a decade, performing solo and collaboratively in Canada, the U.S., Mexico, New Zealand, and Japan. In September 2013, he will join the Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice Project as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Guelph.

### ***Improvised Soundsinging and the Police***

This paper is a reflection on moments in my history as improvising vocalist when I have felt audience members have made attempts to police my musical practice. In the philosophical framework set out in the work of Jacques Rancière, "to police" is to divide the world into realms of sayable and unsayable, visible and invisible, discourse and noise. Rancière writes: "[t]he essence of the police lies neither in repression nor even in control over the living. Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible." (Dissensus On Politics and Aesthetics, 36). I have been an active soundsinger since 2000, and on a number of occasions I have been witness to attempts to mark the sounds soundsingers employ as belonging entirely and exclusively to the domain of the

non-human. Differently stated, listeners exposed to improvised soundsinging sometimes respond with efforts to perform to others their understanding that the sensible should be divided up in a manner where the sounds of soundsinging emerge only from the bodies of animals and not the bodies of humans.

It will be the aim of this paper to unpack and theorize these performances that listeners engage in following their exposure to the sights and sounds of improvised soundsinging. I will argue that these performances have something to tell us about the power of improvised music to engage in political acts, in Rancière's sense of "politics." Rancière is highly critical of many artists' claims regarding the political nature of their work and he argues against those who qualify art as political through the content or intention of the work. Instead, he posits that art becomes politics through events of reception wherein the art encountered presents a new logic of the sensible that contradicts the dominant logic. I contend that the performances I have seen listeners engage in after hearing improvised soundsinging are demonstrations of the processes Rancière points to in his work. The labour these listeners engage in is police labour that tries to repair a fractured experience of the sensible. By (re)articulating the sounds soundsingers produced as the domain of the animal, they attempt to restore a universal order of the sensible and the symbolic that the improvisational soundsinging performance cracked in two. I will argue that what compels these listeners to go out of their way to engage in these forms of counter-performance is their desire to protect a hegemonic order of the sensible. As such, I will argue that these counter-performances are evidence that something truly political, in Rancière's sense, has occurred through the forces of musical improvisation.

Further, I will discuss Rancière's definition of politics in relation to the Foucauldian understanding and argue that though Rancière's sense may not involve actual changes in the distribution of power in a given context, distributions of the sensible are essential components in the determination of how power changes hands. As such, when improvisers convince audiences that their sounds belong to the realm of the sayable, against those audiences' "better" judgements, politics in both philosophers' sense of the term is enacted.

### **Matt Valnes**

I earned my PhD in music at the University of Pennsylvania in 2012. My research focuses on improvisation and live performance, with a particular concentration on groove-based musics. I have presented my research at national and international conferences. In my work I argue that the sonic interactions that take place during improvisation are also social and cultural interactions that can provide deeper insight into larger historical and socio-political circumstances.

### ***Sounds of the Afrofuture: Improvisation and Technology in 1970s Popular Music***

This paper explores the use of what composer and scholar George Lewis calls "real-time music technologies" in 1970s improvisatory musics. During this time, musicians,



writers, and other artists of black culture began to incorporate extraterrestrial and science fiction themes into their recorded output and live performances, a practice that became known as Afrofuturism. Sonically, musicians combined these themes with the new sound possibilities afforded by technological developments in electronic instruments. While scholarship has productively explored Afrofuturistic themes as forms of resistance and identity formation, scholars have largely neglected how musicians incorporated these new sounds into their compositions and improvisations. In this paper I argue that the use of these technologies accomplished at least two things: it complicated reified genre categories by questioning what black popular music could sound like; more importantly, however, it highlighted how musicians integrated these new sounds into what Lewis calls an “Afrological” perspective of improvisation, combining technological developments with historically collaborative and communicative forms of music making.

Scholars of Afrofuturism note that its critical power comes from the juxtaposition of two seemingly incommensurate elements: technological advancements, frequently coded as “white,” and black artists and black cultural production. However, as musicologist J. Griffith Rollefson argues, this juxtaposition can turn into reification if the historical contexts that give rise to the representation of technologies as “white,” and “blackness” as an assumed stable identity are not also critiqued. In this paper I expand his framework to argue that improvising musicians utilized myriad sound possibilities created by new music technologies to articulate the intimate relationship between Afro-diasporic musical practices and technological developments. The output of Sun Ra and George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic are useful in this regard. In the 1970s, the Afrofuturistic works *Space is the Place* and *It's After the End of the World* by Sun Ra, and *Mothership Connection* and *Funkentelechy vs. The Placebo Syndrome* by Parliament Funkadelic were released. These recordings coincided with the increased presence of electronic instruments, particularly Moog synthesizers, in a variety of musical practices. In “Space is the Place,” the title track from that album, Ra integrates improvised lines performed by electronic instruments over a repeated ostinato bass line, a common feature in Afro-diasporic musics. In “Myth Versus Reality (The Myth-Science Approach),” Ra’s extended solo on a Minimoog synthesizer functions as a sonic analogue that negotiates between standard conceptions of “myth” and “reality.” Similarly, Parliament Funkadelic keyboardist Bernie Worrell weaves improvised lines of his Minimoog synthesizer as a way to complicate, and in some cases reject, perceived generic conceptions of funk on *Mothership Connection*. Later, in the piece “Flashlight,” he *replaces* the standard repeating bass line with an improvised line on the Minimoog synthesizer. Each ensemble expanded the sonic palette of black popular music through the integration of electronic instruments, while also firmly connecting their performances to the Afro-diasporic tradition of interactive and collaborative performance. Furthermore, they provide insight into the role technology and improvisation play in the Afrofuture.

## Sara Villa

Sara Villa is an ICASP Postdoctoral fellow at CREUM Université de Montreal with a

research project focused on the influence of jazz improvisatory practices on the Beat Generation poetics. In 2008-2010 she was a research fellow in a joint program between Columbia University's Center for Jazz Studies and the University of Milan, where she received her PhD in 2008. She is the translator into Italian of *Windblown World: The Journals of Jack Kerouac 1947-1954*, and the editor of a forthcoming collection of Kerouac's jazz writings. She has published articles on Virginia Woolf, Anglo-American Cinema and Jack Kerouac, and she collaborates with the jazz magazines *All About Jazz*, *All About Jazz Italia* and *Musica Jazz*. Her monographic volume dedicated to the film adaptation of Woolf's *Orlando* (*I due Orlando: Le poetiche androgine del romanzo woolfiano e dell'adattamento cinematografico*) is published by CUEM, Milan. Her main interests are focused on the poetics and politics of gender, and on the relationship between contemporary British and American literature and the other arts, particularly film and jazz music.

### ***Jayne Cortez the Improvised Voice of the Performance Poet in the Globalized World***

In the field of improvised jazz poetry, year 2012 ended on a highly sad note. On 28th December Jayne Cortez had left us prematurely and her radical, humorous, feminist, activist, and ironic voice had abandoned the stage, leaving a piercing void. Obituaries and articles soon focused on her political activism in the Black Arts Movement, on her long-lasting jazz poetry performances with improvising musicians (including her historical group, the Firespitters) and the often willingly hyperbolic style of her feminist poems, as in the famous "Rape" where, meditating on the 1970s cases of Inez Garcia and Joanne Little, she graphically explores the double brutality of the abuse a rape victim undergoes when, in self defense, she is pushed to the point of killing her aggressor.

What most of these international articles only indirectly pointed out, though, was the transnational scope which the poetic persona of Cortez, also thanks to her sophisticated vocal techniques, performance after performance, had reached throughout her career. Her jazz-based and improvised style had allowed to widen the range of her published poems by creating selections of them which became more alive each time they were performed. Her live and improvised poems spoke to the international public about forms of political activism that went far beyond the sole realms of the Black Arts Movement. Think, for instance, of "Cheerful and Optimistic", clearly exploiting the power of an increasingly ironic poetic word, performed on stage and off stage with jazz, in order to raise awareness towards globalized issues of fiercely capitalistic environmental policies. The improvising voice of Cortez here reveals, with an increasingly sarcastic crescendo, the appalling consequences of careless exploitation of the natural resources, and the surreal perspective of a human being who tries to be cheerful and optimistic even when covered with nuclear waste. I would like to argue that if thinking the artistic world in global terms is, first and foremost, conceiving a world-scale level of interconnectedness, where messages of social, cultural and political activism transcend the national agendas through artistic practice, Jayne Cortez represented a core figure of how poetry can reach a global scale. Her poetic voice did so not only because of the wide breath of its themes and

registers, but also, to a remarkable extent, due to the fact it was performed and improvised.

This paper aims at unveiling how the choice of improvised jazz poetry so naturally intertwined with Cortez' transnational activism, from her early days in the Black Arts Movement to the co-foundation of the Organization of the Women Writers of Africa. I would like to reveal how her vocal style, always both stemming and transcending from African American vocal paradigms, broke away from the classical figure of the national bard, singing odes in order to reaffirm a highly conservative and propagandistic idea of the state, to embrace the postmodern notion of the committed performance poet. Cortez, in fact, improvised with music in order to reach audiences through more fluid and interactive sonic narratives, using the fluidity of performance poetry to denounce racial, gender, class inequality on a worldwide spectrum, until the very last breath of her voice.

### **Rob Wallace**

Writer, musician, and teacher Rob Wallace holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Improvisation and the Making of American Literary Modernism* (Bloomsbury) and co-editor (with Ajay Heble) of *People Get Ready: The Future of Jazz is Now!* (Duke University Press). His recordings can be found on the pfMentum and Ambiances Magnétiques record labels.

### **Passages to India**

This presentation is a brief sketch of the historical connections, contradictions, and continuing dialogue between the music of South Asia (primarily in the form of Hindustani classical music) and improvised music stemming from the jazz tradition. My perspective on these relationships grows out of my own practice as a performer of both jazz and Hindustani music, and my own attempts to reconcile the different aesthetics of improvisation inherent in each form. Encounters between jazz and Indian music, occurring in myriad ways since the early 20th century, continue to produce important collaborations and cross-cultural conversations. Within these conversations, however, remain some important misunderstandings on the part of both jazz musicians and Indian musicians. In keeping with the theme of this colloquium, "Sound Knowledges," I'd like to meditate on the potential meanings of the cultural contact exhibited and sounded through Indian music and jazz fusions. Ultimately I argue that, as in much improvised music, the risk of misunderstanding and failure, however we might define those terms, is often outweighed by the improvisers' ability to learn from such failures and risks and grow musically (and possibly even politically and spiritually).

### **Carol Ann Weaver**

Carol Ann Weaver, eclectic composer, improvising pianist, writer, music professor, and festival curator composes genre-bending music heard throughout Canada, USA, Europe, Korea, Africa, and Paraguay. Her music blends classical, jazz, avant garde,

environmental and African sounds. Among her seven CDs, *Paraguay Primeval* and *Every 3 Children* include various soundscape compositions, while certain improvisational gestures are found in many of her works. As Music Professor at Conrad Grebel/University of Waterloo (Canada), where she teaches composition, music theory, jazz, women and gender, and African music studies, she also directs *Sound in the Land Festival/Conferences*. The upcoming *Sound in the Land—Music and the Environment* (June 5–8, 2014, at Grebel/UWaterloo) brings a new field of study, ecomusicology, to the forefront, promising to attract attenders and presenters internationally. <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/sound-land-2014> As well, Carol performs, tours widely and records with Canadian vocalist Rebecca Campbell. In keeping with her composing, performing and African music research, Carol has also led a number of University of Waterloo students groups to Durban South Africa on music and culture study trips.

### ***Improvising Song from Natural Sound: Hearing the Kalahari into Music***

Possibly one of our earliest human sonic instincts has been to emulate nature sounds, whether by imitating animal calls during hunting rituals—an ancient practice that led to Southern African click languages; formulating dance patterns and musics which incorporate animal-like gestures and sounds—as found within many traditional societies; composing works which emulate natural sounds and are played on Western instruments—as widely found in the works of Oliver Messiaen, Amy Beech and others; or recording sounds electroacoustically and creating soundscapes and other sonic projects. As we listen to natural sounds, we tend to hear these sounds as if they were free or improvised, which tends to heighten our fascination with these ever-changing symphonies of natural sounds.

In fact, were we to note precise patterns in, say, the seconds between repeated calls of a Louisiana Water thrush, or the numbers of taps of a Red-bellied Woodpecker on a dead forest tree, or the interaction between numbers of species within any natural Canadian setting, we could scarcely improvise a texture so intricate, contrapuntal, improvisational, and endlessly fascinating.

So, it is without apology that I turn to a natural soundscape, as found in South Africa's Kalahari Desert in 2011, for musical and improvisational inspiration. The varied and constantly interweaving juxtapositions of Cape Turtle Doves, Laughing Doves, Kalahari Scrub Robins, and Barking Geckos become songlike, weaving together a plethora of polyphonic layers evocative of Kalahari's sonic environment. As I recorded these many sounds, it felt like it would almost be plagiarism to place them within an actual electroacoustic soundscape. Rather, I wished to allow these convergent sounds, already so multi-layered and mobile, further improvisational possibilities within a musical response I would create. So, attempting to capture exact rhythms and pitch patterns from these perky life forms, and allowing their various convergences to interact with each other freely but within a credible natural context, I composed an orchestra piece called *Kgalagadi Calls*, played by KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban, South African on April 19, 2011. This title is derived from the transfrontier park shared by South African and Botswana, and the work, which

emulates interactive sounds from the Kalahari Desert, has created a vehicle for ongoing sonic improvisations.

Within the presentation I will play some of my field recordings of these African natural sounds, show relevant visuals from the Kalahari, and finally, present a recording of this short piece as played by the KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, along with a coordinated slideshow of original photography of images evoked by the music.

### **Christopher J. Wells**

Christopher J. Wells is a PhD Candidate in Musicology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he teaches in the departments of Music and African & Afro-American Studies. His dissertation research on Chick Webb, a bandleader in Harlem during the 1930s, focuses on Harlem lindy hoppers' participatory kinesthetic engagement with Webb's music through social dance. Chris is also an active dancer and dance teacher specializing in the lindy hop, charleston, and other forms of African American popular/vernacular dance.

### ***Feeling Jazz “Under the Skin”: The Lindy Hop and Embodied, Participatory Listening***

This presentation explores social dancing, and specifically the lindy hop, as a tool through which to foreground improvisatory audience participation in jazz listening, history, and analysis. Having first experienced jazz through my participation in the “swing revival” movement, my primary mode of understanding jazz music is kinesthetic, and this has fundamentally shaped my perspective on jazz music. As a social dancer, I understand jazz primarily by engaging with it corporeally, and my listening practice rests upon adding rhythmic layers through movement and using my body to route what I hear through my own and my partner’s creative responses to musical sound. In this presentation, I will demonstrate the useful particularities of the lindy hop as an improvised social movement practice through which to experience and interrogate jazz music and foster nonverbal communication.

As a theoretical framework, I will employ my own experience in social dance to explore and expand Ingrid Monson’s concepts of “participatory framework” and “perceptual agency” by investigating the positions of multiple agents dancing with each other to create an engaged listening experience. I will begin with two parties as I employ a dance as a metaphor for the interaction between cognitive stimulus and reception. Adding another partner into the mix, I will consider a literal dance between two people as a project of collaborative listening that generates a multi-layered communicative web. Finally, I will take a somewhat dangerous step by inviting historical voices to the dance to see if perceptual agency can answer difficult historical questions: what are the potential benefits and pitfalls of using my experience as a contemporary revivalist social dancer to give “flesh” to accounts of the participatory listening experiences of dancing audiences in the 1930s? As I explore the role of improvised social dancing as a tool of communication and of



understanding and experiencing music, I will ask colloquium participants to use their own bodies to feel those aspects of jazz engagement that lindy hoppers take for granted yet struggle to express in words. As Russian choreographer/dance scholar Mura Dehn explained it, visual observation of dancers gives an incomplete understanding of the physical tension and release one feels while dancing the lindy hop, which Dehn describes as dancing “under the skin” and “for the ear as much as for the eye.”

While improvisation studies in jazz tend to focus on musicians as the primary communicative performers/agents, I hope my demonstration will contribute by taking improvisatory practice “off the bandstand” and into the crowd by collapsing the distinction between active performer and passive listener. By shifting the historical focus back to the 1930s and to jazz as popular dance music, I seek to reinvigorate a listening practice that relies on the active body and on a communicative language that simultaneously engages touch, sound, and image. As I present this perspective, including both its potentials and its problems, I will ask colloquium participants to dance and to touch each other: to feel those elements of improvised social dance that happen “under the skin.”

### **Tony Whyton, Walter van de Leur, Loes Rusch**

Tony Whyton is Professor and Director of the Salford Music Research Centre at the University of Salford and Project Leader of Rhythm Changes. His books *Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and *Beyond A Love Supreme* (Oxford University Press, 2013) have sought to develop cross-disciplinary methods of musical enquiry, blending musicological analysis and observation with cultural and critical enquiry. *Jazz Icons* has been well received among journalists, scholars and musicians alike. For example, Ian Patterson from [www.allaboutjazz.com](http://www.allaboutjazz.com) described the book as 'one of the most insightful and thought-provoking books written about jazz that I've ever come across' and 'Jazz Icons is essential reading for anyone interested in better understanding their relationship with jazz icons and it will no doubt change the way many of us perceive our relationship with jazz. Highly recommended.' Whyton edited the Jazz volume of the Ashgate Library of Essays on Popular Music (2011) is the founder and co-editor of the *Jazz Research Journal* .

Walter van de Leur is the first Professor of Jazz and Improvised Music in the Netherlands. Because of his dual position at the University of Amsterdam and Conservatory of Amsterdam, he is deeply involved with interdisciplinary and practice-based research. Van de Leur is an internationally recognized expert on the music of Duke Ellington and his collaborator Billy Strayhorn and his publications address questions of representation; he also specializes in jazz in the Netherlands and jazz criticism. While he works in international academic circles (e.g., as editor for the Jazz Series at University of Michigan Press, for the peer-reviewed journals *Jazz Perspectives* , and *Music and Practice*. He was guest-editor of the Duke Ellington Special Edition of the peer-reviewed *Jazz Perspectives* in March 2012), his work



branches out to cultural practitioners as well. Van de Leur's book, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* was published by Oxford University Press was the winner of the 2004 Society for American Music's Lowens Book Award.

Loes Rusch is a PhD student in jazz and improvised music at the University of Amsterdam. As part of the Rhythm Changes Research Journal she researches the development of local and national narratives in jazz through a sociocultural study of Dutch jazz practices, 1960-1980. Her research interests include cultural politics, musical ownership and transformation and Dutch jazz and improvised music. Recently published articles include 'Common Ground: 1970s improvised music as part of a cross-genre Dutch ensemble culture' (*Jazz Research Journal*, 2011) and 'Jazz in the Netherlands, 1919-2012: historical outlines of the development of a social and musical praxis' (*Jazzforschung*, 2012).

### ***Rhythm Changes: Jazz Cultures and European Identities***

Rhythm Changes: Jazz Cultures and European Identities is a 3-year transnational interdisciplinary research project, which examines the inherited traditions and practices of European jazz cultures in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. As the largest research project ever funded for jazz in Europe, Rhythm Changes seeks to develop new insights into cultural exchanges and dynamics between different countries, groups and related media. The project has been funded as part of the Humanities in the European Research Area's (HERA) theme, 'Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity', a joint research programme (JRP) funded by 13 national funding agencies to 'create collaborative, transnational research opportunities that will derive new insights from humanities research in order to address major social, cultural, and political challenges facing Europe'. This panel examines the key themes and findings of Rhythm Changes, focusing on four key areas of investigation within the project.

**Professor Tony Whyton (Project Leader, University of Salford)**

#### ***Rhythm Changes: Understanding the Cultural Politics of European Jazz***

This presentation explores the ongoing dynamics between American and European and the need to challenge existing formations of jazz as a historical and cultural practice. The paper highlights ways in which American and European jazz scenes have been articulated and explained in binary terms, and explore how writers, critics and institutions have sought to distinguish between Europe and American cultures, laying claim to the ownership of jazz. Drawing on the findings of Rhythm Changes project and examples ranging from film documentaries such as Julien Benedikt's *Play Your Own Thing* to the marketing strategies of the Munich-based ECM label, the presentation discusses of the changing status of jazz today and the place of Europe and America in a changing political landscape. The paper concludes with a discussion of the legacy of Rhythm Changes and the need to reconfigure the way in which we understand the development of jazz culture.

**Professor Walter van de Leur (University of Amsterdam)**

#### ***Representing Europe: the Dutch, Jazz, and Death***

Jazz mythology, full of heroes, icons, and (living) legends, has a special fascination for death. In Ken Burns's "Jazz" for instance, Charlie Parker's death is spun out to drive home what seems to be a Faustian parable. Parker is a genius, elsewhere in the film likened to the Pied Piper of Hameln, whose music is full of Devil's intervals. But such virtuosity clearly comes at a cost, and at 34 Parker is dead of substance abuse. Earlier in that episode, the death of Parker's daughter Pree, is used to painfully expose him as mentally disturbed. Her passing ominously pre-shades his own.

Jazz biographies tend to be full of such Romantic notions, from the death of the lone and misunderstood Bix Beiderbecke to the the larger-than-life Duke Ellington for who death was "the only problem he couldn't solve." Such is the fascination with death that there is an entire monograph dedicated to Jazz and Death (Spencer 2002), which "reveals the truth behind the deaths of jazz artists and the secrets of their often fatal lifestyles," neatly organized in categories such as "trauma" and "syphilis". The most important question, "why do we even care?," is blatantly absent from this morbid collection. This paper looks at these fascinating narratives of jazz and death, primarily from a European perspective, and discusses how these mythologies represent certain ideas about jazz and the fetishisation of genius figures.

**Loes Rusch (University of Amsterdam)**

***Dutch Jazz in the Making: Musical Ownership and the Process of Transformative Collaboration***

During the 1970s two developments deeply impacted the musical and extramusical organization of jazz practices in the Netherlands: 1) the emergence of Dutch improvised music and 2) the establishment of an internationally acclaimed public funding system for jazz in the Netherlands.

Together with Dutch artists from different musical backgrounds, self-acclaimed improvising musicians such as Willem Breuker, Willem van Manen and Maarten Altena successfully pursued structural public funding of jazz and improvised music in the Netherlands. Supported by the government, the founding of flexible, cross-genre collectives (Instant Composers Pool, Theo Loevendie Consort, Willem Breuker Kollektief, among others) offered them both an escape from hierarchical culture of big bands and jazz combos, as well as new possibilities of musical expression and organization. As these collectives reflected the founders' ideas of social criticism and anti-establishment, improvised music performances paradoxically subverted as well as confirmed institutionalized powers. In this process, media presentation played a crucial role, reinforcing notions of improvised music as 'rebellious', 'uniquely Dutch' and 'avant-garde' and providing the musicians with the support necessary to legitimize their works of art.

By exploring some of the fascinating musical examples of improvised music in connection with the establishment of structural funding for jazz, this paper investigates this intricate liaison between arts, media representation and politics, and the emergence of the idea - at least - of a jazz that was distinctively Dutch.

**Gayle Young**

Gayle Young is a writer and improviser who has designed and built new instruments and created interactive sound installations through which the public is invited to interact with sound as a medium. She is the publisher of Musicworks Magazine and has written many articles about artists and issues related to sound exploration. The Sackbut Blues, her biography of Hugh Le Caine, outlines a period of time during which music developments were integrated with innovations in science, electronics and acoustics.

### ***Response Able: Response and Responsibility***

Does the word responsibility inherently tell us what its essential meaning is? Does being responsible mean being able to respond?

Two of the most challenging characteristics of contemporary life are the loss of stable identity and the loss of predictability. These are often associated with the breakdown of cultural and national boundaries through the relatively recent availability of physical transportation and electronic communications.

Several elements related to, and reflected in, the practice of improvisation develop the skills needed to adapt to constantly-emerging social and cultural contexts and contribute to developing the ability to engage with and respond to often-confusing experiences. Are we modeling our responses to contemporary cultural conditions through music and improvisation?

The practice of improvised music enhances the growth of our ability to:

- Adapt to sudden change in musical material
- Quickly identify patterns and respond to them in a manner that strengthens group communication
- Listen to, and interpret, material that falls outside previous experience
- Negotiate boundaries and work within structures agreed upon by consensus

Translated into a broader social context, the skills of improvisation can support the ability to:

- Adapt to changes in social context, such as moving from one cultural community to another, developing what might be called cultural mobility
- Avoid—or resolve—conflict by identifying common interests and responding with in a manner that enhances meaningful communication
- Recognize common elements, connections, among factors that may not be obvious in unfamiliar situations
- Adapt to new and changing cultural expectations and norms by developing structures agreed upon by consensus

This discussion will further develop a paper to be delivered at the Deep Listening conference in Albany in July, 2013, during which I will describe a project involving the collaborative creation and outdoor performance of a new piece by a grade twelve music class.

The class demonstrated some intriguing underlying dynamics in their engagement with sound and with their fellow collaborators. This was the students' first creative experience outside the realm of traditional band music, and they responded with imagination and insight, building their composition through a process that began with

the experience of listening, then included the creation of non-music-based visual representation of sound, through which they recognized and defined patterns in what they heard. They then translated the patterns they had discovered into instrumental sound, initiating many adventurous approaches to the imagining and production of sound.

I will also speak from my own experience with instruments and sound installations that lead the listener and performer away from familiar habitual forms—or patterns. Through such experiences I believe we are learning to accept risk, adapt to change, and adjust to novel situations.

The element of play, as opposed to work, is usually applied to the practice of music, and playfulness can be enhanced when the boundaries of the expected are relaxed, where no pre-formatted concept of correctness determines our responses. Being able to respond in these circumstances is crucial to both the art form of improvised music and to our ability to resolve the many challenges facing us larger as larger communities.

### **Thomas Zlabinger**

Dr. Tom Zlabinger is coordinator of music at York College / CUNY and is the director of the York College Big Band and the York College Blue Notes & Summer Jazz Program. He is a professional bass player and an ethnomusicologist. Tom has performed with a wide range of musicians including Marshall Allen, Glenn Branca, Lukas Foss, Eddie Gale, Wycliffe Gordon, William Hooker, Lukas Ligeti, Emeline Michel, Berne Nix, William Parker, and Christian Scott. He holds a BA from Grinnell College, an MA from Queens College / CUNY, and a PhD from the Graduate Center / CUNY. His dissertation was entitled *FREE FROM JAZZ: Jazz and Improvised Music in Vienna after Ossiach (1971-2011)*. His research interests include the globalization of jazz, the pedagogy of improvisation, and video games.

### ***Widening the Spectrum of Taught Musical Improvisation: The Story of the York College Creative Ensemble***

I had the pleasure of speaking with David Baker informally after his presentation at one of the last IAJE conferences in 2005 in Long Beach. And he asked a question in his presentation that I have struggled with for years: Why do we not teach the entire spectrum of the jazz tradition from ragtime to free, as opposed to concentrating mostly swing and bebop? And as a musician who participates and identifies with the “downtown” scene in New York, I have had countless conversations with my fellow musicians of how more-adventurous forms and free playing can be included in the curriculum of jazz education. And until recently I thought that you could only accurately teach the music of musicians like Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and others only if you had such individuals present. I realized there was a flaw in my thinking. And I have my students to thank for changing my mind.

Starting in 2011, I began directing the York College Creative Ensemble, which is

mainly a subset of students in the more traditional York College Big Band who are interested in free improvisation. Through the direction of the ensemble, I had hoped to develop some ideas on how to effectively teach free improvisation. We simply began by playing a few openings at the York College Fine Arts Gallery. The environment was a low-risk setting as we were not the focus of attention. And it was so successful that later an art show entitled Energetic Fusion asked us to perform as they conducted workshops as an extension of the show. The pieces that were hung on the wall were created during our performances! And the show changed with every performance.

After these performances, it was obvious that students were interested in creating music on the spot with little discussion. These were not standards, though the instrumentation was generally jazz-oriented. In the spring of 2013, I incorporated free playing into the curriculum of the Jazz Improvisation course. And over the semester, most students continued to want to create more and more free improvisations and were less interested in standards. We discussed how to build performances through selecting instrumentation and personalities and how tension and release could be created during a performance.

But a few students greatly resisted this trend. And this is where the discovery happened. After playing free for a while and discussing the free playing, the students who resisted the free playing had a breakthrough. They could hear the ensemble better. They were more aware of their own performance within the context of the band. They could also hear more quickly and accurately overall.

I would like to conduct formal interviews with these students who resisted the free playing and now love it. What happened? Where, when, and what exactly changed their perception? How does the free playing and their new hearing help their “inside” playing? Can this experience be recreated for other students and how? I think there is great pedagogical potential here and needs to be explored.

### ***Lotería del Sotavento, Sonido del Sototempo | Free Fandango***

...is not only a concert, it is a ceremony, an encounter, an improvisation party based in the fusion of jazz and son jarocho, poetry and painting, décima and grabado, sax, jarana, voices and requinto, freedom and tradition from Veracruz and Canada. How does this music sound in the voices of Kali Niño Mendoza and Alec Dempster, their jarana and requinto (basic instruments in the jarocho folk music) the soprano saxophone of Alain Derbez and his poems, and the double bass of Toronto's based great musician and improviser Rob Clutton. Sones like El Balajú, El Toro Zacamandú, El Pájaro Cú, La Indita and La Lloroncita; repentist poetry, written poems; free jazz approaching to the Sotavento musical world and the unlimited universe that knowledge, pleasure and improvisation can allow, can produce. An hour of music and poetry, an hour of fandango, an hour of freedom. That is what we want to present in this 2013 Guelph Jazz Colloquium and Festival. We want also to present Alec Dempster's new book and the new edition of my poetry book El jazz según don Juan

(Jazz according to don Juan).

([www.alainderbez.com](http://www.alainderbez.com))

*Lotería Jarocha* by Alec Dempster

Lotería Jarocha assembles a series of linoleum-block prints created by Mexican-Canadian artist Alec Dempster after his return to his native Mexico in the mid-1990s. Discovering a lively genre of folk music from the Veracruz region, Dempster subsequently devoted himself to documenting his heritage with printmaking. The result is Lotería Jarocha, a collection of expressive images which catalogue Dempster's encounter with the vibrant son jarocho culture of his birthplace.

### ***In Case of Emergency Please Break Glass: A Multi-Modal Fantasia on Philip Glass's Knee Play 4***

What do you get if a classical pianist, a jazz/rock band, three conservatory singers, three contact improv dancers and a ballroom dance couple all interpret one six-minute song at the same time? Chaos or complexity? Starting from Paul Barnes' arrangement of Glass's Knee Play Four for solo piano, we will spin out and deconstruct a single composition with multiple improvisory resources: musically, with instruments and voices, jazz with and against systems music; in movement, using contact improvisation with and against Latin and ballroom dance. The original piece is about three over two. With all the vocabularies we have, how many times can we switch up that structure? We're going to break the piece apart, see how much energy and play is in it, and put it back together again in a 20-minute performance.

The Guelph Jazz Festival and its accompanying colloquia have been overwhelmingly concerned with the musical inheritance of improvisation. As with previous appearances by the Raw Nerve Research Group (2012) and Four Faces of Contact Improvisation (2011), we would like to introject the important dance and movement tradition of improvisation into the soundscape. For the first time, though, we propose to work directly with musicians in several vocabularies (minimalism, jazz/blues/rock, opera) and to work out a system whereby dancers and musicians are trading and amplifying phrases in a dynamic process, to achieve a feedback loop. Two of our dance performers, additionally, are professional athletes — a boxer and a gymnast — accustomed to improvising in the realm of competitive sport, a zone of improvised performance that has hitherto not received much consideration at the festival.

Concept design: Sarah Tolmie

Featuring: Scott Straker, piano | Jack Pender, guitar | Jonny Sauder, upright bass | Danica Guenette, voice | Wendy Tozer, voice | Emily Barkley, voice | Dawn Parker, ballroom dancer, choreographer | Sharone Levit, ballroom dancer, choreographer | Sarah Tolmie, contact improviser | Bola Olubowale, contact improviser | Kate Montagano, contact improviser

Bios:



Sarah Tolmie is an Associate Professor in the English department at the University of Waterloo, trained as a medievalist, who publishes on Middle English poetry, logic and embodiment. She is a poet and fiction writer, whose speculative fiction novel *The Stone Boatmen* comes out this year with Aqueduct Press. As a contact improvisation dancer she has performed with the Friends of the Floor Dance-Theatre since 2010, concept-designed *Susurrus: A Dance Through the Concepts of Hylozoic Ground* with architect Philip Beesley in 2011, and co-founded the Raw Nerve Research Group, a collective that uses contact improv as a medium to teach and experiment across arts and science disciplines, in 2011. An Ontario Arts Council grant for her sonnet sequence *Trio* takes her to Banff this summer for a residency.

Dawn Parker apprenticed and danced professionally with Milwaukee ballet, Omaha Ballet, Ballet Metropolitan, and Ballet Oregon. She has been doing ballroom dance (American and International styles) for the last six years. She is currently Associate Professor in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo and the Associate Director of the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation.

Scott-Morgan Straker is an Associate Professor of English at Queen's University. He teaches courses on British literature from the Middle Ages to the present, as well as on academic web design. For him, music is a passion rather than a profession; he is drawn to the music of Philip Glass by its ability to produce beautiful sound by combining simple, mathematical patterns.

Sharone Levit grew up playing soccer and has been a Latin dance specialist for ten years, winning numerous amateur and professional titles nationally and internationally. He has represented Canada at the world's largest competitions: the British Open (Blackpool) and the UK Open, and is a North American Bronze Medalist, featured in numerous dance films, including *Take the Lead* and *Shall We Dance*.

Emily Barkley was classically trained at the university of Windsor and specializes in jazz, classical, and R&B vocal styles. Emily is a vocal instructor in Cambridge, ON.

Danica Guenette was classically trained at Cambrian College, and has worked as a vocal instructor. Along with her experience in various jazz, folk, and classical styles, Danica has toured Canada with Sudbury prog-rockers Meadowlark 5.

Jack Pender is a guitarist and instructor who specializes in popular and jazz styles, and a PhD candidate in American literature at the University of Waterloo.

Jonny Sauder is a self-taught multi-instrumentalist and one of the busiest working musicians in the region. His resume includes collaborations with local acts as diverse as The Urban Monks, Grüveyard, The Bad Bongwater Boys, The Crazy Diamonds, Bob Guido, and others.

Wendy Tozer is a singer and pianist with a background in gospel, blues, and R&B styles. She plays regularly in the region with her own Wendy Tozer Band, as well as

various other rock, folk, and blues collaborations (The Jendy Way, The Crazy Diamonds, Mennogroove, Miss Angel, Joe Forster).

Katelin Montagano has 13 years of competitive gymnastics and 8 years of competitive power cheer leading experience. She has spent the last 10 years coaching gymnastics to kids of all ages and all skill levels and is the proud owner of her own gymnastics studio, Shining Star Athletics, in Kitchener.

Bola Raymond Olubowale is a two-time Canadian heavyweight boxing champion and an actor/stuntman who was in such movies as Resident Evil and Red Light. He lives in Toronto.