



INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE FOR
CRITICAL STUDIES IN
IMPROVISATION

Call for Papers

2014 Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium

University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

September 3-5, 2014

SOUNDING FUTURES

“The future is always here in the past”
-Amiri Baraka, “Jazzmen: Diz & Sun Ra”

“We will make our own future Text”
- Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*

The Guelph Jazz Festival, in conjunction with the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, the University of Guelph, and the SSHRC funded International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI) invites proposals for presentations at our annual three-day international interdisciplinary conference. This year’s colloquium will take place September 3rd to 5th as part of the 21st annual Guelph Jazz Festival (September 3-7). It will bring together a diverse range of scholars, creative practitioners, arts presenters, policy makers, and members of the general public. Featuring workshops, panel discussions, keynote lectures, performances, and dialogues among researchers, artists, and audiences, the annual colloquium cuts across a range of social and institutional locations and promotes a dynamic international exchange of cultural forms and knowledges.

In celebration of the centennial of musician, bandleader, and Afro-black philosopher Sun Ra’s arrival on planet earth, and in keeping with Ra’s use of music as a way to envision – and indeed to create – other possible futures, this year’s colloquium asks, What does your future sound like? How might jazz and improvised music offer ways into other and future realities? One of the legacies of Ra’s lifework has been the fusion, in his own performances and compositions, of Egyptian iconography with sounds, texts, and imagery of space travel and technology. The mid-1990s saw Marc Dery and other scholars formalize this aesthetic vision around the term “Afrofuturism.” As Dery has put it, “African American voices have other stories to tell about culture, technology and things to come. If there is an Afrofuture, it must be sought in unlikely places, constellated from far-flung points.” From the Afrofuturism of the Sun Ra Arkestra and the “sonic fiction” of Kodwo Eshun, to the Afro Science fiction of Octavia Butler, to the recent work of artists such as Nicole Mitchell and the works of feminist and other visionary thinkers, to other multiple and hybridized notions of futurity, music and sound have long been vital focal points for social movements and utopian imaginings.

In his Foreword to a special issue on Technologies and Black Music in the Americas of the *Journal of the Society for American Music*, George E. Lewis asks, “what can the *sound* tell us about the Afrofuture? How can we develop a new theoretical and descriptive language that both complements and exceeds the purview of the terms ‘music,’ ‘sound,’ and ‘listening’?” This year’s colloquium seeks to extend this line of questioning by focusing on the “other stories” that might be sounded about the future through jazz and improvisatory artistic practices. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to) the place of Afrofuturism and other liberatory sono-futurist movements in the historical narrative of jazz and improvised music, the ways in which other artistic mediums (literature, theatre, dance, visual art) grapple with the sound of future-making, how minoritized and subjugated communities embrace creative technologies and future visions in their expressive output and cultural production. We also invite papers and presentations on the lifework of Sun Ra.

We are particularly interested in interdisciplinary work that speaks to both an academic audience and a general public. We welcome presentations in a range of creative and unconventional formats, including but not limited to dance, theatre, spoken word, music, multi-media, and film. What might it be like, for example, to exemplify the sound of the future through concrete samplings of different forms of musical practice that herald new directions in improvised musicking? Please indicate the format of your presentation and any technical or other resources required. We also invite presenters to submit completed versions of their papers to our peer-reviewed journal, *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation* (www.criticalimprov.com) for consideration.

Please send (500 word) proposals (for 15 minute delivery) and a short bio by May 31, 2014 to: The 2014 Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, c/o Dr. Ajay Heble, Artistic Director, The Guelph Jazz Festival
email: jazzcoll@uoguelph.ca