

## **PANEL: The Virtual Future of Jazz: Improvisation, Technology, and Time**

**Chaired by Ric Knowles (School of English and Theatre Studies, University of Guelph)**

### **Panelists:**

#### **Pauline Oliveros**

##### ***Bio***

Pauline Oliveros (1932) is an internationally acclaimed composer, performer, humanitarian, and pioneer in American music. For five decades she has explored sound and forged new ground for herself and others. Through improvisation, electronic music, teaching, ritual, and meditation she has created a body of work with such breadth of vision that it profoundly affects those who experience it. Oliveros was born and raised in Houston, Texas to a musical family. In 1985 she started the Pauline Oliveros Foundation, a non-profit organization in New York, to "support all aspects of the creative process for a worldwide community of artists." Currently she serves as Distinguished Research Professor of Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., and as Darius Milhaud Composer-in-residence at Mills College in Oakland, Calif. More information is available at [www.deeplistening.org/pauline](http://www.deeplistening.org/pauline).

##### ***Abstract***

"Deep Listening Convergence 2007: Description of a Process"

Following a 5-month virtual residency online, 45 musicians converged from Switzerland, Canada, and the USA to perform three concerts in upstate New York in Troy, Hudson and High Falls. The purpose of the virtual residency was to enable the formation of ensembles for improvisation and the creation of improvisational structures and pieces. All three programs presented were created in the virtual residency. The process is described and sound clips from the residency and concerts are provided.

#### **Roger Dean**

##### ***Bio***

Roger Dean is an Australian sound and multimedia artist, and researcher in music computation and cognition. He is a participant in the Canadian SSHRC MCRI project on Improvisation, Community and Social Practice. He has performed in more than 30 countries, and his compositions include computer and chamber music, and commissions for many ensembles. His music is available on more than 30 commercial recordings originating in Australia, UK, US, and in several publications. He is particularly involved in computerinteractive sound and intermedia work. He has published five research books and many articles on improvisation, particularly in music. He is the founder and director of

austraLYSIS, the international creative ensemble making sound and intermedia, and also formed the Sonic Communications Research Group at the University of Canberra. Roger has the unusual distinction of being a subject in both the new Grove Dictionary of Music and that of Jazz. Until early 2002 he was foundation director of the Heart Research Institute, Sydney, and has more than 280 substantive biological publications. From 2002-2007 he was the vicechancellor and president of the University of Canberra, and he is presently research professor of Sonic Communication at the MARCS Auditory Laboratories, University of Western Sydney.

### **Abstract**

“Dynamic Signifying: Control of Sound Intensity by the Miles Davis Quintet and in Computer-Mediated Improvisation”

David Huron described the ‘ramp archetype’ in Western classical composed music, in which the notated dynamics of a range of works show that progressive increases in the players’ physical efforts and correspondingly in the intensity of their sound output (crescendi) are generally followed by decreases (diminuendi) which are shorter in duration. In recent work I have investigated the relevance of this archetype to a range of recorded computer music, some produced by purely compositional processes, and some by ‘applied’ or ‘pure’ improvisation (as elaborated by Smith and Dean, 1997). Computer music often displays the archetype, though sometimes with a counter-feature not commonly displayed in classical composition.

In the present work, I will extend my and others’ earlier studies of rhythmic innovations in Miles Davis’s music (e.g. Dean, 1992) to assess the possible interaction between rhythmic patterns and the ramp archetype in sonic intensity in published recordings, notably the performance of My Funny Valentine on the album of the same name. I compare these patterns with those in two recorded examples of computer-mediated improvisation discussed in my book on the subject (Hyperimprovisation, 2003), one by the Hub, the other a more jazz oriented piece by the austraLYSIS Electroband. I will compare the ramps as analysed independent of meter with those judged dependently.

Robert Walser has illuminated the nature of signifying in Miles Davis’s work, and I will offer a counterpoint on the dynamics of its signification. In addition, I will discuss whether computer-mediation in improvisation may permit or even encourage novel processes in musical dynamics.

### **Ken Prouty**

#### **Bio**

Ken Prouty recently joined the faculty in the College of Music at Michigan State University, where he teaches courses in musicology and jazz studies. He was formerly a faculty member at Indiana State University. Ken received his PhD in

ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh in 2002, and an MM in Jazz Studies from the University of North Texas in 1997. His doctoral research focused on the cultural system of post-secondary jazz education. He is a frequent presenter on jazz topics at scholarly conferences, including recent presentations for the Leeds International Jazz Conference, the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Society for American Music, and the International Association for Jazz Education. His current research on technology in jazz and its cultural implications has been supported by a Promising Scholars Grant through Indiana State University and the Eli Lilly Foundation. He is the author of several publications in recent years, with articles appearing in *Popular Music and Society*, the *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, and the *International Jazz Archives Journal*. Apart from his research and teaching, Ken is also active as a jazz trombonist. While at UNT, he was a member of the acclaimed "One O'Clock Lab Band," and has shared the stage with musicians such as James Moody, Monty Alexander, Benny Golson, and Slide Hampton.

### **Abstract**

"Not Dead, But De-Centred: Jazz's New (Web) Address"

In Stuart Nicholson's provocatively-titled 2005 book *Is Jazz Dead?: (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)*, the author argues that Europe, not the U.S., has become the center of new, innovative thinking and performance in jazz. While this paper is not a critique either in support of or opposition to Nicholson's thesis, the notion of jazz "moving" to different places, different spaces, is an intriguing one. The implication that jazz, or any cultural form, can "move" from one place to another as a single, coherent entity, is problematic. I argue that jazz does not "move" as Nicholson suggests, but rather has grown into a number of related, yet regionally, nationally, and ethnically distinct approaches. I propose a model for understanding jazz in the 21st century as boundary-less, fluid, and most importantly, globalized. To date, most studies of "global jazz" focus very little on jazz as a function of globalization, in the contemporary understanding of the term. Taylor Atkins's edition *Jazz Planet*, for example, argues that jazz "predicted" globalization; yet this text focuses primarily on the local, jazz *in* India, jazz *in* Zimbabwe, rather than seeking connections between various locales. In a truly globalized study of jazz, it is these latter connections that define how the music is performed and discussed.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the Internet. The presence of jazz across transnational online networks has exploded in recent years. Blogs, message boards, social networking sites, and collaborative performance platforms have begun to re-shape how musicians, critics, scholars and fans interact with each other. High speed connections and near instantaneous messaging and networking may soon allow the disparate components of the "jazz community" to connect in more meaningful ways. Communications that only a decade ago required at best a telephone call, and often, actual travel to New York, New Orleans, etc., now may be done at one's fingertips (in a literal sense). In

presenting a critical analysis of these developments, I borrow from the work of *New York Times* columnist and author Thomas Friedman, one of the foremost writers on globalization and economics. In his books *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, and *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, the author argues that globalization must be understood not as the transference of culture from one site to another (i.e., the U.S. to the world), but as a complex set of interactions where traditional center-periphery power relationships are replaced with more cooperative, lateral (i.e. "flat") arrangements.

Nicholson was correct in arguing that the U.S. can no longer be considered the center of the jazz world, with Europe, Canada, Asia, and other locations as a periphery. He is incorrect, however, that one center has simply been replaced with another. I would argue that in the near future, and possibly already, there will be no center to the jazz world. It is at this point that jazz will become a truly global, indeed *globalized* musical and cultural form.

## **Rob Wallace**

### ***Bio***

Rob Wallace is a PhD candidate in English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His dissertation, entitled "At the Borders of Meaning: Improvisation and the Formation of American Modernism" investigates the influence of jazz and improvisational aesthetics on early 20th Century poetry. Rob is also a percussionist who performs in a wide variety of musical contexts, including jazz, punk, North Indian classical, and Arab music.

### ***Abstract***

"The Drumset is a Time Machine"

More cowbell, please: by giving the drummer some you're tapping into the secret history of time itself. This paper places the drumset as a central device, both figuratively and literally, in the history of Modern Time. The drumset is one of the most important cultural and technological innovations of the past century, making it possible for one person to do the work of a whole percussion ensemble and providing the beat for countless forms of popular music throughout the world. Although often hidden from the spotlight (or ridiculed for their spotlightgrabbing antics), drummers are the creators and users of complex musical and social meaning via this time-making machine built from Turkish cymbals, Chinese gongs, African and European drums, and various other "contraptions." The history of the drumset and the music made on the drums is also the history of globalization encapsulated in a musical instrument. As Paul Gilroy has suggested, because jazz – and, contemporaneously, the drumset – was developed in tandem with recorded sound, and because its primary producers themselves were often the victims of the cruel logic of modernity, jazz is a cultural form that both creates modernity and "critiques it from within." Drummers

improvised an instrument so that they could improvise a music, setting the pace for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and providing a crucial site of resistance. This paper will focus on several important examples where the drumset and the drummers who play it have intersected with and influenced historical, musical, and spiritual time.