

Speaker Biographies and Abstracts
2007 Guelph Jazz Colloquium

Amiri Baraka, Ron Gaskin (moderator), William Parker
Plenary Panel: The Future of Jazz

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Tamar Barzel, John Brackett and Marc Ribot
Roundtable: Crisis in New Music? Vanishing Venues and the Future of Experimentalism in New York City

Bios

Tamar Barzel is assistant professor of Ethnomusicology at Wellesley College. Her scholarly interests center in jazz/improvisational music, Jewish cultural studies, and New York City's downtown music scene. Her research focuses on how musicians negotiate issues of identity – cultural, national, creative, and personal – through their work. She has presented her research at national and international conferences, including the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Society for American Music, and the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University. Her article, "If Not Klezmer, Then What? Jewish Music and Modalities on New York City's 'Downtown' Music Scene," was published in the *Michigan Quarterly Review* (Winter 2002). She is working on a book manuscript, 'Radical Jewish Culture': *Composer/Improvisers on New York City's 1990s Downtown Scene*.

John Brackett is an assistant professor of Music at the University of Utah where he teaches and co-ordinates the music theory curriculum. Prof. Brackett has presented and published on the music of John Zorn, Led Zeppelin, and Arnold Schoenberg. His book – *Tradition/Transgression: Critical and Analytical Essays on John Zorn's Musical Poetics* is forthcoming from Indiana University Press.

Marc Ribot is a composer/guitarist based in New York City

Abstracts

Barzel: "Experimental Music: How Does the Centre Hold?"

Brackett: "Change Has Come?: Chronicling the 'Crisis' on New York's Lower East Side"

Ribot: "Crisis in Indie/New Music Clubs: The rare feeding of a musical margin"

Numerous clubs, venues, and other less formal performance spaces have supported and sustained many of the creative musicians who have called New York City their home. In some ways, many of these venues (The Blue Note, CBGB's, The Knitting Factory) are just as recognizable and celebrated as the musicians themselves and the music they created. With the closing of Tonic on the Lower East Side (henceforth LES) in April of this year, many musicians lost an invaluable venue in Manhattan. Billing itself as a "home for avant-garde, creative, and experimental music" since 1998, Tonic closed its doors due to the rising costs associated with operating in an area that even many longtime residents can no longer afford.

A grassroots protest opposing Tonic's closure included a rally in front of City Hall and a demonstration at Tonic that ended with the arrest of two of the most vocal opponents of the club's closure: guitarist/composer Marc Ribot and

musician/activist Rebecca Moore. Concerning the changes taking place on the LES, Ribot has been the most outspoken musician, speaking not only at the City Hall rally but also authoring an early-warning piece entitled “Crisis in Indie/New Music Clubs.” In his article, Ribot pleads for the “care and feeding of a musical margin” by describing how musical styles that developed and flourished in New York would have been impossible without the support and opportunities made possible by local venues, venues forced to close under the oppressive weight of gentrification. Ultimately, Ribot argues, the marketplace has failed creative musicians and venues. To counteract this trend, he urges musicians to fight for subsidized spaces by appealing to practices in Europe, especially the so-called “cultural exception” arguments.

Ribot’s arguments are compelling and deserve to be taken seriously. At the same time, however, certain assumptions implicit in Ribot’s article as well as opinions expressed by others angered by the closing of Tonic require critical examination. In my talk today, I will examine those arguments that invoke gentrification when referring to Tonic’s closure and similar changes taking place on the LES. While I certainly believe that the financial interests of developers and owners are to blame, the history of gentrification in the Lower East Side is a complex one. Therefore, I will compare the current plight of club owners and musicians to the burgeoning arts scene in the LES in the early 1980s. After outlining certain qualitative differences between the LES in the 1980s and today, I will consider the possibility that musicians and artists – through the marketing of a marginal, resistant musical community to a global market – may ultimately be complicit in the current wave of gentrification overtaking the area. So as to not end on a pessimistic note, I will conclude by proposing alternative marketplace strategies not considered by Ribot, strategies that would allow musicians to participate in the marketplace without appealing to “cultural exception” and/or government-subsidized performance spaces.

Anthony Braxton

Keynote Talk: Tri-Centric Modeling

Bio

Anthony Braxton came to prominence during the 1960s as one of the key members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), the crucially important Chicago Musicians’ collective dedicated to the promotion of African American musical creativity. Braxton is a legendary improviser and a consummate master of the entire woodwind family and, as a composer, his prolific output represents some of the most radical and thoroughly achieved bodies of work ever created.

www.wesleyan.edu/music/braxton

Roger Dean

Panel: The Virtual Future of Jazz: Improvisation, Technology, and Time

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 computer-interactive 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 vice-chancellor 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.

Alain Derbez

Panel: Jazz, Improvisation, and Transcultural Understanding

Bio

Alain Derbez is a sax player, historian, and radio producer and writer. He is the author, among other titles, of the book *El jazz en Mexico, datos para una historia* (Fondo de Cultura Economica), that was presented in the Guelph Jazz Festival in 2002 as well as the performer of the jazz poetry concert, “Everything can be heard in Silence” in that edition. In 2005, once again in Guelph, he presented the

recital: "Jazz will set you Free". Recently, he published his poetry book *El jazz según don Juan* (Jazz according to don Juan). He is a member of the Jazz Journalists Association and a collaborator with the Spanish magazine *Cuadernos de Jazz*.

A selection of Alain's CDs include "Las cosas por algo son", "Ya son horas con Sonora Onosón", "Eze ozo jazzea azi con Emiliano Marentes", and "Privado-Público con El Código Postal". A selection of his writings on music includes, *Todo se escucha en el silencio* (blues and jazz in Hispanoamerican literature), *Los sesenta cumplen treinta* (the 60s as seen in the next generation) and *Hasta donde nos de el tiempo* (an informal history from blues to free-jazz). He is also the author of *Desnudo con la idea de encontrarte* (poems), *Cuentos de la Región del Polvo y de la Región del Moho* (short stories), *Ya no nos imaginamos la vida sin la radio* (a history of indigenous radio in Mexico) and *Amar en baños públicos* (poems).

Abstract

"Mexico: Steps Against Desmemory"

How can jazz be dead when it is being born again and again in, at least, my country? How can we explain this birth and rebirth as a continuous phenomena? We have to talk about different issues in order to answer this question. First of all: the cultural memory, something that has been a public enemy not only in Mexico but in all the Third World countries. Cultural workers are fighting daily against the agent of desmemory: those who have the power and the money to decide that any form of art is dispensable, especially any form of popular art. It is easy to understand that all artists have to carry with them their presentation card, because they are always appearing for the first time. Jazz has existed in Mexico as long as it has existed in some other places in the world. Let us remember those Mexican musicians that played original music in the 1920s with their Danzoneras-jazz bands. They even published scores of this music in magazines and papers, but they suffered the charge of desmemory and nationalism and they decided to go and play some other kind of "more comercial music" in order to survive. Jazz history in Mexico started to be a "curiosity" until, in the '30s and '40s, jazz got into the radio and the dancing parlors. But, once again, nobody acknowledged the fact.

In the '60s there was an evolution: jazz musicians started to believe in themselves not only as reproducers of the music that they knew was being played elsewhere, but as composers who – as happened in the twenties – had their own popular music to mix with jazz mainstreams. So folklorical music from different regions – Veracruz, Chiapas, San Luis Potosí – started to nourish jazzists' imaginations. But something has happened once again, and this is the lack of conciousness of the role that jazz musicians play in their society, in their history. How has jazz in Mexico coloured the chroma of Mexican social movements? Has it been relevant? This is now the situation, now that something promising starts to appear and documents such as my book of history in jazz – the one I presented in Guelph five years ago – and some other books that have appeared later about the Mexican Jazz reality. A lot of new audio documents unparalleled to any other period in jazz history in our country, weekly jazz articles in different newspapers and some radio shows and also some TV programs can make us believe that something is, once again, happening here.

How do we open the door for new and younger audiences for jazz in Mexico, for contemporary jazz in Mexico? How do we prepare against the

violent attacks of desmemory? We now have schools of jazz, we have Mexican jazz players out of Mexico that have been recognized not only as curiosities, and we have jazz musicians that are working to create, with a Mexican sound, jazz for the world. Popular music as jarocho son, huapangos huastecos, etc., base their quid in improvisation as well as jazz; how do we deal with both? The answers, the questions, and the history of this all will be studied in my paper in Guelph this year.

Charlie Haden

Onstage Interview: Liberation Music

Conducted by Patrick Case (Human Rights and Equity Office, University of Guelph)

www.charliehadenmusic.com

Peter Johnston

Panel: Jazz Education, Jazz Activism, Jazz Futures

Bio

Peter Johnston was born in Windsor, N.S., the son of a high school music teacher and a Baptist Church pianist. He studied composition and double bass at Dalhousie University, alternating academic endeavours with tours of North America as part of a traveling swing band. After completing his studies at Dalhousie, Peter moved to Toronto in 2001 and began working as a freelance musician, music teacher and novel editor. After several years in Toronto Peter returned to the academic life, completing a master's degree in composition at York University in 2005. He is currently working on a PhD in Ethnomusicology at York University while still maintaining an active career as a performer and composer. Peter's research interests include exploring the creative processes of free improvisers, specifically focusing on the ways in which ensembles approach the integration of composition and improvisation in their performance practice.

Abstract

"Searching for Uncommon Ground: Eddie Prévo's Improvisation Workshop and the Construction of Collective Identity"

This presentation explores the social and musical relationships that are investigated and enacted at Eddie Prévo's Friday night improvisation workshop in London, England. Prévo has been convening this community gathering for the past eight years, and I was a regular participant from October 2006 to April 2007. The workshop is intended to be a 'safe space', where participants can freely explore the sonic possibilities of their instruments and interrogate the creative process in real time. At its best moments it is a site where co-operation, collaboration, and shared discovery are the key values, rather than the competitive 'cutting' atmosphere that frequently characterizes jazz jam sessions. Yet the freedom that is allowed in the workshop presents a unique challenge, as the participants must negotiate between the restrictions that may potentially result from a hardening of collective musical practice, and the consequences of unbounded communitarian experimentation. This workshop should not be approached as simply an idealized situation for free creative expression, but rather as a cultural work-space, where the participants are granted the opportunity to critically challenge their musical habits and work towards personal and collective change.

The workshop ideally functions as a musical laboratory for those involved; there are no restrictions on what instruments are welcome, or on the musical or cultural backgrounds of the participants. In my time at the workshop there were participants who were experienced with many different idioms, including jazz, rock, free improvisation, Turkish music, electronica, western classical music, and beat poetry, among many others. The international reputation of the workshop ensures that there will be visitors from other countries, such as myself, taking part for various lengths of time. As such, the workshop offers the opportunity for transcultural communication, as each participant is asked to respond to the musical needs of the collective, rather than to express themselves through whichever idiom they may be used to. The danger in this approach is the potential establishment of a dominant middle ground, such that musical moves from outside the collective aesthetic become disruptive, and the proposed freedom of the space becomes qualified in particular ways. The freedom of the event thus needs to be coupled with a critical thought process in order to prevent the "no-boundaries" nature of the event from becoming its own orthodoxy. This workshop offers a unique opportunity to examine this struggle in detail, as both long and short-term participants confront the tensions that arise between the pursuit of social ideals and the defence of creative freedom.

My presentation will focus on practitioner narratives to explore notions of freedom, community, and cultural relevance as they are played out in the workshop. I will draw on both my own experiences and those of other participants collected through interviews to investigate how the musical relationships formed in Prévost's workshop can inform society at a broader level.

Howard Mandel

Panel: Musicians, Critics, Journalists: Perspectives on the Future of Jazz

Bio

First published in *Down Beat* in late 1974 with bylines, Howard Mandel is a freelance jazz journalist, who has since been published in *Village Voice*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *Jazziz*, *JazzTimes*, *Musician*, *Signal2Noise*, *The Wire*, *Swing Journal*, and *Bravo* (Rio de Janeiro), among many other publications. He has been an editor for *Billboard*, *Guitar World*, and *Ear and Rhythm Music*. Howard currently writes a monthly column in Finnish *Rytmit* magazine, produces arts segments for National Public Radio (most recently, a profile of Sonny Rollins), and is still published in *Down Beat* (in the July issue, the cover article on Maria Schneider's new recording with her jazz orchestra).

Howard Mandel is president of the Jazz Journalists Association, for which he produces "Jazz Matters" panels at the New School Jazz program and at jazz festivals throughout the U.S. (notably, Portland OR, Newport RI, Chicago, Detroit) as well as producing the annual JJA Jazz Awards. He is an adjunct associate professor at New York University, where he teaches "The Arts: Jazz," "Arts: The Blues," "Roots of American Music" and "World Music." His book, *Future Jazz*, profiled music made since 1975 that he asserts will continue to have influence for decades to come (among those profiled were everyone from the Art Ensemble of Chicago to John Zorn). He was general editor of the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz and Blues* (Billboard Books/Flame Tree Publishing), and contributed to the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music* as well as the *Oxford Jazz Companion* and Leeds School of Music's *The Source: Challenging Jazz Criticism*.

He is currently planning a blog to be distributed via ArtsJournal.com, and the redesign of his website www.HowardMandel.com will feature the publication of *Miles, Ornette, Cecil – Jazz Beyond Jazz*.

Abstract

“The Future of Jazz – Thanks to Miles, Ornette and Cecil”

In this presentation I will discuss what Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor have brought to the music that continues to be the pathway for exploration and development, with examples of things happening now (and upcoming) that are building on their foundations. I will allude also to the manner in which they built on what preceded them, directly, though not always obviously, so as to emphasize that the future grows out of the present, always.

This is a point of my book titled *Miles, Ornette, Cecil – Jazz Beyond Jazz*, which Routledge will publish in later fall 2007, which comprises interviews with the three musicians and many of their associates, overview of their recordings and performance careers, analysis and personal memoirs designed to contextualize the "avant-garde" among other manifestations of culture and the arts since roughly 1950 (my discussion of Miles starts a bit earlier, with his recording with Charlie Parker of "Now's The Time"). My interest in this book, as always, is to "cut across a range of social and institutional locations" and to identify essences of the music that are broadly appealing and affective in language vivid and pertinent enough to interest the general public, yet solidly grounded in knowledge and research so as to satisfy the academics among us. I love the use of Mayfield's civil rights-related anthem (in the title for this year's colloquium), because a lot of the writing in *Jazz Beyond Jazz* has to do with the social circumstances that the music reflects and reflects on -- and to me it seems clear that the value of this music (future jazz, to cite the title of my first book, from Oxford U Press in 1999) is as a continuing mirror to the larger society/societies in which it exists – whether mainstream elements of that/those society/societies are paying attention or not.

In the view I will present, jazz is far from dead; it is a secured cultural location from which other explorations begin; generic boundaries are mostly useful for sales and marketing purposes, but hold little interest beyond self-identification for musicians pursuing their personal creative/innovative imperatives. Jazz and improvisation are vehicles for cultural memory and memorialization no less than history books, and in fact more, as jazz and improv in constant flux allow for reinterpretations of the past with each occurrence. The major strategy of jazz-anchored improvisers such as Miles, Ornette and Cecil regarding technology is to bend it to their will, but not to be swept up in it for its own sake (vis a vis Miles studio techniques and instrumentation from *In A Silent Way* through doo-bop, Ornette's interest in sound effects and collage starting with *Science Fiction*, continuing through *Tone Dialing*, and Cecil's use of layered sound in *Chinapas*, though overall he's ignored multi-media manipulations).

Roger Mantie

Panel: Jazz Education, Jazz Activism, Jazz Futures

Bio

Roger is a PhD Candidate in Music Education at the University of Toronto, where he conducts the Hart House Symphonic Band and directs the Royal Conservatory of Music Jazz Ensemble. His research interests lie in theorizing

avocational and lifelong music making, music teacher training, and school curriculum and instruction.

Abstract

In *Is jazz dead? (Or has it moved to a new address)* Nicholson (2005) examines the by now familiar agonistic relationship between 'preservationists' and 'progressives' during the 1980s and 1990s, ultimately arguing that most of the creative energies in jazz are occurring outside of the United States (which would seem, in his analysis, to subsume Canada). Among the causes Nicholson considers for the cessation of creative impulses in North American jazz is the phenomenon of 'jazz education.'

In 2003-2004, the author interviewed leading Canadian university jazz educators ('selected experts') about their perceptions of public school jazz education. Among the issues raised in the author's empirical research are: school jazz curriculum and instructional practices; the International Association for Jazz Education's jazz curriculum and its relationship to school teaching practices; and the role of improvisation in the teaching of jazz. Among the findings were that university jazz educators were unfamiliar with the central tenet of the IAJE curriculum that "jazz can and should be taught as aesthetic education." For the 'selected experts,' jazz curriculum and instructional practices should, at a minimum, emphasize ear training and listening skills, improvising, theory, large ensemble playing, and jazz history. These aspects, in the opinions of the 'experts,' were, for the most part, neglected in current jazz teaching practices, which tend to demonstrate an emphasis on part playing, balanced and blended ensemble work, and generally good intonation and tone quality. While there was unanimous support among the 'experts' for the importance of improvisation in the teaching of jazz, there was disagreement on the extent to which this was believed possible, and on the possible solutions to rectify what was generally perceived to be poor improvisation occurring at the high school level.

This paper examines the state of jazz and jazz education in Canada using the theoretical frameworks of Wenger's (1998) 'communities of practice' and Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'situated learning.' The author attempts to highlight the political tensions that surround broader issues of curriculum and instruction, incorporating strands of critical, feminist, and postcolonial theory. These issues are put into the larger philosophical contexts of education, pedagogy, and schooling. The author draws not only upon Nicholson (2005), but on a broad variety of sources within both jazz and educational literature, as well as his own experience as a high school jazz educator and professional jazz musician.

Tracy McMullen

Panel: Exploring the Improvisative: Two Views

Bio

Tracy McMullen earned her PhD from the University of California, San Diego in Critical Studies/Experimental Practices. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Guelph as part of the Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice Research Project. Her published works include, "Corpo-Realities: Keepin' it Real in 'Music and Embodiment' Scholarship" in *Current Musicology*, No. 82 (Fall 2006) and "Identity for Sale: Glenn Miller, Wynton Marsalis, and Cultural Replay in Music" in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, edited by Nichole Rustin and Sherrie Tucker, forthcoming from Duke University Press.

Abstract

“Playing the Performative: Replay and Improvisativity”

Working from the assumption that “the improvisative” is that radical element which allows for movement within the performative, this paper argues that musical practice may offer important insights into how identity operates in the larger social field. I first examine practices that could be considered the opposite of the improvisative – practices I name “Replay.” Replay describes those performances that strive to recreate a past event exactly, as found in certain tribute bands, civil war reenactments, and other nostalgic recreations. Much like the scopophilic pleasure of the instant replay in sports, cultural Replay offers the same sense of exactness, of the identical, the bounded, the true. It comforts by showing us what we (think we) have seen before and by its ability to play it again – a fetishized moment, captured and displayed. I assert that Replay is a form of cultural production that yearns to create the perfectly “happy performative” described by J.L. Austin in his classic work, *How to Do Things with Words*. In order to maintain such a performative, Austin had to elide the many ways that it could fail to perform its expected function, for example through citation in different contexts. Replay is a form of cultural entertainment that attempts to contain contexts and citations within a hegemonic narrative, ritually performing its narratives and stereotypes (musical and cultural) as “truth.”

If one viewed performativity as a continuum, Replay would be at the end characterized by “perfect” reiteration. The other end of this continuum could be the pure improvisative, something which would surely be as impossible as a perfect repetition. I argue that we consider the improvisative a capacity or faculty more than an action or performance and that such a capacity can be honed through corporeal practice, including the practice of instrumental performance. Understood in this way, performative agency can be found not only in the possibilities inherent in misfired signification as described by Butler, Derrida and others, but also in a practice that works to mitigate the power of signs over the performer. Looking at various musical responses to Replay, this paper suggests that improvisers consciously practice loosening the constriction of expectations inherent in the performative, allowing them to perform amidst, as well as against, musical clichés – both formal and social. Examining such a practice may help elucidate larger operations of identity and ways of negotiating agency within a world of signs always already defining us.

Kevin McNeilly

Panel: Jazz, Improvisation, and Transcultural Understanding

Bio

Kevin McNeilly teaches cultural studies and contemporary poetry and poetics in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia. He has published essays on John Zorn, Robert Creeley, P. K. Page, Charles Mingus, Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Battlestar Galactica, among others. He's currently at work on a book-length study of poetry and improvisation.

Abstract

“Improvising Diaspora: Fred Ho, John Coltrane and the Music of Radical Respect”

Words and music interlace in Fred Ho’s art. As a composer and improviser, Ho has pursued remarkable and effective fusions of Asian heritage and folk forms

with African-American avant-garde jazz, and many of his ballets, operas and suites – as extended idioms adapted from their “legit” Eurocentric counterparts and re-imaged as culturally porous, collaborative events – have been realized in complex, poly-dimensional, multi-media productions. These structural and conceptual pluralities have become hallmarks of Ho’s creative enmeshment in the unsettled and unsettling irresolutions of his diasporic cultural status, as an Asian-Pacific American. Difference and contrariety are, in Ho’s work, not problems to be resolved but constitutive elements through which liberation, both as a raising of consciousness and as tangible political transformation, might be sought. At the same time, Ho openly acknowledges his debt to the social polemics of Black Nationalism of the 1960s. His work as a writer (represented, for example, in his contributions to the anthology *Legacy to Liberation*, 2000) remains seemingly bound up in identity-politics and Marxist apologetics, an often fiercely uncompromising discourse that is stylistically and theoretically at odds with his radically destabilizing musical practices. His admiration for poets such as Amiri Baraka or Kalamu ya Salaam appears to have much more to do with the verbal directness of their political interventions, with their emphasis on declarative immediacy, than with their linguistic or formal innovations.

Still, when Ho asks, in a recent artist’s statement, “how does music free us?” he draws attention to sonic texture and to poetic structure as inherently, crucially political, focusing our ears on the how rather than simply the what. Ho’s apparently naïve preference for uninterrogated declamation – what some critics have dismissed as crude stridency – actually involves him, along with his listeners, in a difficult dialectic, a deeply rooted tension over the nature and practice of expression itself: of the interconnections between doing and saying. Paul Gilroy’s recent discussion of jazz and diaspora in *Against Race* – where he argues for “new possibilities and new pleasures” enabled by the fundamental dislocations of diasporic non-identities – provides a starting point for re-thinking Ho’s indebtedness to racial nationalisms, and for a more careful and attentive reading of his mesh of sounds and words. His recording of John Coltrane’s “Naima” (1998) – with lyrics by poet and journalist Andrea M. Lockett – offers listeners an opportunity to address Ho’s deliberately conflicted relationship to the radical sixties, and also suggests how a dynamic critical relationship between Ho’s work and his multiple cultural and musical heritages – what he names a practice of radical respect – has the potential to enact a model for new and liberated human communities, an arduous and challenging idealism he calls, following Sun Ra, embracing the impossible.

Jim Merod

Panel: Musicians, Critics, Journalists: Perspectives on the Future of Jazz

Bio

Jim Merod has written about jazz for 25 years. He has been a jazz critic for the *Los Angeles Times*; *Jazz Now*; the *San Diego Union*; *La Folia*; *On Sound and Music*; *Stereo Times*; *Positive Feedback*; *Jazz News*; and the *San Diego Voice & Viewpoint*.

His book of interviews and essays, *Jazz as a Cultural Archive*, was published in 1995 by Duke University Press (*Boundary 2 Journal*). In addition, across 30-plus years Jim has recorded a who’s who of jazz luminaries: Herbie Hancock; Wynton Marsalis; Kenny Barron; Art Farmer; Tito Puente; Wayne Shorter; Cecil Taylor; Sarah Vaughan; Red Rodney; Clifford Jordan; Tommy

Flanagan; Chris Potter; Tom Harrell; Kenny Burrell; the World Saxophone Quartet and many more. Jim teaches jazz as well as literary and critical studies at Soka University in Southern California.

Abstract

“Is the End in Sight For Jazz As We Know It? (A Reply to Red Rodney, Charles Mingus, and Stephen Hawking)”

This paper looks at a predictive narrative defined by the unfolding, entangling careers of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Lucky Thompson, Bill Evans, George Russell, Charles Mingus, Eric Dolphy, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Hank Jones, Maria Schneider, Chris Potter and Donny McCaslin. That narrative spans the music's history and comprehends its generic diversity and increasingly global reach. On one hand, this narrative emulates the remarkable span of classical compositional gestation from J. S. Bach to Beethoven. On the other hand, it suggests that Adorno's critique of classical modernism inadvertently provides insight into the fertility and self-renewal (the continuity and exfoliating structural and aesthetic complexity) of the jazz heritage.

This paper will share comments regarding the future of jazz drawn from private interviews with Benny Golson, Nick Brignola, Tommy Flanagan, Art Farmer, Mike Garson, Tom McIntosh, John Hicks, Sweets Edison, Red Rodney, Maria Schneider, Kenny Werner, Herbie Hancock and Jimmy Rowles.

Michael Morse

Panel: Cecil, Ornette, Sun Ra, William Parker: Negotiating Tradition and Innovation

Bio

Massachusetts-born bassist, composer, arranger, and teacher Michael Morse studied with Gary Peacock, Warren Grim and Rudolf Watzel. Among the jazz greats with whom he has performed and recorded are Brian Barley, Bob Mover, Lee Konitz, Roswell Rudd, Charles Ellison, Claude Ranger, Jane Fair, Terry King, Steve Hall, Kirk MacDonald, Pat LaBarbera, Maury Kaye, Phil Nimmons, Bob Fenton, Linton Garner, Glen Hall, Sadik Hakim, Nelson Symonds, Norman Marshall Villeneuve, Michael Occhipinti, Ted Quinlan, Roy Patterson, Billy Robinson, Karl Berger, Peter Leitch, David Mott, Jessica Williams, and Tim Brady.

Experienced in virtually every form of North American music, he has performed with Lightnin' Hopkins, Haitian master drummer Georges Rodrigues, the Eddie Toussaint Dance Company, Diane Tell, Big Sugar, and the Prague Chamber Orchestra.

Michael Morse is the leader of the Dignity of Labour Ensemble, and is presently active as a performer with the Avataar Collective, the PoetiKs, Satanist Daycare, and Weapons of Mass Neutrality.

Michael participated as a bassist in two recent CDs with close friend and collaborator Glen Hall: Trio Muo's Angles, with master percussionist and composer Joe Sorbara; and Strophe, with brilliant string players Kye Marshall and Rebecca Van Der Post. Michael's compositions are played by many groups. For example, "Ecstatic Regret" was recently recorded by a group led by guitarist Steven Cole.

Michael is an avid participant in Toronto's creative improvisation scene. He has played with many of its leading lights, including (in no order whatsoever) Christine Duncan, Joe Sorbara, John Kameel Farah, Kyle Brenders, Michael Snow, Colin Fisher, Ronda Rindone, Lina Alemanno, Jean Martin, Felicity Williams, Michael Parsons, Jim Bailey, Ravi Nainpally, Dave Clark, Victor Bateman, Jason Hammer, Myk Freedman, Michael Herring, Rakesh Tewari, Paul Newman, John Wilson, Michelangelo Iaffaldano, Brodie West, Melissa Stylianou, Sundar Viswanathan, Geordie Haley, Nick Fraser, Ken Aldcroft, Tomas Krakowiak, Kye Marshall, Evan Shaw, Glen Hall, Tania Gill, Michael Keith, Nick Storrington, Nicole Rampersaud, Jesse Stewart, Don Scott, Brandon Valdivia, Rob Piilonen, Scott Thomson, Kai Koschmider, Gordon Allen, Jake Oelrichs, Rebecca Van der Post, Parmela Attariwala, David Story, Matt Brubeck, Rob Clutton, Dave Chokroun, and Alex Porter.

Other groups and musicians Michael has played with during his years in Toronto include a cooperative trio (featuring Jay Alter and the late, sadly missed Bob George), Andy Wernick, Laurie Corrigan, Bill Westcott, EarCam, Bill King, Rita DiGhent, Tony Quarrington, the International Drone Bandits, John Brown Trio with Brenda Scott, Sonora, Steve Cole, and one or two whose names he can't recall (or never knew in the first place).

Michael completed both a Master's and a PhD at York University. His dissertation, *Rhythm, Musical Time and Society -- Prolegomena to a Sociology of Music*, will be published by White Cliffs Media. New books on musical rhetoric and syncopation are in progress.

Abstract

"Jazz and the Rise of the Uniculture"

Students of jazz and contemporary improvised musics continue to consider the multiplicity of relations between these practices and others (that may or not may not be) like them. Whether or not the bass playing of Flea and William Parker belong under a common rubric called 21st century bass playing is as debatable as whether Parker's music has any reasonable generic connections to the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

However we choose to answer such questions – and a variety of answers are not only possible but certainly necessary – it is undeniable that maestro Parker (and his listeners) live in a world not merely contingent to Flea's but directly affected by it. In other words, however disparate the experiences of its various component subcultures, all belong to (and are defined by inevitable participation in) a larger socio-economic framework.

The present paper argues that this framework, society, has become increasingly indistinguishable from a kind of unified popular culture, in which the experiential and generic distinctions of hitherto extant subcultures weaken and move even farther to the margins. In the uniculture, the identity of artistic subcultures, however powerfully delineated, approaches non-existence through functional irrelevance. At the same time, musically germane technological developments offer grounds for eventual hope (and even present-day realities) of musically defined culture.

DY Ngoy

Panel: Jazz, Improvisation, and Transcultural Understanding

Bio

DY Ngoy is a cultural researcher and archivist whose areas of interest encompass hybridization and creolization in Linguistics and Musicology. He has been involved in field research mostly in Africa and Europe. Over the past five years, he has been involved in research to develop new techniques of documenting oral tradition. He is presently working on a book that documents the presence of American Improvisers in Paris from 1965-85.

Abstract

“The Guardians of Harlem:

My paper borrows its title from the late cornetist Clifford Thornton's album *The Guardians of Harlem* featuring the JCOA(1974).

Three years after this recording took place, the critic Bob Palmer wrote in a review of Mr. Thornton's Unit at Ali's Alley: "Mr. Thornton has been grappling during the past few years with an intriguing musical problem. Through traveling and performing in Africa and coming in contact with African musicians while he taught at Wesleyan University, Mr. Thornton became interested in the polyrhythmic complexity of traditional African music" (Palmer:1977)

Before going any further, it must be acknowledged though that Mr. Thornton was not alone in (t)his effort to use element(s)/fragment(s) of African and Asian music into his compositions, a list of such practitioners includes his contemporary colleagues such as Archie Shepp, Don Cherry, Wadada Leo Smith and The Art Ensemble of Chicago, and prior to that generation, Randy Weston, Yussef Lateef and Dizzy Gillespie, to only name a few.

In the spring of 2001, during the yearly Banlieues Bleues Festival – that takes place in the suburb of Paris – the German saxophonist Peter Brotzmann, alongside the Chicago-based percussionist Hamid Drake, was heard performing with the master guembri practitioner Mahmoud Gania from Morocco (fortunately their previous musical encounter was recorded and released in 1998 by the Chicago-based label OKKA disk, as *The Wels Concert*[od12013]).

This is an indication of how this effort to use improvisation and blues (or any other world folkloric material) as a tool/vehicle for investigation has globalized. However, an inquisitive mind might question whether the cultural motivations and methodologies used by European improvisers and (African)-American improvisers do converge?

To go back to Mr Thornton's initial preoccupations to generate a music which respects both the African and African-American traditions (Fred Ho:1991), it is noteworthy to mention that initially his work was partly – if not heavily – influenced by the theories of the late Nigerian composer/philosopher Fela Sowande, and Ghanaian musicologist/composer Nketia. Nonetheless, through extensive personal research Mr. Thornton was able to develop a systematic approach /methodology to impart the music to the musicians.

It is through the prism of the Pan-African festival which took place in Algiers 1969, and using Mr. Thornton's recording *The Guardians of Harlem*, that I will attempt to highlight aspects of histories and methodologies of this school of thought. At the same time, I will also attempt to answer some of the initial questions such as: is jazz dead? are generic boundaries still relevant? how do jazz and improvisation function as sites for cultural memory/ cultural memorization, or as arenas for transcultural understanding? through what strategies (and to what effect) has technology been negotiated and mobilized in contemporary jazz and improvised music?

Pauline Oliveros

Panel: The Virtual Future of Jazz: Improvisation, Technology, and Time

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.deeplisting.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.

Benjamin Piekut

Panel: Exploring the Improvisative: Two Views

Bio

Benjamin Piekut is a PhD candidate in historical musicology at Columbia University, where he is writing a dissertation on experimental music in New York in 1964. He has also been a student in the Critical Studies/Experimental Practices program at the University of California, San Diego, and earned an MA in composition from Mills College. His article "'Demolish Serious Culture!': Henry Flynt and Workers World Party, 1962-67" will appear in *Otherwise Engaged: Avant-garde Music and The Sixties*, edited by Robert Adlington and forthcoming from Oxford University Press. He is the assistant editor of the *Journal of the Society for American Music*, and serves on the editorial board of *Current Musicology*.

Abstract

"From the Performative to the Improvisative: Reconsidering Butler"

This paper considers Butler's theory of reiterative performance and suggests ways to think about the creation and maintenance of social structures through the varied practices of improvisation. Her theory of performativity presupposes a text (of gender codes) that is enacted in the course of daily life, and open to transformation through the techniques of drag and parody. The notion of "improvisativity," however, does away with the underlying text, offering in its place an always emerging set of dynamic structures that are read, taken apart,

resisted, joined, or otherwise negotiated by improvisative actors. The transformation of preexisting systems is no longer framed in the somewhat limited terms of drag, but part of the everyday process of reacting to one's surroundings and seizing opportunities to redirect flows of power to different ends.

Seizing on improvisativity as the dominant modality through which social structure and identity are enacted necessitates a closer look at the discourse of improvisation itself. In the formulations of both Butler and Pierre Bourdieu, improvisation is explicitly set against the normative ideal of structure: a "regulated improvisation" suggests that improvisation alone is unregulated and without structure. Such an opposition—also common in discussions of musical improvisation—promises a fantasy world where the improvisative may only carry notions of freedom, individuality, deterritorialization, and perhaps even liberation. By the same token, this escape from structure also commonly connotes a lack of preparation, inadequate foresight, and questionable judgment. Both of these constellations of meaning do a disservice to the heterogeneous practices that can be subsumed under the label "improvisation," and they indicate that a move away from the composition/improvisation opposition holds promise for new theorizations not only of musical practice, but of social structures broadly construed.

This paper begins with a recapitulation of Butler's theory of gender performativity and some of the debates and resonances it has engendered. I then introduce the concept of improvisativity and consider the ramifications of displacing the composition/improvisation binary that has preoccupied scholars in favor of an examination of the relationship between improvisation and performance—or, more specifically, improvisativity and performativity. Finally, I offer a brief account of how the concept of improvisativity has been helpful in my own development of an actor-network model of experimental music in the 1960s, specifically the substitution of Latour's emphasis on the *performance* of knowledge/power networks with their *improvisation*.

Alexandre Pierrepont

Panel: Jazz Education, Jazz Activism, Jazz Futures

Bio

Alexandre Pierrepont is a social and cultural anthropologist working at Paris-VII and Sciences Po (France), specialized in the internal alterations (at the corner of otherness and togetherness) of the Western World and in the African American musical continuum as a social institution. He has just completed a PhD on the AACM. Alexandre is a writer (*Le Champ jazzistique*, Parenthèses, 2002), translator (*William Parker's Sound Journal*, Jalan/Sons d'hiver, 2004) and artistic adviser for labels and festivals.

Abstract

William Parker created his tribute to Curtis Mayfield in 2001, at the Banlieues Bleues festival in the northern suburbs of Paris. On this occasion, he also ran a workshop based on some of the songs by Mayfield, with more than one hundred kids and teens. In the last ten years or so, Alexandre has watched William Parker in many different teaching positions/situations in Europe, from the nursery school to the university, to high schools or music schools. Every time, every human being, from age 7 to age 77, had to sing his or her own song, using his or

her own voice, and find a space where all the songs of all the people involved could be played and heard. As another great bassist, Malachi Favors Maghostut, used to say: "There's a message in the music for you". This presentation will focus on three faces of such a message: the heterogeneity, the flexibility and the creativity – where music functions not only as a site for cultural memory or memorialization, but also as a site for cultural imagination.

Ken Prouty

Panel: The Virtual Future of Jazz: Improvisation, Technology, and Time

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.

Jane Reynolds

Panel: Musicians, Critics, Journalists: Perspectives on the Future of Jazz

Bio

Jane Reynolds is an improvising musician who has hosted a weekly jazz radio program since 1985 in Madison, Wisconsin on WORT-FM. During that time, she has recorded many interviews with musicians who have made appearances in Madison. In hearing about the colloquium, Jane decided to go back over some of the interviews for a look into the future of creative improvised music from the point of view of the musicians themselves. These musicians are Roscoe Mitchell (who was interviewed in May at his home), McCoy Tyner, Sonny Fortune, Marilyn Crispell, Malachi Thompson, Richard Davis and Sonny Rollins, whose interview is published in the current issue of *Jazz Improv* magazine.

Abstract

“Musicians’ Perspectives on Creative Improvised Music”

My presentation will give you an overview of topics discussed in the course of these interviews (conducted at WORT-FM, Madison, Wisconsin), providing artist’s individual (and shared) insights through direct quotes regarding the past, present and future of creative improvised music. It provides a brief sampling of what I found to be enlightening and inspirational.

All of the musicians interviewed gave humble acknowledgement to John Coltrane. Upon listening to Coltrane’s “A Love Supreme,” Marilyn Crispell “...felt a bridge between that and the contemporary classical music” that she was doing.” Roscoe Mitchell, who was once invited to play with Coltrane, explained that Coltrane “...was trying to hone his music down into a very clear message so that it can be widely understood, which is what I’m trying to achieve in my music.” Malachi Thompson formed the Africa Brass, named after Coltrane’s

album. He explained that he “was going back to the origins of jazz, but trying to project the music into the future to demonstrate how there is a thread running through the jazz fabric.”

One of the most influential groups is the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), formed in Chicago in the 1960s. Mitchell is one of its founding members. Malachi Thompson learned from the AACM that: “Experimentation itself is part of the tradition.” He went on to say, “It’s the role of the creative musician to push the music forward. If it weren’t for musicians like Miles and Ornette and Trane and members of the AACM, that wouldn’t be happening. Jazz musicians stand on the shoulders of the great masters in the jazz idiom.”

Roscoe Mitchell pushes forward with his exploration of sound and space, scored improvisation and, most recently, interacting with computers. Marilyn Crispell performs on differently-tuned pianos and prepared pianos to develop new sounds. A common concern, however, was public exposure to the music. Although there was consensus on the importance of live performance, McCoy Tyner conceded that new technologies, i.e. the internet and iPods, were a new way to reach young people. He is concerned, though, that “...the media, the black media, don’t play this music necessarily, from their culture....and they should support it.” He also noted that in our public schools “...you hear about Mozart and others, but not Bird and Miles and John (Coltrane) back in jazz history.” Sonny Rollins agrees, noting that “...there are no jazz television shows and jazz is not heard too much on the mass media.”

Another common concern was the audience. Many musicians find their most receptive audiences somewhere other than in the United States. Mitchell noted that in Europe “...you get a wide range of audience there, from very young to very old, so people are exposed to music and art at a very early age.” Sonny Rollins found that “...the interest in jazz in Japan was so overwhelming compared to what we experience here in the United States.” He also “...realized how much jazz is loved by people all over the world, and how underappreciated the artists here at home were. I think there’s a bigger appreciation of jazz in the United States since they’ve had jazz in the university curriculums.” Mitchell seems to agree when he observed “...I do start to see larger audiences in the States now. So there is an appreciation for the music. Most people come up to me and say they need the music.” As Sonny Rollins noted, “If people have a chance to hear jazz and appreciate it, they do and they like it.”

When Mitchell toured France with the Art Ensemble, “...these concerts were sponsored by the government and were completely free to the public.” Malachi Thompson mourned the fact that “...our society doesn’t support the creative artists to the full extent that they should, especially with the cutbacks in the funding to the NEA.” Sonny Fortune took matters into his own hands: “Because one of the problems with art is the movement of it, to the appreciator, I started my own record label.” He summed it up by saying: “Art is important to the quality of life. So your creativity and expression of your creativity has a very important role to society.”

Jason Robinson

Panel: Cecil, Ornette, Sun Ra, William Parker: Negotiating Tradition and Innovation

Bio

Dr. Jason Robinson is a Southern California-based saxophonist and scholar. He teaches in Music at the University of California, San Diego and in African American Studies at the University of California, Irvine. His research focuses on improvised music, Jamaican popular music, and music of the African diaspora. He enjoys an active performance and recording career, collaborating often with leading figures in creative music.

Abstract

“Space, Race, and Transcending Place: Sun Ra, Afro-futurism, and Black Nationalism”

In a revealing scene in the 1972 film *Space is the Place*, iconoclastic pianist Sun Ra questions a group of African American teenagers about race and strategies of racial empowerment. The scene takes place at a teenage hangout in Oakland, where black teenagers are playing pool, singing together, and socializing, and where, suddenly, they realize that a pair of shiny platform shoes is emanating other-worldly (synthesizer generated) sounds. Without warning, Sun Ra appears, teleported into his magic shoes from a distant place. Ra’s discussion with his young, somewhat skeptical, audience reveals a unique understanding of black identity, its relationship to (outer)space, and its representation in sound. This poignant scene brings together ideas about race and empowering strategies that use space – outerspace *and* (re)imaginings of social space – as a new mode of black nationalism that transcends prevailing ideas about the connection between racial identity, place, and music.

Framed as an aberrant member of the 1960s avant-garde, Sun Ra is frequently marginalized in jazz discourse. Recent scholarship, most notably John Szwed’s landmark biography of Ra called *Space is the Place*, challenges these historical orthodoxies by illustrating, among other things, Ra’s development as a jazz pianist and his challenging of racial boundaries in music technology and electronic music. While Ra’s early career embodies the development of a late 1940s jazz pianist, his work became decidedly more experimental in the mid 1950s. Changing his name from Herman “Sonny” Blount to Sun Ra, a reference to the Egyptian sun god, founding his commune-like group the Solar Arkestra, and the group’s 1961 move to New York, illustrate a trajectory that speaks to several parallel debates. Ra’s music transformed throughout the 1960s, transcending expectations about post-bop jazz practice by including non-conventional instruments (including homemade instruments) and multimedia elements (costumes, dance, and lighting), promoting themes of space travel and afro-futurism, and incorporating electronics and sounds traditionally associated with science fiction movies and new trends in electronic music.

This paper uses two historical bookends as its focus: Sun Ra’s 1961 recording *The Futuristic Sounds of Sun Ra* (and his concomitant move to New York) and Sun Ra’s 1972 movie *Space is the Place*, filmed in Oakland while Ra undertook a teaching residency at UC Berkeley. I argue that Ra’s musical and social philosophy presented a new kind of philosophy related to emergent forms of black nationalism, yet significantly different than the social and aesthetic strategies evidenced in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. This important distinction helps to explain the (outer)space trope in Ra’s musical philosophy, a phenomenon best described as afro-futurism. I draw upon ideas from the emerging discourse of afro-futurism, showing that Ra’s performance practices

and elaborate mythological ideas confront assumptions about black identity, experimentalism, and access to new technologies.

Daniel Schnee

Panel: Jazz, Improvisation, and Transcultural Understanding

Bio

Daniel Schnee is a Toronto based saxophonist who has performed internationally with a number of Juno, American Music, and Grammy award winning musicians. He has also studied and performed with several world renowned South Indian and Arabic musicians, and is a former student of jazz legend Ornette Coleman. After several years of composing extensively for theater and dance in Western Japan, Daniel became the saxophone / clarinet and jazz history instructor at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Jerusalem before returning to Canada to begin his Ph. D in Ethnomusicology, focusing on Arabic music. He is also currently working on an advanced saxophone technique book, based on his original 'Chromatic Axis Concept' for improvisation.

Abstract

Middle Eastern Swing: What Arabic Music can Offer the Future of Jazz"

With so much emphasis on the supposed death of jazz, it would seem that jazz itself is not dead...rather that 'jazz is dead' is alive! The polemic on whether jazz is a cultural legacy or a lived art will not be resolved anytime soon, nor should it necessarily be. And with the advent of the Internet, globalization, and the rapid advance of technology, this debate has ceased to be strictly Western. For if jazz was born in New Orleans, and grew up in New York, surely it can raise children in Reykjavik. And indeed we are seeing increased involvement in jazz by Canadians who come from non-Anglo or Francophone backgrounds (Sundar Viswanathan, Suba Sankaran, Avesta Nakhaei). Faced with multiple uncertainties in the creation and distribution of jazz music, the ability of jazz music to investigate and include multiple ethnicities within the continuity of jazz heritage may be the key to its artistic survival and continuing relevance in this age of globalization and cultural exchange, regardless of the vicissitudes of the marketplace or the realm of public taste.

Certainly jazz music is not the first to come into this crisis. Though rapid (and in many cases often violent) changes in geo-politics and technology have occurred throughout history, many musical traditions have not only survived but thrived. Whether it was a total ban on music, a total ban on the traditional music of a certain ethnicity, or in the case of Nazi Germany, a ban on certain musical dynamics and syncopation, musical traditions have weathered much in the past. And in the case of Arab music, it has survived all of these forms of repression without losing its scope and its roots.

So what can Arabic music offer the future of jazz? I will look at three areas that address both the artistic and social evolution of jazz music:

1. Apprenticeship: through a more holistic approach to pedagogy, Arabic music study was/is a lifestyle, much like the "school of the street" was for young jazz musicians of the past. This type of training can be implemented, and I will show how.
2. The study of Arab music at the academic and private level, which is now more increasingly available. Beyond private study of a melody or a rhythm

instrument, Arabic music has a history of inter-instrumental study, a tradition that once occurred, but is seemingly lost in jazz. By studying the Arabic model, we can reestablish this important site for innovation back into jazz study.

3. The study and implementation of key devices contained within Arabic music that are compatible with jazz expression, and create new modes of activity within jazz that would encourage increased participation by Arab-Canadians, and others interested in non-Western modes of expression. These would include the Arabic modes, thematic progression, and a particular manner of ornamentation key to creating what might be called the 'blues' feeling in Arabic music.

Andrew Jacob Scott

Panel: Jazz Education, Jazz Activism, Jazz Futures

Abstract

"Community as a site of Jazz Pedagogy: Exploring Toronto's Jam Sessions from 1956-1962"

Experimentation on the bandstand is of central importance to jazz pedagogy. Although all musicians spend hours cloistered away practicing their instruments, a great deal of learning in jazz is social. As a highly participatory art, jazz musicians learn tunes, ensemble dynamics, accompanying sensitivity and many other musical and aesthetic considerations through performance and jam session. Often comprised of both men and women, blacks and whites, experienced musical professionals, rank amateurs, budding enthusiasts and audiences anxious to hear what is often considered to be the most spontaneous and "real" jazz, "jam sessions" blur the lines between performance as play, practice, entertainment or art. As equal parts pedagogy and collegial intercourse, jam sessions have "functioned as a large educational system for producing, preserving, and transmitting musical knowledge, preparing students for the artistic demands of a jazz career through its particularized methods and forums" (Berliner 37).

For Toronto's black jazz community in the late 1950s, the Sunday sessions at St. Christopher House (Kensington Market), which were pedagogical, social and musical events, were of paramount importance to the musical development of many in that musical community. As drummer Archie Alleyne recalls, St. Christopher House was "where many of the younger black musicians used to go to jam on Sunday afternoons and learn [emphasis his]," giving currency to DeVaux's point that the jam session was the first setting of jazz pedagogy (DeVaux 202-235).

In this paper, I offer a history of Toronto's jazz jam sessions of the late 1950s and early 1960s and demonstrate how community can act as a site of pedagogy. Through ethnography and musical analysis, I explore the immediate connection between pedagogy and performance that occurred in Toronto's black musical community of the late 1950s-as saxophonist Doug Richardson points out, "I was honking that one note from the beginning" -and show how these inclusive pedagogical sites also offered means of community building.

Alan Stanbridge

Panel: Cecil, Ornette, Sun Ra, William Parker: Negotiating Tradition and Innovation

Bio

Dr. Alan Stanbridge is an Assistant Professor in Visual and Performing Arts and Arts Management at the University of Toronto, cross-appointed in Music and Museum Studies. In 2005, Stanbridge was a recipient of the University of Toronto at Scarborough Faculty Teaching Award for his outstanding contribution to the teaching of undergraduates.

Drawing on a diverse range of musical examples from the early 20th Century to the present day, Stanbridge's interdisciplinary research focuses on the manner in which a variety of discourses have served to shape contemporary understandings of musical meaning and cultural value. His research project is supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Stanbridge has published articles on popular music, jazz history, cultural theory, and cultural policy, and he is a member of the Editorial Boards of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* and the *Jazz Research Journal*, a member of the Advisory Board of *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation*, and a contributor to the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*.

In a previous life, Stanbridge pursued a 15-year career in professional arts management and music promotion in Britain, during which time he held the post of Director of the Glasgow International Jazz Festival, and occupied senior management positions with several arts centres and music organizations, including Midlands Arts Centre, the Almeida Theatre, and Jazz Services. Throughout his career, Stanbridge has been responsible for the programming and co-ordination of a diverse range of arts and music events, and he has promoted concerts and specially commissioned projects featuring Ray Charles, Cab Calloway, Stan Getz, Lee Konitz, Gerry Mulligan, Astor Piazzolla, Willem Breuker, the Brotherhood of Breath, John Stevens, Fred Frith, John Zorn, Tim Berne, Philip Glass, and John Cage, among many others.

Abstract

"Old and New Dreams: Tradition and Hybridity in Contemporary Music"
In a recent interview in the *Globe and Mail*, prior to his first concert performance in Toronto in over 20 years, the pianist Cecil Taylor cited Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Mary Lou Williams, Thelonious Monk, Horace Silver, and Dizzy Gillespie as among his most important influences. When asked whether he was "really just a traditionalist at heart," Taylor responded by quoting Somerset Maugham, suggesting that "tradition can be either a prison or a guide" (Considine, 2007). Interestingly, however, Taylor misquotes Maugham slightly, introducing a degree of ambivalence into Maugham's otherwise optimistic epigraph: "Tradition is a guide and not a jailer."

Given the often hostile reception that Taylor's ideas have received at the hands of jazz traditionalists – "total self-indulgent bullshit" was Branford Marsalis's considered opinion in Ken Burns's PBS *Jazz* series (quoted in Stanbridge, 2004) – the ambivalence is perhaps unsurprising. But Taylor's faith in tradition – "I'm always one who'll genuflect to those great men and women" (Considine, 2007) – coupled with his still uncompromising artistic practice, represents a clear statement of the manner in which many of the most challenging jazz artists have sought to balance issues of tradition and innovation: issues that the philosophical tenets of modernism had tended to suggest were mutually exclusive.

Although Taylor's current performance practice has little of the relentless intensity so familiar from his concerts of two or three decades ago, the advancing years have done little to compromise Taylor's aesthetic approach. Indeed, Taylor's links to the jazz tradition – a consistent trope in his own discourse over the years, if one viewed with considerable scepticism by his detractors – are now clearer than ever, suggesting a fertile and productive relationship with the past that denies the stereotypical discourses of either an adamantly vanguardist modernism or an ironically depthless postmodernism. Moreover, Taylor's artistic practice remains a profoundly hybrid one, drawing inspiration not only from the jazz tradition but also from contemporary classical and world music, dance and literature.

The qualities inherent in Taylor's music are shared by many of the most interesting examples of contemporary music today, serving to confirm Somersert Maugham's positive reading of the role of tradition. But much of this music fits somewhat uncomfortably under the restrictive rubric of 'jazz,' emphasizing the increasingly problematic nature of genre classification, and highlighting the aesthetic narrowness of the traditionalist gatekeepers of the jazz canon. To offer a typical example: John Hollenbeck's highly innovative approach to the jazz big band – which, alongside more 'traditional' big band scoring, incorporates electronic effects, minimalist techniques, Theo Bleckmann's vocalizing, and settings of the poetry of William Blake and Wallace Stevens – is readily dismissed as "pretentious" by *Jazz Times* (Shanley, 2007: 71).

In this paper, denying such easy criticisms, I examine the eclectically hybrid nature of much contemporary music, and its dynamic relationship with tradition. Focusing on the creative balance between tradition and innovation, I consider the recent output of several key record labels, including ECM, Winter & Winter, and Tzadik. In the latter part of the paper, I explore the remarkable resurgence of the accordion in contemporary music, drawing on the work of Gianni Coscia, Jean-Louis Matinier, Stian Carstensen, and Guy Klucevsek, among others.

Rob Wallace

Panel: The Virtual Future of Jazz: Improvisation, Technology, and Time

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 spotlight-

grabbing 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 20th 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.

Peter Williams

Panel: Cecil, Ornette, Sun Ra, William Parker: Negotiating Tradition and Innovation

Bio

Pete Williams is a PhD student in American Studies at the University of Kansas. His work explores improvisation in music, identity, literature, the classroom, and everyday life, and has examined Ornette Coleman, Langston Hughes, Miles Davis, and conceptions of "jazz democracy." He is also an electric and upright bassist who has performed in the U.S. Southeast and Northeast in a variety of musical settings.

Abstract

"Sound Has No Parents': Ornette Coleman's Harmolodic Democracy"

In 1997, Jacques Derrida interviewed Ornette Coleman about improvisation, composition, and language. After the interview, Derrida joined Coleman on stage and read a short piece he had written while Coleman improvised. Two recent essays – by David Wills and Sara Ramshaw – examine this unusual meeting through the framework of Derrida's concepts of "the event" (in Wills' case) and "the law" (in Ramshaw's case) and, based on that framework, judge the performance to be largely a failure. My essay will focus on Coleman's contributions to the meeting and will take a harmolodic view of the performance and of the preceding interview, examining Coleman's critical notions of democracy in music and in everyday life, as well how Coleman's performance of a multiplicity of identities contributes to his complication of and resistance to dominant modes of blackness, masculinity, and democratic freedom. Through this view, the performance and interview with Derrida may be seen not so much as a failure but as an opening to possibilities.

To this end, the essay will perform close readings of Coleman's words about music, holding them up alongside his musical production itself as an object of study. Looking at Coleman's words and music together can blur the categorical boundaries that have been constructed between interpretation, musical performance, and theory.

Given Stuart Hall's conception of culture as a site of struggle, this paper further envisions improvisation as a key player in that battlefield. Ornette Coleman's music and his conception of harmolodics – both improvised – reorganize the relationship among the three cultural elements identified by Ajay

Heble and Daniel Fischlin – “knowing,” “community,” and “instruments” – even as his improvisations in these areas also constitute a performance. In the same way, following Judith Butler’s notion of performative gender, Coleman’s unique performance of black masculinity speaks to the limitations of the dominant culture’s depictions of African Americans and of reductive codes of black masculinity.

Coleman’s resistance to and complication of almost every category of identity one tries to put him in – African American, heterosexual, male, jazz musician – point to his status as what Antonio Gramsci called an “organic intellectual,” one that arises out of the dominated class in its struggle for hegemony and can “bring into being new modes of thought.” Coleman constantly struggles against the limiting, defining, and even oppressive categories the dominant culture forces onto cultural production by continually asserting music’s basic freedom. As he said in an April 2007 interview, “Sound has no parents, so you don’t have to worry about being spanked.” Ornette Coleman’s ideas and his music, the totality of his cultural production, deserve attention as “new modes of thought.”

Despite Coleman’s recent Grammy and Pulitzer awards (or perhaps because of them), harmolodics remains both critical of the dominant culture and productive of new modes of improvisation and community, projecting its hopeful vision of democracy into the future, even as it improvises its resistance in the present.