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ISIM Newsletter Summer 2007 Volume 3, No. 2

Message from the President



I recently reread Bob Sweet's wonderful book, *Music Universe, Music Mind*. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in improvised music. The book chronicles the all-too-brief history of the Creative Music Studios, an innovative school founded by Karl Berger that brought together students and top improvisers-composers during the 1970's and 80s. While I never had the opportunity to attend CMS, I was well aware of its existence and consider it an important influence in the formation of ISIM due to its wide-ranging horizons. Musicians from a huge diversity of traditions—Turkish, African, North and South Indian, Brazilian, contemporary Euroclassical, and jazz—came together to play, teach, eat, tell stories—to essentially live and breathe music and the creative process together. That CMS also had a strong spiritual component, where students and faculty learned meditation and related practices from nearby Tibetan and Zen Buddhist centers, further points to the depth of its artistic vision.

The list of artists who appeared at CMS is a virtual “who’s who” in improvised music, many of whom we are happy to note are, like Karl himself, ISIM Advisory Council members: Pauline Oliveros, Dave Holland, Don Cherry, Babatunde Olatunji, Colin Walcott, Marilyn Crispell, Oliver Lake, Karl Berger; the list goes on and on. Pivotal artists from the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) such as Roscoe Mitchell, Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, Leo Smith, and Cecil Taylor were a strong presence at CMS. Here I might express my delight that the AACM will be featured in various formats at our upcoming ISIM conference next December. The AACM is not just a seminal organization in the history of improvised music but in the contemporary musical world and it will be a honor to have them take part. I might also alert everyone to be on the lookout for ISIM Advisory Council member George Lewis’ history of the AACM, which we can expect to be a landmark work in contemporary musicology. More info on that will be forthcoming.

The CMS and AACM, grounded in an exploratory spirit that spanned wide-ranging terrain, exemplify the theme of our second ISIM conference: “Building Bridges”. It is thus fitting to acknowledge these important aspects of the improvised music tradition as we welcome all of you to join us next December.

Ed Sarath



Executive Director Report
Sarah Weaver, Executive Director



Dear ISIM Members,

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find the Call for Proposals for our ISIM Conference 2007 "Building Bridges: Improvisation as a Unifying Agent in Education, Arts, and Society" taking place December 14-16, 2007 at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, USA.

I'm very excited about the featured presentations we have lined up from the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music, Bennett Reimer, the duo Jane Ira Bloom and Mark Dresser, the duo Mazen Kerbaj and Michael Zerang, and Oliver Lake with the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra. We will also have a special appearance by Pauline Oliveros to interview the Bloom/Dresser and Kerbaj/Zerang duos at the conference.

I am inspired by the proposals we have received so far from our members for the conference. Everyone seems to be taking the conference theme to heart, and contributing their work towards the purpose of the conference. We recognize that bridges need to be built within our field, within our organization, and within our society.

Improvisation can be a powerful and unifying force for this purpose, and we will come together in December to work on this process. I believe we have an unprecedented gathering in the works for this conference, I encourage each and every one of you to submit a proposal and join us for this extraordinary event.

Please consider sending the Call for Proposals to your colleagues and speak with them about ISIM. We can grow our organization by inviting our communities that share our vision. If you are involved in a local chapter, discuss the conference theme and encourage each other to make proposals. Make plans to travel together and represent the chapter at the conference. All of us can reach out to new communities within our local region that have a relationship to improvisation - in music and across fields.

A new element to our conference this year is vendor booths. We are offering a free vendor booth to all Associate and Patron members. All institutions and businesses should consider this offer as a wonderful opportunity to connect with our field, build an association with our organization, and service our members. Please contact me with questions and reservations for vendor booths.

I would like to thank Maud Hickey, ISIM Vice President and Secretary, for hosting the 2007 conference at Northwestern University. Maud is the Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Music Education and Technology at Northwestern University. Stephen Syverud, a recently retired Associate Professor of Composition and Music Technology at Northwestern, and recent addition to the ISIM Advisory Council, is serving on the Conference Committee this year. Students from Northwestern will be assisting, including members of the group Backgammon, that performed at the ISIM 2006 Conference. Thank you for your leadership!

The deadline for submitting proposals is September 1, 2007. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions about the conference. I look forward to your proposals, to this event, and to the mindful growth of our organization!

Sincerely,

Sarah Weaver
ISIM Executive Director and Conference Director



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR IMPROVISED MUSIC SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY Evanston, Illinois DEC 14-16, 2007

Building Bridges: Improvisation as a Unifying Agent in Education, Arts, and Society

Featured Artists and Presenters – Jane Ira Bloom (NY), Mark Dresser (CA), Mazen Kerbaj (Beirut), Oliver Lake (NY) with the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra, Bennett Reimer (IL), Michael Zerang (IL), Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (IL).

Creating connections is one of the most prominent themes in today's world. Whether forging treaties between hostile nations, creating ties between diverse cultures in today's global society, melding ideas and artistic influences, or negotiating the intricacies of human relationship; the capacity to integrate disparate perspectives and constituencies into a coherent whole—to build bridges—is central to meaning and progress in most every area of life.

Recognizing improvisation as a powerful tool for achieving this integration, the International Society for Improvised Music invites proposals for performances, workshops, and papers based on this theme for its second international conference.

The theme may be construed broadly: Improvisation may be considered as a powerful way in which to engage with music as an individual or with others; as a pedagogical tool that bridges diverse areas of musical training such as performance, theory, and composition; a vehicle for creativity across fields as diverse as business, science, and sport; a means for integrating one's own creative awareness through peak or transcendent states; a lens for interdisciplinary investigation into areas such as complex systems, cognition, consciousness, and sociology; or a catalyst for dissolving ethnic, gender, and other boundaries. These are just a few examples of possible angles; proposals that pursue other approaches are welcome.

ISIM encourages proposals from as diverse a cross-section of performers, pedagogues, and scholars as possible. Deadline for proposals: Sept 1, 2007

Proposals can be submitted via email: info@isimprov.org
or by postal mail:

International Society for Improvised Music
P.O. Box 1603
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

For more information please contact:

Sarah Weaver, ISIM Conference Director
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A Word from the Advisory Council

Interview with Douglas Ewart of the AACM, by Karlton Hester



The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) is one of the best known of the pioneering organizations for improvised music in the world. It is, therefore, extremely fortunate that they will be among the featured artists and presenters at the International Society for Improvised Music's second annual conference in Chicago in December.

The origins of the AACM began in 1961 when Muhal Richard Abrams (b. 1930) formed the Experimental Band, which would later evolve into the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. He later became the AACM's president. Abrams explored new ideas with bassist and multi-instrumentalist Donald Garrett and other musicians for an extended period of time. By 1963 the Experimental Band eventually expanded to include Joseph Jarman (b. 1937), alto saxophone; Fred Berry, trumpet; Henry Threadgill (b. 1944), woodwinds; Gene Dinwiddie, Kalaparusha and Maurice McIntyre (b. 1936), tenor saxophones; Lester Lashley, trombone; Charles Clark and Donald Garrett, basses; Jack DeJohnette (b. 1942) and Steve McCall (1933–89), drums; and numerous other musicians.

Pianists Abrams and Jodie Christian, drummer Steve McCall, and trumpeter Phil Cohran formed the AACM in May 1965. Its original members were from several groups that appeared around Chicago. Their goals involved (1) creating a situation where a brand of music of their own choice could be produced, and (2) maintaining self-reliance and control over their music. John Johnson handled most of the administrative responsibilities. Minimal dues were collected from members to cover operational expenses and concerts were presented around town. The

seriousness and gravity of the music eventually attracted more innovative musicians (who heard the AACM concerts and rehearsals) into its broadening ranks.

Members from other parts of the country also became interested in the organization and, if nominated by a member, they joined. Lester Bowie (1941-1999), who had been a member of the Black Artist Group (BAG), came to Chicago with drummers Phillip Wilson and Leonard Smith from St. Louis. Trumpeter Leo Smith came from Mississippi. Leo Smith later worked with Anthony Braxton (woodwinds; b. 1945) and Leroy Jenkins (violin; b. 1932) during a period when the trumpeter evolved closer to the idea of "total creativity." Trombonist George Lewis, woodwind artist Roscoe Mitchell and many other pioneering improvisers are illustrious AACM members who emerged during the nascent years to help usher in a diverse range of "Free Jazz" styles that quickly changed the world of composition and performance forever.

I recently spoke with Douglas Ewart from the AACM. I began by asking Douglas about his perspective on ISIM's conference theme and inquired about the nature of the AACM "then and now."

K: This year the theme is "Building Bridges: Improvisation as a Unifying Agent in Education, Arts, and Society." I want to start with talking about the history of the AACM and where some of those original AACM goals are now and how things have been pursued now after almost 50 years. In several more years it will be fifty years since the original Experimental Band got started.

D: This is 42 years that we're now in existence. This past May was the 42nd year. May 8th 1965 was the formal founding of the organization. And you know the idea behind the formation of the organization was for people to be independent, self-sufficient, to be able to be self-determinate. And it was necessary for composer/musician/performers to come together and to organize themselves, as the climate of that time was one in which musicians, particularly those that were being adventurous, were being shut out, in a sense. Well, musicians in general were being shut out. Electronic reproduction had come into full sway if you will, and so in a lot of instances in clubs where musicians would normally play, of any ilk, they began to be supplanted by electronic devices playing music. And then on top of it there were a number of things afoot in Chicago to really prevent certain kinds of music from taking place because of its unifying aspects. You're talking about crossing bridges, crossing boundaries, people would come together and once people start talking to each other it doesn't take long before they step over whatever that forbidden threshold is where they can see the beauty and the magnetism and the humanity. We can see that in each other if we just stop and but converse for a while. We can get to know and understand each other particularly in artistic environments. They had laws in Chicago actually that prevented bands from having more than a trio or duo.

K: Wow, that's amazing.

D: And that was part of that was Mayor Daley senior and his henchmen that helped devise that. They tried to prevent "sitting in" and that's how they made that trio law. There were a lot of reasons during the sixties to formulate an organization like the AACM. There were many organizations being formed anyway outside of AACM like Cumba, a theater group, Afrocobra, which is an artistic group, and Ugima. You know, different theater, visual arts, and musical organizations began at that time. The AACM is one of the few organizations, particularly musical organizations that have remained intact from that time.

K: Yeah, It seems that under various forms of oppression, the way out is always to unify and to find support structures to oppose them, and it seems that back then the AACM was very successful at creating situations where anyone's brand of music could be produced,

and where a lot of people did become self reliant and maintained control over the music. Similar situations happened elsewhere, but I didn't see. I don't know of as strong of a support group taking place that often. At the turn of the century there was the Clef Club, and so there was a strong support groups with similar results of success. How do you see the circumstances surrounding the music today as compared to the way they were in 65, and how are the musicians reacting to it to find a way out of the situation?

D: Well you know I think we're still in a similar position; probably in some respects it might even be fewer venues to play. I remember one time Eddie Harris had compiled a list, and I think I have it somewhere in my archive of materials, of scores and scores of clubs around the Chicago area, and that no longer exists. Now I'm not really all that big about clubs anyway, because they're not always the most conducive environments to play in. Of course there are people who would debate that; who would say that that's where the music grew up and all of that, but I don't even espouse to that idea; that the music grew up in. There's an interesting interview with Coleman Hawkins where he talked about the music, and during the 30s and the 40s people had a lot of salons in their homes and the music was played often inside people's homes. So clubs, you know, just the idea that you need a dingy atmosphere you need this club atmosphere, smoky place to play in in order to make gritty music, I don't espouse to that concept at all, and I think more than ever we need organizations, we need unity. I recently got an email in which some of the musicians were complaining about being left out of some program that was taking place in California, I think at Yoshi's, that the black representation wasn't this and it wasn't that and so on. What do I say to something like that? Do your own festivals; do your own concert, write your own book, don't wait for anybody to include you in their stuff, that's up to Yoshi's what they want to do.

K: Exactly. And in that situation, I got the same email and I responded to it, and that's exactly what I said. I said, "why should you even be concerned about those venues?"

D: As I said to them, most of the time in those places it's almost a given as to what you have to be in there; you don't usually have the kind of freedom that you'd like to have. You can see who they boo, and you know they're looking for a certain kind of thing and so if you want to be truly an artist that is free, then you need to go on and do your own thing. My response to that email was, hey, look let's have a conference call and let's talk about forming a consortium across the country and we put on our own festivals. We could unite and put on a conference festival in Detroit, unite and put one on in Chicago, unite put on one in New York. Rent whatever venue; we can come up with the money to rent it. We don't have to wait for somebody to hire us to play at some particular place and in fact we can find new places, new staging grounds, new theaters, places that have never really been thought of, or people that have not been tapped in terms of their support for the music. There are many people that are ready to do that. So, I think that that, to me, is where our heads should be

K: I'm exactly with you, and I had proposed a very similar thing, suggesting that if we had 12 people to put on 12 festivals in different places around the world once a month, and support each other [that would initiate one potential solution]; everyone in their venue making sure that everything is taken care of so that each one has a certain quality and standard. Just start with 12 and there would be one festival a month throughout the year, and that would gradually multiply. I talked to people in Egypt, people in Cape Town, around the States, etc. It would be very easy to pull together if you find like-minded people. In terms of the venues, there's no musical reason why clubs are needed, particularly not acoustically. As you said with the salons, there are other small venues that take away the intimacy argument, but freedom is what you're looking for on all levels of presenting music. So in terms of what's coming up in Chicago in December of this year with ISIM, part of the thing that I was talking with them about is the fact that there seems to be a huge divide when it comes to talking about improvised music between so called "Black" and so called "White" audiences, and musicians involved. A lot of the things that come up when you start talking about new music and improvised music gets out of domain of African American music; and when you go to the presentations of such music there are very few African American artists included. I thought that it was very important that the AACM be represented in this second annual conference because the whole concept of a society promoting improvised music kind of starts with the AACM - that is, creating the kind of collective that people are now coming around to do here in the United States and transferring that concept over to Europe through a lot of people like Dave Liebman and Kenny Werner and other people. But the origins of the idea and the origins of the music get lost in translation, and I just wanted to see what you thought about that.

D: What they call that syndrome is "a hand full of gimme and a mouth full of much obliged".

K: And what I call it is "Residual Slave Mentality".

D: Okay, okay, and we concur on that because we always trying to get somebody else to take care of stuff for us and we can sit back. It's like my mother said, they're holding the anvil and we're holding the blade. You know, same thing: we want to be in charge but we don't want to take charge.



Members of the AACM circa 1968. Left to right: Leo Smith, Sarnie Garrett, Jarrell's son, Muhal Richard Abrams, Wallace McMillian, Douglas Ewart, Buford Kirkwood, John Shenoy Jackson, John Stubblefield, Lester Lashley, Martin "Sparx" Alexander, Steve Mccall, Henry Threadgill). Collection of the AACM



Karlton Hester. Photo by Norma Cordova, Copyright 2005

K: Well, let me say though that the Bay Area musicians are doing exactly what you said. They're beginning to try to think that way and try to put their own things together. The conversation that you gave them is exactly the conversation that they're developing themselves right now, so I think it was very effective.

So in terms of what's coming up in Chicago in December of this year with ISIM, part of the thing that we have been talking about is the fact that there seems to be a huge divide when it comes to talking about improvised music between so called "Black" and so called "White" audiences, and musicians involved. A lot of the things that come up when you start talking about new music and improvised music it gets out of domain of African American music; and when you go to the presentations [of such music] there are very few African American artists included. I thought that it was very important that the AACM be represented in this second annual conference because the whole concept [of a society promoting improvised music] kind of starts with the AACM – that is, creating the kind of collective that people are now coming around to do here [in the United States] and transferring [that

concept] over to Europe through a lot of people like Dave Liebman and Kenny Werner and other people. But the origins of the idea and the origins of the music get lost in translation. I just wanted to see what you thought about that.

D: Well you know I think part of the divide is a natural one and a normal one in terms of this culture, and how its been for black musicians/black artists/black people, and people that aren't European. One of the things that people like Cage did to distance themselves from some of the most important improvisers of the time was to call their music aleatoric music to circumvent calling it improvisation. So they call it chance music, aleatory music, all that kind of stuff, as a means of trying to not have any kind of alliance or sympathetic vibration with Africans in America. And so what we're having is a continuum of that, and so for me I can see that people have tried to distance themselves because of the economic factor.

I don't call myself a jazz musician. I say to people, "yeah I'm a black musician, if you want to call me that". Interestingly enough, there's a book on Louis Armstrong called "Feel That Music". I actually found the book at a garage sale recently, and within a couple days I read it and I actually bought four copies for other people to read, because he calls the music, and I'm paraphrasing, American Aboriginal Music. He talks about swing, but he doesn't talk about swing in the terms that people normally think swing means, he talks about swing in terms of a spirit, in terms of a kind of progression that takes place. It's a really interesting book, and I would advise as many people, particularly those that are really interested in the music, and those that are interested in what's taking place now. It's a must read, particularly in terms of how things are phrased and the kind of language that he used to describe the music. When he's talking about swing, he's not talking about doo doo doo doo doo doo doo; he's not talking about that, because our music, it covers a lot of ground.

I understand some of the party tricks of people distancing themselves but I also know that it's a way of not acknowledging the enormous contributions and the enormous learning that has taken place from Africans in America; you know musicians that are part of the African Diaspora and part of a greater Diaspora for want of a better word, people of color. The music that we play, while heavily African based influence, it also has global implications, and that's part of what the music has always been-- this kind of embracing nature. Where if you play a mandolin, someone's not going to say "well, aww, man you need to go get a guitar". There's never been that kind of rejecting.

K: What you say is very astute, because music is a reflection of culture and a mirror of society, so there is going to be that natural divide that's just like the rest of the culture. And the rubric of jazz is very telling, because it's one of the only terms on the planet where the music is disassociated from the people who created it in order [for those involved in misappropriation] to use it; and it becomes so silly that they can say Latin jazz but they can't say African-American jazz.

D: Or they can't say Afro, they need to say Afro-Latin and Afro-Cuban. That's where the Afro thing really got out more than even before. People say Afro-this and Afro-that and what I find interesting is the catch phrase that jazz needs. That's why I never use the term Jazz to describe myself, and really my mentors, my influences, when most of them talked about the music, they never really used that phrase to describe what they were doing at all, because they understood the political implications and the inadequacy of using that terminology. And I think self-determination is really important. We need to decide for our own selves what we want to call things.

You may have a name, for example my name is Douglas, and some people want to change it and abbreviate it and they still feel that it's viable, and I'm like "no, that's not my name. Use all my letters, you're not giving me the right sound". And there was a time in my life when it didn't seem to matter that much, and maybe I just didn't say anything about it, but I remember when I started telling people "no, that ain't my name". And I didn't ever use it as a means of saying don't call me this, call me that. I remember it's almost like saying, "Don't call me nigger". Why say it at all? Just call yourself what you want to call yourself and you don't have to go down the road of what it is you don't want to be called. Why you say a column of things you don't want to be called? Say what you want to be called, and that only emphasizes what you want to say anyway. That means you're not giving power to the negative thing you don't want to be called in the first place.

K: Yeah, all the titans of the music I've ever spoken to said exactly what you did. I remember Jackie Bayard said that whenever anyone tried to force him into that term he said "well I will say the music that some call jazz" Duke Ellington said, "if we keep using that term we're going to lose our music." All the masters understood the political implications of using that word.

In terms of membership these days, how is the AACM membership [progressing]? Is it pretty much moving in a global direction? I know it's not completely centered in Chicago anymore it's expanded so much.

D: We have members that are really all over the place; officially we have a chapter in Chicago and a chapter in New York. Chicago is still the "spawning ground", if you will, because membership only comes in through Chicago, new membership only comes in through Chicago . . . and part of it is in Chicago we still have the school that was originated in 1967. The school was informal prior to that but the formal founding of the AACM School of Music was in the fall of 1967, in what was then the Abraham Lincoln center, which is now part of Northeastern University.

K: Has George Lewis come out with his book on the AACM yet? I wonder if you had a chance to read any of that book and if you'd like to share any of your feelings about it as a document reflecting the history of the AACM?

D: The book by George Lewis? That book is a terrific book and what's wonderful is that the AACM spawned such beautiful thinkers and theorists. We've been truly, truly blessed in that area, and yes the book is finished will be out this fall. In fact George just sent out an announcement about the book coming out this fall for sure, and what's great about this book is that it doesn't talk just about this association, but it links organizations that were formulated in Europe and organizations that were formulated around the country. It discusses global implications of the music and of the practitioners, and it links things together. It doesn't just talk about musicians, but talks about artists from every aspect of art making and the many tentacles and the many overlaps and the many connections that we all bear. To me, the book is really far-reaching and powerful, and George is a perfect candidate to do it because he has made so many links. Some of us may not have had all the links that he's had in terms of working with both European players and players from around the United States and players of all genres and backgrounds, if you will.

K: Yeah, his foundation is so broad and he's so knowledgeable - and such a good researcher and musician - that he has a perfect formula for doing a book like that.

D: In order to do a document like that, you need to have somebody that a lot of people have faith in and trust in an implicit fashion. Because people will have information but they won't give it to you if they don't really feel confident about trusting you. I read the book of course prior to the formal, you know, doing the aspects of putting it together. I was one of those who read to look over things and give feedback, so I read the entire book but I'm looking forward to seeing the book after all the revisions and corrections have been made.

K: That's going to be an excellent document; I'm looking forward to it myself.

D: Crucial, crucial! And more and more people are writing about the association, and I think this book will be a benchmark and a really important document in terms of helping tell the history in our own words, and in our own way. It kind of harks back, or harks forward, to what we talked about earlier, which is got to write your own stuff and to stop getting pissed off about people not including you in their own private party.

K: And that's on all levels, as you said, in terms of documenting the music, creating venues and music education all across the board.

D: Absolutely man, to me some of the most beautiful events that I've participated in have been the ones where the musicians or the artists or people that have a real fervor for this music have presented; in which they really take care of the musicians, look out for the musicians, feed the musicians, love the musicians. And that really shows. You're not dumped after the gig is over. Instead you're treated with the utmost respect from start to finish. That to me is what we need to strive for and look at as a model in terms of presentation; what kind of presentation we should be looking at as a hallmark, and as a way of really thinking and showing respect for the practitioners of the art, of the music we say we love so much.

Transcribed and edited by Kate Olson and James Ilgenfritz

News In Brief and Caught on Camera::

If you have some big news or a great photo from a recent event, ISIM wants to include your news and photos in these pages. Have a new CD coming out? Or take part in a noteworthy concert event, conferece, or workshop? Please send news announcements and photos to ISIM Newsletter Coordinator James Ilgenfritz to be included in a new section for the upcoming Fall newsletter. Deadline to get news or images included is Wednesday October 31.

email James at:
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ISIM Member Profile::

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Julianne Carney is a Brooklyn-based violinist from Detroit, MI. Her improvisation project is called Ahnfinod, and she has performed, toured, and/or recorded with Jay-Z, Beyonce, Sufjan Stevens, Jenny Scheinman, Bill Frisell, Lupe Fiasco, Adam Matta (beatbox), Ambitious Orchestra, Luminescent Orchestr(ii), My Brightest Diamond (formerly AwRY), Pilotram, and the One World Symphony.

Venue highlights include Radio City Music Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Tonic, Knitting Factory, Apollo Theater, Symphony Space, Café Lena, and the Beachland Ballroom. Julianne also began to play Appalachian and New England style fiddle in 2005.

She was a recipient of the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 2001-02, & received her Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance, Summa Cum Laude, at Lawrence University, in Appleton, WI.

Julianne is the ISIM NYC chapter leader. She also teaches violin at the Harlem Children's Zone, Brooklyn College, and maintains a Brooklyn Violin Studio. She also co-facilitates SPYE: Soundpainting Youth Ensemble of NYC.

isim compilation CD volume 2



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|---|------|--|
| 1. Underwater Ballet | 3:03 | Michael Jeffrey Stevens and Dom Minasi |
| 2. Tangram | 3:50 | Ken Filiano |
| 3. Taal Mama | 4:57 | Gojogo |
| Eric Perney, Sarah Jo Saharako, Ben Mawhorter, Elias Reitz | | |
| 4. Dice | 6:18 | Cesar Villavicencio and Diego Espinosa |
| 5. Electric Fence | 1:59 | Jon Rose and Hollis Taylor |
| 6. Turkish Tihai | 3:52 | Ed Sarath |
| 7. Tyler Lives in a Warehouse Complex | 6:24 | The Giants of Gender |
| Kyle Farrell, Jenna Barvitski, and Andy Meyer | | |
| 8. Flying Lessons: IV (Robert Dick) | 2:36 | Robert Dick |
| 9. 5.24.07 Greenwich Music House (Part 3) | 6:37 | Cincinnati Real Time Composers |
| Michael Ippolito, Carlos Velez, Jason Denner, Isaac Thompson, Steve Whipple, and Shiau-uen Ding | | |
| 10. Selfish Shellfish | 6:20 | Thomas Helton |
| 11. 226 Manifestation: 1/14 | 3:35 | Julianne Carney and Lathan Hardy |
| 12. MU edited version 2 | 4:59 | Claudio Parodi |
| 13. One Seven | 6:17 | Paul Scea |
| 14. Cut 03 (5-7-2006) | 3:22 | DSS |
| Aaron Drake, Cassia Streb, and Philip Stearns | | |



compiled by james ilgenfritz

Ty Cumbie / Invitation – The King’s Waltz



In the summer of 2004, producer Nick Holmes invited me to put together a string group in support of multi-reed/brass player Daniel Carter and record at his studio in Chelsea, New York. This recording is a result of the ensuing session. I had just recently gotten to know the wonderful West Coast violist, Tara Flandreau, and cellist Chris Hoffman had also recently come to my attention as a terrific improvising cellist. I had already a good deal of playing with Adam Lane, and have long been convinced of his excellence in all facets of musicianship. The group had not, of course, played together previously, and some members weren't even acquainted. There was no rehearsal, and there was minimal conversation in the studio. Mostly we just played. Daniel was rather subdued in the context of strings without drums, but the microphone caught the superb nuances of his playing that one misses in his usual settings, often with highly active drumming and other horns joining. The title I chose for the airy closing track, which also serves as title for the recording, pays tribute to producer Nick Holmes with tongue firmly in cheek. The group title makes reference to his generous invitation, something no other producer in New York could conceivably have had the vision and courage to undertake. - Ty Cumbie

Invitation is a collection of duos, trios, quartets, and quintets, often highlighted by Mr. Carter's richly intoned work on all the wind and reed instruments, but sometimes by a string trio or quartet in which the leading voice is exchanged amongst the players. Aside from the opening notes on track one, on which Mr. Carter briefly quotes "Stella by Starlight"

(destined to make a quick bow on the 9th track as well) and the bouncy feel to "26th Street Shuffle," this is a freely improvised collection of vignettes. Mr. Cumbie's electric guitar work is typically very clear in tone, his favored techniques running to a combination of tapping, plucking, and rheostatic volume swells, although late in the program he engages in some stirring single note work interspersed among plucked arpeggios and affirming chords.

Adam Lane and Tara Flandreau both contribute extensively to the pieces with a catalog of pizzicato, arco, harmonics, bow tones, and transducer tapping while Christopher Hoffman seems to be least in evidence, although always a strong contributor when he is playing.

The general tendency of the ensemble work is towards a massing of long tones and resulting harmonies which, while always stirring, are in evidence on every track. With these long tones coloring a majority of the recording, it often falls to the singular scalings and intervallic leaps from Mr. Carter, tapped swells from Mr. Cumbie, and the pizzicato work of any of the other strings to differentiate the pieces from each other. These are well played improvisations by masterful performers, particularly Daniel Carter's distinctive voice, that might have gained from more line and voice trading within each piece. -Ian M. Davis



Claudio Parodi – Horizontal Mover



Claudio Parodi received classical training and played jazz since the age of 25. He joined the improvisers' scene after meeting Barre Phillips. He performs duo with Michel Doneda, John Dobie, Alessando Buzzi, Luigi Valenziano, and Riccardo Kalb. He composed the music for the videos *Malegatus* (directed by Alberto Ghiara) and *Frammenti Sonori* (directed by Francesco Bianchi and Claudio Rossi). He received second prize in 1998 at VIII videodance international festival *Il Coreografo Elettronico* and was mentioned at the second edition of *Genova Film Festival*. His new project is *de Manincor/Rispoli/Parodi*, improvisation trio with actresses Anna de Manincor and Anna Rispoli on voice. With Alessandro Buzzi he runs the *rabbia* series, booking *Anatrofobia*, Giancarlo Locatelli.

Claudio Parodi's "Horizontal Mover" is a long piece (58'31") that uses Tiziano Milani's recording "Suoni 2005" as a means to examine Alvin Lucier's composition "I Am Sitting In A Room." The piece results from allowing Milani's source material to play in a room twelve separate times through a variety of "diffusers" (a series of instrument amplifiers and associated monitor speakers), resonate with a variety of cymbals, drums, and "humming amplifiers," while being captured by strategically placed microphones. The source material was eliminated from each of the twelve results and these were, to some extent, edited and cross-faded to produce the single program.

In effect, the piece is an improvisation of a recorded source with a room installation. As such, the piece bears strong conceptual resemblance to the witnessed creation of an abstract painting, in that the final color, density, and position of the paint is aleatorically determined by choice of paint, application method, and canvas.

The sounds thus accumulated slowly and constantly change over the duration. They are all derived from interaction of an electronically reproduced source in a manipulated acoustical environment. I suppose this sums to one definition of an "electroacoustic" piece. The tones and timbres discovered consist of tremulous, shifting long tones, vitreous glissandi, gentle accretions of overtones to a once pure tone, and the occasional trumpet line, one supposes residual from the expurgated source. Interestingly, it can be perceived as a meditation on the importance of "the room" as a collaborator for any performance – the room always has something to add – or subtract. "Horizontal Mover" is a beautiful long-form sound sculpture crafted with care. -Ian M. Davis



Martin Norgaard – Jazz Fiddle Wizard Books 1 & 2



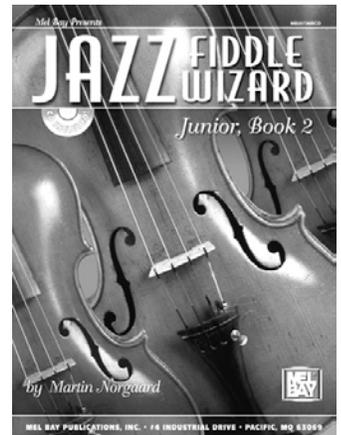
Martin Norgaard is the author of the groundbreaking method books *Jazz Fiddle Wizard* and *Jazz Fiddle/Viola/Cello Wizard Jr.* for Mel Bay Publications. He is currently a Doctoral Fellow in Music Education with a jazz emphasis at The University of Texas at Austin. Norgaard taught jazz and commercial strings at Belmont University and Vanderbilt University in Nashville for six years and was director of the Belmont Jazz String Quartet and Jazz String Septet, which have been featured at IAJE 2001, MENC 2002 and ASTA 2003. Norgaard has also taught at the IAJE Teacher Training Institute, the South Carolina Suzuki Institute, the Augusta Heritage Festival and Vanderbilt's International Fiddle School.

Strangely, the word "improvise" is alternately a joke or a means of terror in the string world. All of the volumes of improvising methods combined weigh less than just the catalogue for method books. For this reason, I'm grateful, as an improvising string player and teacher, for all new developments, such as Norgaard's *Jazz Fiddle Wizard Jr.* Mel Bay series.

Utilizing the "Music-Minus-One" type of drum/piano/bass trio backup, with cues from the violin, the two volumes follow a pedagogically sound (and Suzuki-friendly) path of small building-block steps, which are easily approachable by post-Twinkle Twinkle to intermediate students. Each volume is available for violin, viola, and cello, comes with an accompaniment CD, and includes tunes written by Norgaard, arranged with three parts, which all fit together for string ensemble. Bass parts for Volume 1 are downloadable; Volume II bass parts are included with each book.

The first volume begins with easy rhythms on open strings, expanding to twelve-bar blues by the end. Backup tracks are included for the student to improvise over. This is repeated for D minor pentatonic & G Major scale, eventually mixing up rhythms for whole scales. The single note improvisations enable a teacher to begin using the books as early as the student can comfortably play the Twinkle Variation rhythms, and a mid-Book One student can play the D minor & G Major sections. The second volume follows a similar path. First, students learn to "tell a story" or "shape energy" – changing rhythmic density and register. Then, the concept of "inner melody" is introduced: by choosing one tone per chord in a progression, the student creates a simple melody, and may then improvise on that melody. The volume also offers good explanations of scale degrees, how mixolydian is found, and how chord progressions work. Scales used include G Major, C Major, D Mixo (building on G Major), and G Mixo.

For Volume I, I was disappointed not to have anything in A Major or D Major, which Suzuki students stick to for quite some time. Nonetheless, they're a lot of fun, and I would strongly recommend them as one way to introduce improvisation with string students. And, I would encourage all ISIM members to continue to develop materials - how about one each for post-jazz, classical, and noise improvisation? –Julianne Carney



Connie Crothers – Music Is a Place



Pianist **Connie Crothers** has been recognized for her originality, virtuosity and range of musical expression, and has been described by Jean Quist as "...a lioness on the keyboard." She has performed at such festivals as Berlin Jazztage, Jazz at Middleheim, Belgium, DuMaurier International Festival in Toronto, JVC New York Jazz Festival, New Music America Festival, Spoleto in Charleston, NC, and performed at Merkin Hall, Location One, BAM, Carnegie Recital Hall, the Blue Note, the Village Vanguard, Birdland, Sweet Basil, and The Stone in New York City, De Singel, Belgium, Bim House, Netherlands, and Deep Listening Space, Kingston, NY. Five of her CDs have been chosen by critics for their list of the best records of the year. One of them, "Love Energy," was voted #1 record of the year in *Wire*. She was featured on Marian McPartland's "Piano Jazz." She also made a duo CD with Max Roach, "Swish," and performed with him in Tokyo, Bologna, New Orleans, and Harvard University, where she and Mr. Roach were honored as Visiting Jazz Artist. Other collaborators include Lenny Popkin, Carol and Bud Tristano, Warne Marsh, Lee Konitz, Andy Fite, Jemeel Moondoc, Henry Grimes, Eddie Gomez, Sonny Dallas, Kevin Norton, Cameron Brown, Adam Lane, John McCutcheon, Ace Yamashita, Ben Manley, Jim Staley, and poet Mark Weber. She is the founder and president of New Artists Records.

Connie Crothers has for the past few years lead a quartet that features Richard Tabnik on alto saxophone, Roger Mancuso on drums, Ken Filiano on bass. Her new CD "Music is a Place" features this quartet, with the bass role filled on this CD by Ratzo Harris. Tabnik and Crothers have a profound shared sensibility that celebrates and expands the abstraction and fragmentation of the jazz vocabulary that characterized the innovations of Crothers' former teacher, the great Lennie Tristano.

This is complex music, as expressed both in the flawlessly executed heads and in the improvisation, but the complexity is employed purely in service of creating a fertile creative environment. Cross-rhythms, block chording, counterpoint, and extemporaneous ensemble arrangements are so central to the improvised developments that the energy and feeling expressed on spontaneous pieces "You're The One" and "Ditmas Ave. Angels" are nearly identical to those found in the tunes-based improvisation on other tracks. Indeed, only the unison head in the piano and saxophone at the beginning and end of the track distinguishes the tunes from the spontaneous pieces. The tunes themselves have their own merits: heads like Crothers's "Helen's Tune" or Tabnik's "Linearity" grab the listener's attention and inspire serious blowing from all the musicians.

The experiments with open form improvisation and unorthodox melodicism of the so-called "Tristano School" are on virtuosic display throughout, as the feeling and attention to the moment define this work. Crothers says it best in the liner notes: "You don't achieve complexity by practicing it or rehearsing it or planning it, you get it by merging completely with the instant that you are in and the note that's expressing that instant". –Jl

