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ISIM Newsletter Spring 2008 Volume 4, No. 1

Message from the President



Coming up with something to write about following an ISIM conference is never a problem. What is difficult is figuring out where to start and what to omit when space is limited. Let me begin by saying "thank you" to everyone who attended the event last December, ISIM's second conference, and in so doing, contributed significantly to the evolution of ISIM. To put it in baseball parlance now that a new season is about to begin—ISIM is batting two for two!

To cite a few of the many individuals without whose incredible efforts the event would not have been possible: Maud Hickey and the many students and faculty at Northwestern's School of Music came out in full force, this after their semester had ended a week before the conference, and came through in a big way. Evan Tobias, NU Music Education doctoral student was indispensable to the effort from early in the planning throughout the end of the conference. Kate Olson, MM in Improvisation student at Michigan, inherited the daunting task of Technical Director and performed superbly under intensive conditions and responsibilities. And Sarah Weaver, Conference Director and ISIM Executive Director, once again performed the kind of heroics that, while often going undetected, either make or break an event. Perhaps the most meaningful feedback we hear from conference attendees is that they feel like they are part of a big family at these events. I cannot express my appreciation adequately enough to Maud, Evan, Kate, and Sarah and many others for their efforts in making this kind of experience possible.

Thanks also to Advisory Council member Thomas Buckner for his financial support for the conference as well as his presence at the event. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Maria and Frederic Ragucci for their numerous and generous donations to ISIM over the past few years.

We will shortly be announcing plans for future conferences. Meanwhile, we have plenty on our plate to keep us occupied. I am happy to welcome two new members to the ISIM Board of Directors—LaDonna Smith and India Cooke. Both LaDonna and India are consummate creative artists as well as involved in teaching in one way or another, thus exemplifying two important aspects of ISIM. It is a pleasure to have them join us. I would also like to thank Michael Nickens and Mitchell Gordon for their invaluable service to ISIM during their terms on the ISIM Board of Directors. Additionally, we are happy to add Mazen Kerbaj, Michael Zerang, Nicole Mitchell, and Douglas Ewart to the ISIM Advisory Council.

Two new committees have been formed that will support the further growth of the organization: the ISIM Development Committee, which will be chaired by Stephen Nachmanovitch, and the Membership Outreach Committee. Evan Tobias is the coordinator for the ISIM Volunteer Team; please contact ISIM if you are interested to join this group and get involved with volunteer activities for ISIM!. It is truly gratifying to see participation in these groups from among the broader ISIM membership and Advisory Council; this will be instrumental to the growth of our organization.

In May, the first ISIM Benefit Event will be held in New York and hosted by Thomas Buckner and the New York ISIM chapter. Julianne Carney is the NYC chapter coordinator and we greatly appreciate her leadership in this event. And in October, a think-tank will be convened for the ISIM Curriculum Project, which was presented at a panel discussion at our conference. Plans are being drawn up as we speak for a collaboration between ISIM and the Center for Applied Research in Musical Understanding at Oakland University. Those of you who are involved in one way or another with academic musical training know first-hand the importance, yet unfortunately marginalized status, of improvisation in many if not most institutions. I believe we are at the threshold of an entirely new era in music learning where the creative activities of improvisation and composition and the multi-stylistic expanse of the musical world will assume their rightful place as central to the preparation of 21st century musical artists. But this transformation will need to be catalyzed and guided by a highly sophisticated artistic and pedagogical vision that enables integration of past and present, old and new, and East and West, in inclusive and flexible ways that honor the unique needs of individual students and institutions.

The ISIM Curriculum Project is being conceived as the next wave in a series of initiatives at music education reform that goes back decades. In the 1970s was the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program, which was followed by the Comprehensive Musicianship Program of the 1980s. Other smaller ventures as well as a host of conferences and publications (e.g. MENC National Arts Standards) have dotted the music learning landscape in the interim. But much like the venerable cockroach that some wryly surmise will be the only form of life to survive a nuclear holocaust; musical training, when all is said and done, has not significantly budged from its moorings from the time of its entrance into higher education. Hopefully the ICCP will make a significant contribution to this important educational need.

In closing let me emphasize that the various strands of ISIM—performance, education, research, improvisation across fields—are inextricably linked and that as the organization evolves, I truly hope the boundaries between these areas will become increasingly transparent. We are all artists and teachers and researchers in one way or another. And one of the most gratifying things about our organization, and this has been wonderfully evident at our conferences, is the way we have been able to bring together practitioners from highly diverse backgrounds. From Bennett Reimer's inspiring opening talk, to the incredible music of the AACM Experimental Music Ensemble, to the riveting duo sets of Jane Ira Bloom and Mark Dresser and Mazen Kerbaj and Michael Zerang, to Oliver Lake's stellar compositions and performance with the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra—not to mention the wide diversity of presentations many of you made—we have managed to 'build bridges' between worlds that all too often remain separate. ISIM is entering an exciting phase of growth and it will be important to keep this breath and inclusiveness of the ISIM vision in mind as we move forward.

Finally—I would like to thank all of you for your involvement in ISIM and urge everyone to help spread the word about the organization as we continue build our future community together.

Ed Sarath





**Executive Director Report
Sarah Weaver, Executive Director**

I would like to echo Ed Sarath in thanking everyone involved for a spectacular ISIM Conference 2007 Building Bridges: Improvisation as a Unifying Agent in Education, Arts, and Society. It was a truly inspiring event and indicative of a resonant vision realized within our community. I am excited for our organization and the ways in which we are growing together in support of our work and our field.

Our ISIM Benefit Event promises to build on the momentum of our organization and joined vision with feature performances and a panel discussion by prominent musicians and scholars of our field. Here are the event details.

International Society for Improvised Music Benefit Event

Hosted by Thomas Buckner
and the ISIM New York City Professional Chapter

Featuring performers and scholars:

- Oliver Lake, Geri Allen
- Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton
- Dom Minasi
- Ursel Schlicht and Robert Dick
- TranceFormation: Andrea Wolper, Connie Crothers, Ken Filiano
- NYC Chapter Ensemble: Julianne Carney, Adrian Coburn, James Ilgenfritz, Carol Purdy, Chris Chalfant

Panel: Ed Sarath, Earl Howard, Stephen Nachmanovitch
Environmental Dialogue by Pauline Oliveros, facilitated by Sarah Weaver
The event takes place May 17, 2008 7:00pm-10:00pmEST at Lotus Music and Dance, 109 West 27th Street 8th Floor, New York, NY 10001
www.lotusmusicanddance.org Local audience is by invitation only, the event is streamed live on the internet www.isimprov.org

Donations to ISIM can be made online or by postal mail during this event and throughout the year. The Friends of ISIM webpage gives details about our private donation program. All donations are tax-deductible.

Thank you again for your participation in ISIM. Please stay in touch with your ideas and suggestions for our organization. Best wishes for the spring season!

Sarah Weaver
ISIM Executive Director

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ISIM Announces Two New Committees::

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Kate Olson
Evan Tobias
Brandon Vaccaro
Sarah Weaver
Derek Zoladz

ISIM Development Committee
Stephen Nachmanovitch, chair
Jeff Agrell
David Borgo
James Ilgenfritz
Stephanie Phillips
Ed Sarath
Sarah Weaver

A Word from the ISIM Advisory Council

An Interview with Thomas Buckner

Sarah Weaver, Interviewer

For over three decades Thomas Buckner has championed music of the avant-garde in America and throughout the world as a performer, producer, and promoter. A former student of the legendary Metropolitan Opera baritone, Martial Singher, he was trained in the classical tradition and has continued throughout his distinguished career to broaden the scope of his vocal styles, specializing in a wide range of experimental music. Buckner has collaborated with a host of "new music" composers including Robert Ashley, Roscoe Mitchell, Wadada Leo Smith, Noah Creshevsky, Annea Lockwood, Bunching Lam, David Wessel, Tom Hamilton, Leroy Jenkins, Phill Niblock, Matthias Kaul and many others. He has made solo appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Harvard University, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Edinburgh Festival, the Prague Spring Festival, and the Biennale Festival in Venice, presenting a repertoire that includes more than 100 compositions, written for, or dedicated to him. The baritone works as an energetic concert producer as well, presenting many facets of new music deserving recognition. For the past eighteen seasons, Buckner has curated the Interpretations series with the World Music Institute in New York City. He also has created the Mutable Music record label to produce new recordings and reissue some important historic recordings, previously unavailable in CD format. The impressive catalog includes recordings by Randy Weston, Roscoe Mitchell, Borah Bergman, Jerome Cooper, Earl Howard, Noah Creshevsky, and Tom Hamilton. www.thomasbuckner.com

Sarah Weaver: Let's begin by speaking about your presentations and overall experience at the 2006 and 2007 ISIM Conferences. In 2006 you performed Robert Ashley's *The Producer Speaks*. In 2007 you were a member of the panel on *Present and Future Directions of Improvised Music* with Michael G. Nastos and Rui Carvalho.

Thomas Buckner: I really enjoyed it very much. I had more of an experience the first year when I could be there for the whole conference. The second year I had a concert your opening night so I got there in time for the second day. I arrived in time to hear the panel discussion of the AACM. I hadn't heard their concert the night before. The fantastic group that came from Brazil really impressed me. I wish they had a bigger audience. They were just quite amazing, a remarkable group of improvisers, I really enjoyed hearing them.

I always enjoy the fact that you get to meet up with old friends. For example I hadn't seen Art Lande in years. Seeing people that have like-minded ideas is always a great pleasure. I didn't hear Joe Giardullo this time but I did see him, and Claudio Parodi from Italy I didn't get to hear either because that was on Friday. But it reminded me that one of my favorite events at the first ISIM Conference was Joe Giardullo's presentation of his soprano saxophone piece. It was outstanding. In fact I originally was going to have him to do that piece in my Interpretations series, but he wanted to do a large ensemble piece. This is for the recent Interpretations concert that also featured the Oliver Lake Big Band.

Oliver's presentation at the second ISIM conference was also remarkable with the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra. I thought they played very well. I'm a big fan of Oliver Lake. Not only is he a phenomenal improviser and jazz composer, but have you heard his string quartets? They are amazing. It was great that you had Oliver there. I was very impressed and thought that the group seemed really familiar with his material.

As I mentioned to you when I was there, I think as the organization grows it would be great if more working musicians outside of academia could somehow be able to come who are not headliners. Which means raising money to bring them because they don't have a school that will pay for them to go. Maybe some kind of reasonable stipend can be worked out once we start making money because I think it would be more interesting if it represented a larger percentage of folks who are not necessarily connected to institutions. We need to find a place for them.

SW: Yes, I agree.

TB: You also asked about the panel that I was on. I was particularly interested to hear about the teaching project from Rui Carvahlo from Brazil. It was unfortunate that his experience is the same. A rejection from the university establishment. His way of dealing with the students was great. Starting with the music that they know, and going backwards in history to show them where it came from. That sounded like a really good idea. If I were in a position where I had to teach this type of course, I would adopt his ideas. It's such a logical idea that never occurred to me. I enjoyed the panel. I thought the questions were interesting and the people were interesting.

I thought the presentation by Pauline Oliveros at the first conference was quite remarkable. The way the students from the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra responded was very good. Also the performance by Steve Coleman was quite good, along with the same ensemble from the University of Michigan that performed with his group. It was a

wonderful and exacting way to work with people. There was a lot of clarity in it. It was quite a beautiful performance. I enjoyed the first year hearing Mark Dresser and Jane Ira Bloom. I noticed you brought them back a second time.

SW: Yes we did, this time as headliners. For the duo night featuring Michael Zerang and Mazen Kerbaj, Mark Dresser and Jane Ira Bloom, hosted by Pauline Oliveros.

TB: I thought that was interesting. What I got to hear I enjoyed, and I enjoyed the whole nature of being around the conference. I really think you should be congratulated. I want to say how well-run I thought everything was, and how comfortable in both cases you made everybody feel. I think that's really important. I think the organization did a fantastic job of making things clear, no one feels lost wandering around. Everyone on the staff both times I was there were extremely helpful. The people selling CDs, the people at the registration desk, everyone was very positive. It's not an easy job. It's great, and I think it's partly because it's all people who are connected with what the organization does. The organization seems to have a very wonderful attitude, which I really appreciated.

SW: Thank you very much Tom. Let's talk more about you now. You have a record label *Mutable Music*, a concert series *Interpretations*, over 100 compositions written for you, and a number of long-standing collaborations. Is there any aspect that you would like to speak about first?

TB: I think I'll go a little bit historically. Since I'm an older fellow in my 60's, I have experiences from back when free improvisation was in its infancy. I was lucky enough to get interested in it when I was quite young. My biggest inspiration was hearing a subset of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Roscoe Mitchell, Lester Bowie, and Malachi Favors, who came to the west coast in 1968. I had actually started before that, I started working with David Wessel, the founding director of the Center for New Music and Audio Technology at the University of California Berkeley. He is a remarkable improviser and developer of tools. He has a phenomenal new interface that he has developed. He's also a project director for the original development of MAX. He's very significant. It turns out he and I became friends at graduate school at Stanford while neither of us was studying music. We discovered our mutual interests and we drove up to San Francisco every weekend to hear Miles Davis and whoever else was in town. We started an improvising trio with a flute player, David on percussion, and me singing. We started exploring free improvisation.

When I heard Roscoe Mitchell's group it was amazing. He and Malachi and Lester were there. Joseph Jarmen was not traveling with them at the time, he hadn't joined the group yet. It was just changing from the Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble to the Art Ensemble of Chicago. They were staying across the street in East Palo Alto from my friend David Wessel. I went to David's house for dinner and I heard music coming out of the house across the street. Live music, improvised music. I went to bed, music was still coming out of the house. I woke up the next morning, music was coming out of the house. We walked over to say hello. The house had one room. The bass player had his bass setup with his percussion. Roscoe had his percussion, plus all of his saxophones, flutes, smaller instruments. Lester had his setup. And on the floor next to each of their setups was a sleeping bag. Literally on this trip to the west coast when they weren't out performing to earn money they were practicing all day and into the night every day. The reason you heard music coming out of the house in the morning is Roscoe is a man that gets up at 5am and plays long tones for a couple of hours. This ups the ante for me! I realized if this is what you have to do to be good at improvised music, you have to work at it all the time. I've been doing so ever since, to the best of my ability!

I also like to do written music, and they are people out of the AACM whose philosophy has been to only perform their own compositions. Even though they all of course mastered and can play all of the standards, they tend not to. They play their own music. That was good for me too. I learned all of the standards as a singer and still do them as a hobby but I decided on a similar kind of approach. I value originality and trying to find one's own way rather than imitating, above almost anything else. Improvisation, if you can really be strict with yourself, is a great way to hear something you haven't heard before. That's what John Cage said, that's why he wrote music, was to hear something he hadn't heard before.

I feel very lucky to have gotten involved in improvisation early because I was a concert singer at the same time I was developing in improvisation. I find that they really help each other. I don't think that I would be able to sing as spontaneously and naturally as I hope I do when I sing written music. If I'm regularly practicing improvisation, music becomes a natural function, getting back in touch with what I like to call your "original musical impulse" that we all have. This gets fed through the various styles that one runs into through composers. Then in improvisation one cannot get drawn into a particular style, but rather find one's own way. I think that brings in an authenticity to the music. Then people are hearing it, they're hearing music made right before their ears. I notice people listen differently to music that could go anywhere.

My first major performing trio was with Roscoe Mitchell and the late Gerald Oshita. Roscoe Mitchell had become world-famous and was running a program at Karl Berger and Ornette Coleman's Creative Music Studio. He invited Gerald

Oshita to do a two-week teaching period there. At the end of their time they got to do a solo concert for the students and they could invite one guest. Since we had been working together for a year but hadn't performed, Gerald invited me and in his concert we performed a piece that we had worked up together. After the concert was over Roscoe came up and said, "Let's be a trio." I almost fainted!

The group was called Space. When we worked in Europe it was usually called the Roscoe Mitchell Trio because he had the bigger name. For several years we worked constantly. We worked on ways of finding a group sound that remained free. We made a couple of recordings and did a lot of touring until Gerald passed away. Since that time Roscoe and I have done something every year together. I just did a concert with him out at Mills where he is now the Darius Milhaud Professor of Composition.

My other long-term experience started when I moved back to New York in 1983. It was the last year of our Arch ensemble. We had finally received a grant. It was an opportunity to commission a composer. We decided that the person we wanted to commission was Robert Ashley. In our opinion his compositions were the most original music we were hearing. He agreed to do a piece for us. I asked for the piece to include voice. He took a piece out of an opera he was working on and made a version of it for chamber orchestra and baritone voice. I had plenty of time because I had just moved to New York and didn't have any concerts. I was about 40 years old. I dug into this piece, and when I went to see him and do it for him he was very pleased. He asked me if I would like to be in his company.

For the next concert we translated the aria into Italian because the next concert was in Rome. I had the words, and I had no music. I spontaneously invented the melody based on his principal he had been teaching me. The principal was that when you speak the declaration of the text has a melody in it. In Italian the melody is much more prominent. It's a very melodic language. You can basically take the shapes from speaking the words, put them in a mode that goes with the chord changes you are dealing with, and just make it up. This has been an anchor of my work for the past 25 years. After I sang in that opera Bob has written a number of more operas, and I have been in his opera company along with Sam Ashley, Jackie Humbert, and Joan La Barbara all of these years.

He puts you in a tessitura. That's the place in your range, whether it's high in your range, middle of your range, low in your range, that's called a tessitura. It corresponds to the emotional impact that he wants you to have relating to the meaning of that particular section. Clearly if you are singing up high in your voice there is going to be a lot more excitement, tension, or high drama. If you're singing or speaking low in your voice it is going to be more calm and peaceful. He knows our voices very well because he has worked with the same four singers all these years. When he puts you on a note he knows what kind of sound you are going to make by having that be your central note. Your musical invention takes place in a small range around that note. It's based on the way your voice goes up and down when you talk. That's really no bigger than a fifth. Your main note would be sort of in the middle. You go a couple of notes above it, a couple of notes below it, if you pay attention to the way you talk you'll hear that's the way you talk. It means that each character has a tone quality that comes from where it is in their range.

The other idea is that we do intensive rehearsals that are very long, to repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat. The character gradually establishes itself, if you follow this principal. Eventually you end up with characteristic ways of singing in a manner of speaking for the whole role of any character that you're doing. It's amazing how different each of us sounds in each opera depending what character we were playing. You can tell it's the same performer but there is a remarkable variety of qualities that each of us got because of applying these principals and the character of the writing.

Ashley writes all of his own texts. The texts are written with lots of musical devices, alliteration, internal rhyme, and rhythmical structure. I think a lot about this. I love the idea that sometimes a structure can be freeing. It can give you something on which to hang your improvisation. The kinds of things it tells you to do help facilitate the things you are doing more freely. Bob really accomplishes that. I feel very blessed and lucky to have gotten to work with him.

I have also had the great pleasure of getting to work from time to time with Pauline Oliveros. She and David Wessel and I have a group with Jennifer Wilsey and George Marsh, two wonderful percussionists, called Timeless Pulse. They made one CD of a concert I couldn't get to and that became their first album. I'll never miss another one! The second CD Timeless Pulse Quintet came out recently. It had a very good response, many nice reviews.

Another main improvising association of mine has been Tom Hamilton, with whom I'm doing a duo with at the ISIM Benefit Event this May. He has a very interesting approach. We play compositions of his in which he conceives his electronic part as an oral score. Other projects we do are improvisations. We made a duo improvisation record where each of us put together an hour-long solo improvisation. In other words we decided the areas we were going to improvise in and made a solo piece for ourselves. Then went to the concert and performed them together. We also had a wonderful processing project where the processing that he was using was independent of his controls. If I happened to hit a certain note or hit a

certain volume it would go into the process at wherever it was in its random functioning. So something would come out that neither one of us knew what it was going to be. That was really nice. That's a CD we made called *Jump the Circle, Jump the Line*.

The other association that has been very important to me is working with the sculptor Alain Kirili. In my experience with Alain he always wants to include improvisational music and sometimes composed music in his art shows. The last and most amazing one was a quartet he put together with me, Roscoe Mitchell, a French flute player named Jerome Broudellon, and a French singer named Dalila Khatir. We performed in Paris June 21 last year. We had a show there at the Musée de l'Orangerie where Monet's *Water Lilies* are kept. We were invited to perform both in the room with Monet's *Water Lilies* and in the room with Alain's sculptures and drawings. That's going to be a CD.

I also want to mention Annea Lockwood. We did a piece that ended up becoming a co-composition. It's on a Lovely Music record of her music that's called *Breaking the Surface*. The piece is called *Duende*. She heard in my improvisational sounds qualities that reminded her of the vocal transformations that are done by shamans. We put together a catalogue of sounds. I went through methodically and showed her how all of these different sounds I can make are made. She put them in an order and made a very sparse and beautiful electronic environment for them. The order had lots of space between the sounds so I was free to move from one sound to the other in my own ways. She decided that actually I was half-responsible for the piece so it became a co-composition.

SW: That is wonderful Tom. Thank you for sharing your distinguished career and these illustrious stories with us. You have been around a long time in this field and have seen organizations come and go. What ideas do you have about the role that ISIM can play in this field?

TB: I think that the role you are playing is really good. Getting improvising musicians together to talk, make presentations, and hear music. I'm very pleased that the emphasis seems to be on making music happen. I think that's the most important thing. To get people playing and being heard. Connecting with one another. I just went to Italy and recorded a second CD with Claudio Parodi. We met at the first ISIM conference and that has become a long-term musical association. I'm sure that has happened with others who went there. People who are now improvising together because they heard musicians there that they didn't know about from different parts of the country and different parts of the world. I may be doing something with the wonderful Polish musician who was there at the first conference Wojciech Konikiewicz. ISIM has already been a big help for me in this regard.

As I mentioned before the only thing I would like is to see if there is some way for more people outside of the academic field to be included. There is such healthy activity out there with people working in improvisation without being associated with an institution. This is a world we really haven't been able to include enough. This is probably by necessity since the organization is new and not having enough funding yet. Somehow I would love to see more of the improvisation scenes included. I think it's great that the academy supports a lot of improvisers. I'm not against academic participation. I just think it's great when an improviser can afford to participate in a conference like this.

I think you are doing a great job. You're getting a good balance. We'll see how it evolves. I think things develop organically. They grow more by what opportunities come up and how things fortuitously come your way, more than what we can plan.

SW: Thank you Tom. It's an honor to have you in our organization.

TB: Thank you so much. I hope I can be of more help in the future. I'm really looking forward to hearing more about the organization's plans. I'm curious to hear what is going to be next!

Thomas Buckner hosts the ISIM Benefit Event May 17, 2008 at Lotus Music and Dance in New York City.

Submit Your CDs for the 2008 ISIM Compilation CD!

To be included in the ISIM Summer Newsletter. Send recent recordings- either a new CD or unreleased material.
Postmark Deadline is Friday June 20.

CD and Publication reviews will return with our Summer issue!

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ISIM Member Profile::



Anto Pett

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Anto Pett is a pianist and free improviser. He works at Estonian Academy of Music as professor of improvisation. A. Pett has created an original improvisation teaching method, that suits to all instruments and singers. He has made lot of

masterclasses in several Music Academics and conservatoires in Europe and also improvisation concerts - solo and with others musicians.

Anne-Liis Poll

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Anne-Liis Poll is very well-known on Estonian music scene as a successful choir conductor(founder and conductor of chamber choir "Eesti Projekt") and a soprano soloist (Magnificat by Bach, Messiah and Israel in Egypt by Händel, Mass in Cminor by Mozart etc.) She has also performed solo cantatas by Telemann, Bach, Händel, Vivaldi etc. Since 2000 Anne-Liis has been mainly involved in vocal improvisation, among others she has performed with Anto Pett, Kent Carter, Sylvain Kassap, Francois Rosse, Etienne Rolin, Albrecht Maurer, Sten Sandell, Petras Vysniauskas, Wolf Kerschek, Mixel Etxekopar, Raymond MacDonald. Anne-Liis Poll is an associate professor at Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.



ISIM News:: Spring 2008

Dave Ballou recently performed the music of Mahler and Mozart with Uri Caine, Chris Speed, Michael Formanek and faculty at Peabody Conservatory, and the Towson University Improvisation Ensemble accompanied a film by Ana Ordeniz with guests Herb Robertson and Matt Darriau. Upcoming projects include the premiere of a new chamber piece, written for the Monarch Trio, and performances with guitarist Michael Musallimi, the improvising group 3081 with Mike Formanek, John Dierker and Will Redman, and with bands led by James Ilgenfritz and Mario Pavone. Summer teaching plans include a week-long residency on jazz and improvisation at Lexington High School, and the Maryland Summer Jazz Camp and Litchfield Jazz Camp. In addition Dave is continually working to revise the curriculum for the Jazz Theory and Improvisation classes and ensembles at Towson University.

Nora McCarthy is a featured member and chorus organizer of A Chorus of Poets conducted by Lawrence D. 'Butch' Morris on Saturday, May 17th at CUE Art Foundation in Chelsea (go to www.cueartfoundation.org for more information). Also, Circle Completing, a duo performance with pianist John diMartino, a mixture of original compositions, free form poetry and classic jazz & blues will be released May 1st.

Saxophonist/ composer **Jane Ira Bloom** has released a new CD "Mental Weather" on Outline (OTL139) featuring Mark Helias (bass), Matt Wilson (drums & percussion), and Dawn Clement (piano & Fender Rhodes). The Cd is available on amazon.com. For further info contact: outline@tuna.net

Steve Nachmanovitch travelled to Berlin for two weeks March 26-April 8 to highlight the Berlin Improv (theater) Festival sponsored by the Gorillas, an improv theater troupe. On March 30 Steve gave a solo improv (violin) concert at Spirit Yoga in Berlin, and later gave a talk at the Urania lecture series in Berlin to celebrate the publication of the German translation of Free Play ("Das Tao der Kreativität") by Fisher Verlage, followed by more "Free Play" improv workshops.

David Borgo released a DVD of electro-acoustic improvisations and digital video called Chance, Discovery and Design and a self-titled CD with his jazz trio Initial Conditions on the Circumvention Music label. LA Times critic Greg Burk offers a nice review of both here: www.metaljazz.com/2008/02/dvdc_d_review_david_borgo.php. David also published an article (which he summarized at the ISIM conference last December) titled "Musicking on the Shores of Multiplicity and Complexity" in the interdisciplinary journal Parallax (vol. 13/4, pp.92-107).

OlhoCaligari Collective was invited to perform at the ElectroMediaWorks '08, an international presentation of mixed media electronic art that will be held in May, in Athens, Greece. In March, it had a piece included in the program of sound works about "DEAFNESSES around us" at the Zeppelin 2008 Festival held in Barcelona, Spain.

Michael Jefry Stevens just returned from Switzerland where he recorded compositions for voice and piano at Swiss Radio in Zurich with vocalist Miles Griffith, Dieter Ulrich on drums and Dominique Girod on bass. Michael also finished recording his music for brass quartet and piano in Brooklyn, NY, with Ed Sarath and Dave Ballou on trumpet, and David Taylor and Steve Swell on trombones. Michael will be in Europe at the beginning of May with the Swiss quartet In Transit and at the end of May with the Hungarian quartet Eastern Boundary. Also recently release is Michael's first Cd on Cadence Jazz Records, which features Dave Schnitter on saxophone, Dominic Duval on bass and Jay Rosen on drums.

Randy Gibson's Aqua Madora, for Just Intonation piano and sine-wave drones, will receive its New York Premiere, performed by the composer, in May 2008 at the Avant Media Performance production Triplicate. Triplicate, an evening of interdisciplinary trios, will be performed May 2 and 3, 2008, at the Gene Frankel Theatre on Bond Street in New York City. For more information and tickets please visit www.avantmedia.org

Aaron Drake is curating the Los Angeles events for the Tank's series of Circuit Bending Festivals across the US - called Bent Fest (see www.bentfestival.org for more info). He also recently performed with composer Michael Pisaro at the Redcat Theatre in Los Angeles, and has an installation at the OC Museum of Art - the Imaginary 20th Century - which is also at ZKM in Germany until Dec of 2008 (see www.ocma.net/orangelounge for more info).

The **Southern Illinois Improvisation Series** is a monthly series with the ambition to present sound events exploring site-specific work, interdisciplinary collaborations, sound installations, and ultimately cultivating a rich forum for ideas.

Jeffrey Agrell has been giving improv workshops locally in Iowa to school bands, music ed classes, and senior citizen groups. In May and June Jeffrey will be team-teaching a unique interdisciplinary course in improvisation with dance and theater professors at the University of Iowa. Participants will work separately on the craft, but meet regularly to learn from each other and combine disciplines and improvise together. The course will culminate in a public performance.

Baritone Thomas Buckner, thirty years a champion of new music, will be performing this spring both improvised and composed works, at the Théâtre la Chapelle in Montreal with Tim Brady; at the University of Santa Clara, California; at the University of Miami, with "Blue" Gene Tyranny; at the Greenwich House in New York with Joseph Kubera; and in the Czech Republic with the SEM Ensemble in the Ostrava Days Festival (see www.thomasbuckner.com/performances.htm for details). He has recently performed with the Jupiter Chamber Players; at the Herbst Theatre; and at the University of Maryland. He was interviewed by Corey Dargel for Time Out Chicago in October (please see www.timeout.com/chicago/articles/classical/23236/bucking-the-trend for details).

William Neil premiered *At the Edge of the Body's* (see www.thecomposerstudio.com/public/at_the_edge.html for details) in the newly constructed Rosch Recital Hall at SUNY Fredonia School of Music in NY. Related events included a guest lecture and a presentation in the Sound Recording Technology class on the digital composing process, a master class for the composition students and a talk with the students majoring in Electronic Music.

Donald Knaack has been honored with the Vermont Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence & Pollution Prevention for his HOP (Help Our Planet) environmental education program! The HOP program was piloted at Burr & Burton Academy in Manchester, VT during the 2006-07 school year with great success. If you haven't checked out Donald Knaack lately, head on over to his website (www.junkmusic.org) and look around.

Denman Maroney's composition "Jackson Whites" for soprano, mezzo-soprano, piano, and percussion will be performed by Sheila Schonbrun, Lisa Karrer, the composer, and David Simons respectively at Christ & St. Stephen's Church (W. 69th St. NYC) on Mon. June 9 at 8:00pm on a concert produced by the National Association of Composers USA. Then on June 10 he will perform duo with Mark Dresser at the opening night of the Vision Festival in New York.

Bassist and composer **James Ilgenfritz** has been active since his return to New York City in Fall of 2007. Recent performances include the New York Winter Jazz Festival at the Knitting Factory, the New Museum in SoHo with Julianne Carney, Briggan Krauss, and beatboxer Adam Matta, and at the Emily Harvey Gallery in SoHo with Sarah Weaver's ensemble Weave, as part of the Deep Listening Foundation's annual conference on Women and Identity. Upcoming events include performances in New York and California with the Trio Caveat, who just released their second CD, "Compliments of the Season", on KMB Jazz. In June James will premiere a new work for violin, bassoon, and contrabass by Dave Ballou, written for the Monarch Trio, which features James along with violinist Julianne Carney and bassoonist Sara Schoenbeck.

University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance
Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation Studies

Probing the creative process and its underlying dimensions in consciousness

- MM in Improvisation Studies
- BFA in Jazz and Contemplative Studies
- BFA in Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation
- BFA in Jazz Studies

Related interdisciplinary programs on UM campus:

- Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies
- Improvisation Across Fields Series
- Scientific Exploration Group

www.music.umich.edu



University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Jazz Faculty

- ELLEN ROWE, chair, piano, Jazz Ensemble, improvisation, advanced arranging
- GERI ALLEN, piano, graduate improvisation, combos
- MICHAEL GOULD, drums & percussion
- MARION HAYDEN, bass, combos
- ROBERT HURST, bass, combos
- MARK KIRSCHENMANN, Creative Arts Orchestra
- BILL LUCAS, trumpet
- STEVE RUSH, Digital Music Ensemble
- ED SARATH, contemporary improvisation, creativity & consciousness, combos
- DONALD WALDEN, saxophone, improvisation, career development
- DENNIS WILSON, trombone, Jazz Lab Ensemble, jazz arranging



ISIM 2007 Conference

Clockwise from Left:

1. Association For The Advancement of Creative Musicians
2. Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble with Thomas Helton
3. Backgammon
- 4.
- 5.
6. Oliver Lake and the Creative Arts Orchestra
7. Ed Sarath
8. Stephanie Phillips
9. Brandon Vaccaro

