



isim international society for improvised music

Second Annual Conference December 14-16, 2007

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

Friday December 14, 2007

8:00AM-5:00PM

Music Administration Building (MAB) - Registration

9:00AM-9:30AM

Lutkin Hall – ISIM Conference 2007 Opening Ceremony

9:30AM-10:30AM

Lutkin Hall - Keynote Address: Bennett Reimer

Improvisation: A Delight for Philosophy and Psychology, a Dilemma for Music Education

Musical improvisation, as all complex human endeavors, requires the building of bridges between theory and practice. Two basic realms of theory—philosophy and psychology—offer important insights into characteristics of improvisation. The realm of music education exists, in one essential function, to cultivate those characteristics. But while theoretical guidelines from philosophy and psychology have become more available, several conditions in music education forestall progress toward adopting them, thereby depriving all students of the potentials that improvisation offers so abundantly. Those conditions may now be more amenable to fruitful change than ever before in history.

11:00AM-12:00PM

MAB 109 – *The Galay Improvisation Method*

Dr. Racheli Galay-Altman, VanderCook College of Music assisted by VanderCook students

Galay's Improvisation Method is geared towards professional performers, music educators and music students. The Galay improvisation approach is based on the belief that music is a built-in component in nature and in mankind. Hence, the ability to "talk" through music, to improvise, is owned by any person. Through a series of exercises and drills, exploring various musical elements and styles, the participants learn different improvisation techniques, which they can continue to develop on their own. A "hands-on" workshop, bring an instrument or your voice.

MAB 125 - *Shadow-walks*

Viv Corringham, Composer, voice/electronics

The sound project called Shadow-walks has been the main focus of my work for the last three years. It involves walking with others, listening to environmental sound, and my improvised singing in the location. The project developed through an interest in our relationship with places, especially very familiar ones. In this presentation I will discuss working methods, with examples of how I attempt to explore this sense of place via improvised music.

11:00AM-11:30AM

Indigo Lounge – Jeff Morris, electronics, Eric km Clark, violin, Andy McWain, keyboards

The improvisatory, continually developing work, *Time is the Substance of Which I am Made*, (a line from Jorge Luis Borges's non-fictional writing), explores mediatization as a device of imitative counterpoint. *Mediatization* is the act or result of recording and replaying once-live events: the "aura" of the original performance is lost, but new realities and musical structures can be built. This work expands the imitation into the visual and performative dimensions using live sampling and artistic mediation through electronics.

Friday December 14 Continued

11:30AM-12:00PM

Indigo Lounge – Giants of Gender

Andy Meyer, woodwinds, Jenna Barvitski, violin/viola, Kyle Farrell, percussion/vibraphone

This performance of improvised chamber music hinges on the medium of the acoustic trio. Giants of Gender explore and exploit sounds inherent and non-idiomatic to the nature of each instrument. Their performance today will consist of two contrasting improvisations, which will illustrate improvisation as a system in which, although technical mastery is assumed, the focus is on the aesthetics of a new music in constant evolution.

1:00PM-2:00PM

Lutkin Hall – Pauline Oliveros, electronics/harmonica/small instruments, lone, spoken word

Second Life dancers Josephine Dorado avatar: Josephine Junot, Marlon Barrios-Solano avatar: Mars Barragar

This session includes a live demonstration of an interactive improvisation between the internet virtual world of Second Life and the First Life at ISIM. SL avatars will dance with improvised music from FL. A discussion will follow.

MAB 109 – Jazz and Free Improvisation Workshop

Pekka Pylkkanen, saxophone, Greg Burk, piano

In this workshop, saxophonist Pekka Pylkkanen and pianist Greg Burk explore 5 ways of using a jazz standard as a launching pad for a more open approach to improvising. By building different bridges between “inside” and “free” improvising, these two experienced performer/educators hope to create new paths for traveling between the worlds of traditional and experimental playing.

1:00PM-1:30PM

Indigo Lounge – Paul Scea, laptop/saxophone/flute, Arthur White, saxophone/electronics

"An investigation of the integration of trans-stylistic genres into a unified holistic concept for improvisation." We will explore the use of structured, free, and collective improvisational devices and combine these with groove-based rhythms and textural pads, creating a dialogue between musicians of different backgrounds, geographic locations, and experiences will be at the foreground of the session. The ultimate goal is to unify these separate experiences and approaches to improvisation into a unified and coherent whole.

1:30PM-2:00PM

Indigo Lounge – Brandon Vaccaro, guitar/electronics

My performance involves improvisation with a computer process in MAX/MSP. The process takes the source audio material (some sampled live and some preexisting) and looks in a small portion called a *window*. The program divides the material in the window into segments. Each segment is labeled with a number. A Markov generator, a special class of random number generator (one that is controlled by a transitional probability matrix), is used to reassemble the audio material.

2:00PM-3:00PM

Lutkin Hall - Limited Connectivity for Small Co-Located Ensemble and Live Electronics

Jonas Braasch, Composer/Technologist

The project Limited Connectivity aims to create a new form of improvised Telematic Music, by systematically degrading, and altering the communication between musicians by temporarily reducing the bandwidth, adding dynamic transmission delays, pitch shifts, and projecting the co-located performers in different acoustic spaces, and thus contradicting the tradition of current Telepresence approaches. The project aims to create awareness for the importance of the communication channels in improvised music and to enhance creativity by altering these.

MAB 109 - G-2: A Different Approach to Realizing Open & Creative Music Ensembles

Joe Giardullo, Workshop Facilitator

This presentation focuses on a different way of conceiving and developing strong, satisfying open improvising ensembles. I will identify and illustrate various techniques and approaches that will quickly bring a group of players into a learning, creative and self-organizing improvisational ensemble, performing at a consistently high level. The ideas will reference traditional New Orleans polyphony, African drum choirs, and concepts from chaos theory. The presentation will concern itself mainly with open, free non-idiomatic improvisation, but also include techniques, approaches and sound examples for utilizing these ideas in various musical idioms.

Friday December 14 2:00PM-3:00PM Continued

2:00PM-2:30PM

MAB 125 – Ricardo Arias, balloon kit, and Guests

My performance for the second annual ISIM conference will be a collaboration with one or two other improvisers attending the conference. As has been the case for the past 15 years, I will play the "balloon kit," a contraption consisting of a number of rubber balloons of various sizes and degrees of sturdiness, a sort of acoustic synthesizer. Regardless of the nature of the other instruments, the piece will be an exploration of the relatively limited but highly expressive sounds of the kit, which are mostly complex or "noisy," within the context of the particular ensemble and place of the performance.

Indigo Lounge – Ahnfinod

Lathan Hardy, saxophones, Julianne Carney, violin

The smallest common denominator is a vibration. Building block of the universe. Bridges between all of us. Manifested as sound. Ahnfinod explores the act of creativity through elements such as "Mistakes", "Play", "Chaos", "Intention", "Structures", & "Patterns", in a set of improvised music.

2:30PM-3:00PM

MAB 125 – Aesthetic Improvisation: Bridging Space(s) Between Theory and Practice

Gerald Phillips, Research Presentation

The values of the market have forced composers/musicians into an intensifying struggle to maintain autonomy regarding aesthetic values in both theory and practice. The move from performing composed scores to the creation of music that is wholly improvised minimizes theoretical incursions and maximizes sensuous, aesthetic experiment and explorations. This move is one of the most promising developments in the long struggle to maintain aesthetic autonomy in our wholly commodified world.

Indigo Lounge – A Stick in the Eye

Philip Fried, bass

This solo performance will include electric string bass neat, alternating with real time analog sound processing. In my solo performances I use a full size upright electric bass and a Korg MS-10 as a sound processor. I use an A/B switch, A-bass alone, B-bass through the Korg, and switch or blend. I do not plan my performances or what will happen when I turn the dials on the Korg or the mix, I react to the Korg, using it as a doppelganger. The Korg is very responsive but not always predictable, so it improvises with me.

3:00PM-4:00PM

Lutkin Hall - Deep Listening Genetic Orchestra!(DLGO!): A Structured Remote Improvisation

Doug Van Nort, Composer

This piece is an extension and continuation of DLC-GO!, premiered June 8, 2007, at the Life Bridge Sanctuary in High Falls, NY as part of the seminal Deep Listening Convergence event. It is a piece for an ensemble of laptop/sampler performers possibly playing over a network. The structure of the work is based on the "Genetic Algorithm" (GA) concept (ubiquitous in engineering applications), and is used for constructing a piece for sound content creation that results in a group improvisation performance.

MAB 125 - Building Bridges/Connecting Communities: Improvisation, Education and Collaborative Possibilities

Evan Tobias, Moderator

The ISIM conference provides an excellent opportunity to further advance the role that improvisation plays both in music education and our communities through forging ties, learning from each other's perspectives and sharing resources. In the spirit of improvisation, this open-ended session will provide a space in the program for members of ISIM to discuss possible collaborative possibilities taking advantage of the participants' expertise. Possible goals could include discussion of what the performing community thinks should be taking place in public school and university music classes as well as ways in which the education community would like assistance in broadening the role improvising plays in music programs.

Friday December 14 Continued

3:00PM-3:30PM

MAB 229 - *Convers/Conversational Music/: Aesthetics of Interactive and Collaborative Music Experience*

Martin Simon, Research Presentation

Understanding the interactive music experience requires investigation of relations among multiple "responsive" performers - participants who are both performers and responders in interaction with existing musical work and among themselves. The author proposes 5 elements in interactive music based on principles of verbal conversation: Presence, Subject Matter, Action and Response, Attention, Intentionality. The conversational concept maintains an attitude of internal questioning mind that music can be reinterpreted, deconstructed or adjusted to fit one's own needs and interests.

Indigo Lounge – *Cassia Streb, viola, April Guthrie, cello*

Guthrie & Streb is a cello and viola duo committed to the composition and realization of new works. We achieve this through creative notation and improvisation as a supplement to the traditional elements of string playing. The ensemble is dedicated to creating a musical community where musicians, in all of their capacities; performance, composition, improvisation and electronics etc, encourage one another to innovate and help them realize their ideas.

3:30PM-4:00PM

MAB 229 – *Composition and Improvisation: Synthesizing the Musical Approaches*

Sundar Subramanian, Research Presentation

Composition and improvisation have sometimes, but not always, been at odds in Western musical history. In this paper, we will consider arguments and historical precedents for synthesizing the two. How much improvisation can realistically be incorporated into a piece before it loses its identity as a composition? How have opinions on this shifted with time? Why? Pieces by Brown, Cardew, Oliveros, Zorn, and Frith, as well as the author's own work, will be discussed.

Indigo Lounge – *Claudio Parodi, Turkish clarinet*

Through a self-taught uncommon instrument, I try to cross boundaries between my knowledge (piano and electronics) and a new sound world, machines (piano and electronics) and intimate physicality (lungs, mouth, tongue, lips, breath). It's not an escape, it is trying with a new tool to keep crossing boundaries between music and noise.

4:00PM-5:00PM

MAB 109 - *Vinny Golia, Composer/ woodwinds, Cassia Streb, viola, Ken Filiano, contrabass*

My compositions connect to one another by having selected soloists or collective group improvisations tie written material together. The brilliance with which musicians fluidly move between the interpretation of written music and improvisation brings the music to life. This performance I humbly dedicate to the idea of peace in the world for our children, their children and ourselves for many years to come. I wish to help foster a world where negativity is vanquished and unity between nations, races, people and even George Steinbrenner is a fact of life and not a dream.

MAB 125 – *Project FourthStream*

Bill Neil, Composer/piano, Tom Gullion, saxophone

Project FourthStream melds formal compositional techniques into the dynamic motion of improvised music. This session will take you behind the scenes as we demonstrate our rehearsal and performance techniques. Initially we explore the essence of a musical idea which reveals its "shadow music" and elements for exploration. We approach live performances with all the elements in mind but preferring to allow the music to unfold in a state we call the "fourth stream".

4:00PM-4:30PM

MAB 229 - *Naked Intimacy: Improvisation and Eroticism*

Ellen Waterman, Research Presentation

This paper explores the deep relationship between the body, space, and eroticism in performances of two very different improvising musicians, Lori Freedman and Charlotte Hug, each working in solo contexts. In the extreme and immediate act of creative improvised performance, intense solo musicians expose themselves through sonic and visual gestures. Such 'naked intimacy' has an erotic charge that constitutes an intense experience for the audience, one that partakes in elements of pleasure, desire, and even voyeurism. What are the roles of bodies, instruments and performance spaces in constructing representations of the erotic, and how are they articulated through improvisation?

Friday December 14 Continued

4:30PM-5:00PM

MAB 229 - *Finding Freedom and Forming the 'In-Between' in Contemporary Improvisation*

Charity Chan, Research Presentation

While improvisation professes to be a free and inclusionary music, this ideal is never absolutely realized. Expectations can limit what is made available in the marketplace, who is invited to perform, and what is to be expected to happen at a performance. Furthermore, musical practice is informed by pedagogy and history. However, if freedom is not considered an absolute, but dependent on history and circumstance, any instance of freedom that is ethically and aesthetically sound must take into consideration the existence of others. Freedom in improvisation then acts as a means of creating a delicate balance where space is in a state of constant and fluid flux.

5:00PM-6:00PM

Lutkin Hall - *Saraswati Steps Up to Bat*

Stephen Nachmanovitch, violin, viola, electric violin

Solo improvisation on violin, viola, electric violin. Improvising as a portal to meditative states, inclusive consciousness, baby steps to wisdom/compassion. It will be electroacoustic and analog. Thirty (or fifty) years of endless tinkering with string instruments and musical electronics continue to yield surprises for me, as well as patterns which have recurred, clarified and strengthened. After doing a lot of chamber improvisation with a variety of partners in recent years, I am now working on two albums of solo improvisation music, *Ludi Fecundus* for electric violin and *Saraswati Steps Up to Bat* for acoustic violin and viola. The concert will contain new improvisations related to the spirit of both projects.

MAB 109 – *James Ilgenfritz, contrabass*

Bassist James Ilgenfritz will present a solo performance and lecture on his 2007 Cross-Country Tour, focusing on improvisation in communities and collaboration between contemporary composers and improvising musicians. Recently commissioned semi-improvisational notated works for solo contrabass will be discussed, including works by composers Steve Rush, Gordon Beeferman, Miller Puckette, Jeffrey Treviño, and Brian Griffeth-Loeb. James will discuss the collaborative relationships he developed with various composers, identifying common ground in the methodologies of composers and improvisers.

5:00PM-5:30PM

MAB 229 – *The BLUE Elephant in the Room*

L.A. Jenkins, Research Presentation

Lemuel Arthur Jenkins (L.A.) is an African-American guitarist who was raised in the Near East side of Columbus Ohio, a dominantly African-American neighborhood to this day. While growing up in that milieu and being exposed to a full spectrum of black music and culture, he nonetheless actively resists in philosophy and in musical performance what one might refer to as "the tyranny of the blues."

5:30PM-6:00PM

MAB 229 - *Improvised Music as Interspecies Communication: Jamming with Birds and Whales*

David Rothenberg, Research Presentation

Through a series of encounters with birds and whales, it is possible to show that improvisation can reach across species lines to reveal insights on the music of animals in a more direct way than considering their sounds as language. Evolution produces music far earlier than it produces language, so the best way to get through to them may not be to analyze, but to get down with them and jam.

8:00PM-10:00PM

Lutkin Hall - Featured Performance: *Great Black Music, Ancient to the Future*

Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM)

Douglas Ewart and Nicole Mitchell, Co-Presidents

Chicago, Illinois

Saturday December 15, 2007

8:00AM-5:00PM

MAB - Registration

9:00AM-10:00AM

Lutkin Hall – Panel: ISIM Curriculum Project

Ed Sarath, Moderator

Panelists: Betty Anne Younker, Maud Hickey, Karlton Hester

MAB 109 – *Biakuye*

Mark Stone, percussion, Kofi Ameyaw, percussion, Roger Braun, percussion, Issa Sall, bass

Among the Akan people of Ghana, West Africa, *Biakuye* means unity. It is the spirit of unity that brings the American and African members of *Biakuye* together to perform "melorhythmic world percussion," uniting the cool sound of American jazz vibraphone, drum-set, and electric bass with the melorhythmic richness of African marimba, kalimba, and hand drums. *Biakuye* will present an energetic concert program rich with improvisation, featuring original compositions and arrangements that draw on a wealth of American and African melodic-percussion traditions including the Ugandan embaire and kalimba, United States marimba and vibraphone, and Ghanaian gyil.

9:00AM-9:30AM

MAB 125 – *Celebration*

Salil Sachdev, hang instrument

Sachdev will perform a piece *Celebration* composed for a new musical instrument called the Hang. The Hang is a percussion instrument designed by two Swiss metallurgists. It includes elements of the steel pan drum, the Indian claypot drum (Ghatam), and the Nigerian Udu drum. Designed to be played with hands, the Hang is capable of playing melodies and producing a vast palette of sonic textures – from extremely delicate nuances to resounding loud sounds. Playing on various areas of the Hang produces melodies and widely contrasting timbres, as do different playing techniques influenced by the Middle East, Latin America and India.

10:00AM-10:30AM

MAB 109 – *Arboreal Muscle*

Lou Mallozzi, Composer

Chicago Bass Ensemble

Arboreal Muscle relies on the players' direct responses to each other's playing, the sound of instruments in the performance site, and the players' shifting relationships to temporal continuity. The piece begins from this premise: Each player listens to another player in order to get cues to play. Mallozzi has composed pieces in this structured improvisation genre, all of which foreground structures for listening and interacting rather than determining sonic content – compositions that trust the musicians.

MAB 229 – *What Does Theology Have to Do with Improvisation?*

Lee Joiner, Research Presenter, Howard Whitaker, Research Presenter, Kevin Vanhoozer, Theologian

Theology and improvisation rarely meet in conversation in the arts community. However, there is current engagement between the two in theological works. Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer has described the Biblical record as God's own improvisations on a redemptive theme. Musicians are known to speak of epiphanies or transcending boundaries in the midst of music-making. As these two areas of endeavor are held up in the light of our experience, we encounter concepts that cross over the divide and inform our understanding.

MAB 125 - *The Use of Improvisation to Assess Understanding in Music*

David Hastings – Workshop Facilitator

At the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, the Musicianship sequence for first and second-year music students includes the teaching of written music theory and ear training. Traditionally, these fundamental skills courses use a variety of methods to assess understanding including; dictation, sight singing, pitch matching, and various kinds of written tests. Participants in the workshop will experience through demonstration and their own vocal or instrumental improvisation, this use of improvisation as this important tool for assessing each student's understanding.

Saturday December 15 10:00AM-10:30AM Continued

Indigo Lounge – SCHAG

Dave Schmalenberger, drumset, Dave Hagedorn, mallets

SCHAG plays jazz tunes and classical pieces adapted to fit our musical sensibilities. One of the main unifying threads within our repertoire is freedom within structure. Fewer participants translate into more opportunities, as well as additional, varied responsibilities. To exemplify this, we will perform several pieces and discuss issues associated with the evolution of our duo concept including: tune selections; adaptation of these tunes to fit our instrumentation; and experimentation with improvisational techniques.

10:30AM-11:00AM

MAB 109 – *Patterns of Living and Sounding*

Marc Jensen, Composer

Patterns of Living and Sounding (2006) is based on circadian rhythms. Each member of the ensemble has prepared a part by observing their lives and activities for twenty-four hours. Within that period, they have selected activities of living and noted when those things occur. This information has then been compressed into a twelve minute piece, and the resulting performance is a simultaneous presentation of all of the performers' days, creating a group rhythm of daily activity that moves from midnight to midnight. Enjoy this piece both as a record of individual activities, and also as the larger pattern formed by the social intersection of the group.

MAB 125 – *Creativity, Self-Actualization, and the Process of Musical Improvisation*

Peter Westbrook, Research Presentation

According to Abraham Maslow, "the release of creativity, spontaneity and expressiveness" in "Peak Experiences" help lead to the higher states of personal integration. These traits might be more fully associated with the process of improvised music than in other forms of musical expression. Musicologist and educator Peter Westbrook explores these issues, based on his own performance experiences, and interviews with many musicians in his role as a journalist and author of "The Flute in Jazz."

MAB 229 – *Temporal Harmony*

Denman Maroney, Research Presentation

Maroney describes a temporal harmonic system for improvising in multiple tempos based on the undertone series. A given number in the series represents a beat and/or a pitch; a given ratio, a temporal and/or harmonic interval. For example, 3:4:5 represents a ratio of beats and/or a first inversion minor triad. Exercises and musical examples are provided.

Indigo Lounge - *Anne-Liis Poll, voice, Anto Pett, piano*

A unique combination of a singer with unusually wide voice range Anne-Liis Poll and classically trained piano virtuoso Anto Pett. The freely improvised music can be described as contemporary improvisation chamber opera, but the main influences are simultaneously contemporary music and modern jazz improvisation. The different backgrounds of the players lead the duo to unexpected territories and help to avoid typical glitches of free improvisation. The duo has performed in Austria, Lithuania, and Estonia.

11:00AM-12:00PM

Lutkin Hall – *Michael Jefry Stevens, piano, Dave Ballou, trumpet*

One of the great adventures in improvised music is the improvised duo format. I have been working within this format for close to 30 years, and continue to learn and grow from these duo interactions. This workshop will explore the duet improvisations between trumpeter Dave Ballou and myself on acoustic piano. Although Dave and I have worked together before in various formats, this will be our first official duo collaboration.

MAB 109 - *Moment by Moment: Improvised Music in the Life of Grace Chicago Church*

The Grace Chicago Consort

James Falzone, Artistic Director, clarinet, tin whistle, launeddas Davin Youngs, voice Rebekah Cope, violin Karen Schulz-Harmon, cello Marty Metzger, guitar Tim Mulvenna, percussion

The presentation will demonstrate the use of improvised music in the context of the weekly liturgy at Grace Chicago Church, showing how improvisation, alongside such traditional spiritual practices as meditation, sacred text reading, and confession, has engendered a sense of mindfulness and surrender to "the moment" in this congregation. Falzone will discuss the development of this practice at the church and the ensemble will perform several of his original compositions and hymn arrangements.

Saturday December 15 11:00AM-12:00PM Continued

Indigo Lounge – *Bottomed Out*

Andrew Bishop, woodwinds, Dan Bennett, woodwinds, Ryan Mackstaller, guitar, Alex Trajano, drums

Bottomed Out is a collaborative quartet founded in 2002 in Detroit, Michigan to explore the dynamic and textural range of a two saxophones, guitar, and drums instrumentation. Through a diverse and nuanced approach to form, Bottomed Out is focused on finding a balance between improvisation and composition by creating and exploring an idiosyncratic language drawn from influences ranging from concert music, jazz, rock, and world music.

11:00AM-11:30AM

MAB 125 - *Cyberjazz: Musicking in the New Millennium*

David Borgo, Research Presentation

Drawing on the emerging discourse surrounding laptop and networked music, this presentation will investigate issues of human-computer musical interaction and the broader techno-culture that frames them. In addition to foregrounding new possibilities for sonic exploration and the potential for new forms of social interaction, I hope to illuminate the ongoing shifts in how we create, consume, and conceive of music in an age of ubiquitous computing.

11:30AM-12:00PM

MAB 125 – *Guqin Improvisation*

Jeff Roberts, Research Presentation

This paper will examine the relationship between Chinese guqin master Li Xiangting's revival of improvisation and traditional guqin performance. A flexible type of notation in traditional performance has existed since the 12th century but records show that improvisation existed previous to the 3rd century. Mr. Li's improvisation draws on traditional elements while allowing flexibility to spontaneously derive phrases and large-scale structures. His use of 'Yi Jing' (emotional impression) from Chinese poetry to shape improvisation will also be examined.

1:00PM-2:00PM

Lutkin Hall - Featured Panel: *Great Black Music, Ancient to the Future*

Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM)

Douglas Ewart and Nicole Mitchell, Co-Presidents

Chicago, Illinois

2:00PM-3:00PM

Lutkin Hall - *Present and Future Directions in Improvised Music*

Panel: Thomas Buckner, Michael G. Nastos, Rui Carvalho

MAB 109 - *Music Concepts from India for the Western Musician*

John Wubbenhorst, Presenter

In this session, John will discuss concepts and practices from his training in Indian music and how they can be integrated into a Western musician's life. There will be instruction about approaches to raga and tala (melody and rhythm) as used in various traditional forms of Indian music as well as unique applications of Indian music as demonstrated by many examples (Coltrane, McLaughlin, Oregon, Hovhanness, Facing East).

2:00PM-2:30PM

MAB 229 - *Improvisation in Brent Heisinger's EKTA (Oneness)*

(for Piano Solo, Indian Tabla, Jazz Rhythm Section, and Chamber Orchestra)

David Ward-Steinman, Research Presentation

In 2005 I premiered Brent Heisinger's *EKTA* (a piece written for me as the improvising pianist) with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, and recorded it on a recent commercial CD. *EKTA* includes improvisation on an Indian raga, between tabla and jazz drumset, for piano and jazz rhythm section, and in a cadenza for piano that attempts to draw together all the preceding elements. Challenges posed in integrating the four styles of improvisation will be illustrated.

Saturday December 15 Continued

2:30PM-3:00PM

MAB 229 – Julius Hemphill

DY Ngoy, Research Presentation

The African-American composer/improviser Julius Hemphill (1938-1995) had expressed, throughout his career, interest in multi-media projects. In order to fulfill his dreams of bridging the gap between visual and sonic medium, Mr. Hemphill had produced highly individual compositions which gave enough freedom to the performers to interact with the musicians. Whether performing with the World Saxophone Quartet or the Sextet, Mr. Hemphill's compositions carry a specific message. In this paper, I will look at the genesis of his multi-media compositions: *Long Tongues: A Saxophone Opera* and *The Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin: The Promised Land*.

Indigo Lounge – Etudes for Crippled Hands

Rocco Di Pietro, Composer/performer, Larry Marotta and Derek Zoladz, performers

Etudes is a photographic performance score based on the crippled hand technique developed when working with handicapped children at a magnet school in upstate New York. It is not art therapy, although it was developed from a healing mechanism instilled in disturbed and impaired children. In the score to *Etudes* the performer meditates, imagines his or her hands as completely dysfunctional and approaches the keyboard by means of the photos, which act as a guide.

3:00PM-4:00PM

Lutkin Hall – OLHOCALIGARI Collective

Denis Koishi, Director

Having improvisation as a base, its unpredictability and spontaneity, the OLHOCALIGARI Collective tries to intuitively move the spectator using the construction of sound signs that, together with visual and poetic production of their components, acquire new meanings and interpretations. Sound sculptures and objects, coexist with electric guitars and basses, and digital signal processors. This complex sound space is further enriched through acoustic-phonetic and tone-colour exploitation of vocal resources, applied in different forms of poetry.

MAB 109 – Transformation through Improvisation

Chris Chalfant, Workshop Facilitator

Working with our voices we will explore tuning into each other energetically and with different simple and complex pitch configurations. Our connection through tranquil sound will allow for a path of trust and non-egotistical exploration of group communication where there is a sense of give and take, bringing more resonance, harmony, awareness and spiritual alignment within ourselves and with each other creating paths for meaningful and transformational moment-to-moment interactions in sound.

3:00PM-3:30PM

MAB 125 – Intercultural Improvisation: Lessons from John Cage

Katharine Cartwright, Research Presentation

How do we improvise in a multi-lingual situation with all participants on an equal footing; no musical language privileged over another? By guiding the performer largely with pictures rather than musical notations, John Cage offers open forms that free one to interpret the score in one's own idiom. Respecting the composer's "suggestions," the presenter looks at ways in which Cage's Songbooks may be adapted to a variety of educational and professional settings among artists of many cultures, sparking collaboration and communication.

Indigo Lounge – Jeff Kaiser, trumpet/laptop, Gregory Taylor, electronics

Jeff Kaiser is a quartertone trumpet player, computer musician, composer, and conductor. While maintaining an active music career, he is also a PhD student at the University of California, San Diego in Critical Studies and Experimental Practices. He is also the founder and owner of pMENTUM records and Angry Vegan Records. Trained initially as a visual artist, Gregory Taylor has studied Indonesian and electroacoustic music in the U.S. and the Netherlands, done writerly stints in various places (Wired, Op/Option), hosted a radio program of contemporary audio since 1986 (www.rtqe.net), and currently labors on behalf of Cycling '74.

Saturday December 15 Continued

3:30PM-4:00PM

MAB 125 - Lenny White's Guernica: A Study in Ekphrasis and the Creative Process

Victor Svorinich, Research Presentation

Ekphrasis typically refers to a verbal representation of a visual work of art. This presentation will examine how jazz pieces, particularly *Guernica* also work in this genre. It will look into the musician's creative process and seek to understand the artist's reactions to the paintings, what some of the limitations and advantages of a representation of an art piece through improvised jazz are, and to identify some of the ways a painting can be transmuted musically.

4:00PM-5:00PM

MAB 109 - Duets: How Piano and Guitar Can Learn To Play Together and Love It

Dom Minasi, guitar, Michael Jefry Stevens, piano

It's unusual to hear two chordal and percussive instruments play well together. This workshop will encompass the different techniques needed to do just that. Dom Minasi & Michael Jefry Stevens will demonstrate single note improv, chords, chordal clusters, the use of the 'wall of sound,' space, odd time signatures with the 4/4 meter, how to listen while still being free and yet stay musical at all times.

4:00PM-4:30PM

MAB 125 – Improvisers from Two Worlds: Zakir Hussain's Making Music - Indo-Jazz or Jazz-Indo?

Dr. Sundar Viswanathan, Research Presentation

A studio session in 1987 for ECM records 'led by tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain led to the recording of 'Making Music', an important example of the fusion of jazz and Hindustani music. The record paired jazz artists Jan Garbarek and John McLaughlin with Hussain and flutist Hariprasad Chaurasia. In an attempt to identify the 'meeting-points' of both jazz and Indian styles, this session will examine and analyze compositions and improvisations on works from this recording

MAB 229 - Articulating Perspectives on Free Improvisation in Music for Education

Simon Rose, Research Presentation

As a teacher I spent eight years working with disaffected, permanently excluded young people in a school setting in Hackney, London. I have also worked for many years with young people who have special needs as well as in a variety of other settings. I found myself increasingly using ideas for teaching and learning (both drama and music) stemming from an approach associated with free improvisation. During a government school inspection the outcomes of this approach to teaching were highly praised – I was put forward for Advanced Skills Teacher status. My experience led me to undertake research in order to establish the validity of the potential of free improvisation in an educational setting.

4:30PM-5:00PM

MAB 125 – Bridging Gaps

Michael Bullock, Research Presentation

I will give a presentation on the development of aesthetic in a community of improvisers. I will present a short case study of the Boston-area improvised music scene during my tenure there (from roughly 1996 to the present day). Rather than a detailed historical analysis, which would be beyond the scope of one session, I will discuss how the community members' backgrounds and interests – both heterogeneous and homogenous – contributed to the development of an improvising aesthetic that has extended outside of Boston and influenced musicians in other cities and countries.

Saturday December 15 4:30PM-5:00PM Continued

MAB 229 - *An Examination of Creative Thinking and Musical Background as Factors in Jazz and Free Improvisation Skill in Australian and American College Singers*

Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman, Research Presentation

The purpose was to investigate convergent and divergent thinking factors underlying vocal improvisation achievement. 102 singers performed jazz and free improvisations. A significant difference was found between jazz and free improvisation achievement; extensive jazz experience was found to be correlated with both types of improvisation; 3 factors were found for jazz: Jazz Syntax, Vocal Creativity, and Tonal Musicianship; and 3 factors were found for free improvisation: Musical Syntax, Vocal Creativity, and Syllabic Creativity.

5:00PM-6:00PM

Lutkin Hall – *Featured Performance: Oliver Lake, saxophone, and the University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra, Ed Sarath, Director*

An accomplished poet, painter and performance artist, Oliver Lake has published a book of poetry entitled *Life Dance*, has exhibited and sold a number of his unique painted-sticks at the Montclair Art Museum, and has toured the country with his one-man performance piece, *Matador of 1st and 1st*. But it's his extraordinary talents as composer, saxophonist, flautist and bandleader that have brought him world-renown. The University of Michigan Creative Arts Orchestra continues its collaboration with the legendary saxophonist and composer Oliver Lake. Following a series of performances in Ann Arbor and New York City in recent years, the 20 member improvising ensemble looks forward to further delving into Mr. Lake's boundary-expanding music.

8:00PM-10:00PM

Lutkin Hall – *Featured Performance: Mazen Kerbaj, trumpet, Michael Zerang, percussion*

Mazen Kerbaj is a trumpeter from Beirut, Lebanon and the co-director of the annual Irtijal Festival of Experimental music. He is the founder of Al Maslakh, a Lebanese record label dedicated to promoting experimental music in the Arab world. Michael Zerang is a first generation American of Assyrian decent based in Chicago. He is a musician and composer, and since 1976 has focused extensively on improvised music, free jazz, contemporary composition, puppet theater, experimental theater, and international musical forms. Mazen Kerbaj and Michael Zerang perform improvised acoustic music employing extended techniques for trumpet and percussion, and have worked together since 2004.

Lutkin Hall – *Featured Performance: Jane Ira Bloom, saxophone, Mark Dresser, bass*

Soprano saxophonist/composer Jane Ira Bloom has been steadfastly developing her unique voice on the soprano saxophone for over 30 years. She is a pioneer in the use of live electronics and movement in jazz, as well as the possessor of "one of the most gorgeous tones and hauntingly lyrical ballad conceptions of any soprano saxophonist - Pulse." Her continuing commitment to "pushing the envelope" in her music has led to collaborations with such outstanding jazz artists as Kenny Wheeler, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell, Rufus Reid, Matt Wilson, Bob Brookmeyer, Julian Priester, Jerry Granelli, Matt Wilson, Jay Clayton, Mark Dresser, Bobby Previte, and Fred Hersch.

Mark Dresser (1952) is an internationally acclaimed bass player/improviser/composer/interdisciplinary collaborator. A major focus has been extending the sonic and musical possibilities of double bass through the use of unconventional amplification. This is documented in over one hundred recordings including nearly thirty CDs as a soloist, band-leader or co-leader. For eighteen years he lived and worked in New York City. For nine years he was a member of the Anthony Braxton's Quartet. He has composed music for silent film, video, animation, and sculpture as well as various chamber formations. He was nominated for a 2001 Grammy. He has taught at Princeton University, the New School, and Hampshire College. He joined the faculty of UCSD Music Department as Professor in 2004.

Lutkin Hall – *Featured Interview: Pauline Oliveros Interviews Mazen Kerbaj, Michael Zerang, Jane Ira Bloom, and Mark Dresser*

Sunday December 16, 2007

8:00AM-3:00PM

MAB – Registration

9:00AM-10:00AM

MAB 109 - *Max/MSP as a Bridge for Improvisation Between Your Traditional Instrument and Computer*

Jeff Kaiser, Workshop Facilitator

Traditionally — if you can use the word “traditionally” in the context of something that has been around for around twenty years—Max/MSP has been considered a compositional tool, but it is an excellent resource for building flexible, software-based instruments for use with acoustic instruments in an improvisatory environment.

MAB 125 – *Music Inside Out*

Stephanie Philips, Workshop Facilitator

Music Inside Out is a sequence of exercises in improvisation that allows us to explore interconnectivity and creative flow. This workshop presents ways to unlock creativity and improve communication among musicians and with the audience. Group exercises will be presented that experiment with ways to enhance entrainment and enable a group or an ensemble to begin to think together and move away from the self consciousness of performance. Participants of all skill levels are welcome. Please bring instruments.

9:00AM-9:30AM

MAB 229 – *Rallying Cry: Improvisation as Invitation for Involvement in Frederic Rzewski’s ‘Which Side Are You On?’ from North American Ballads*

Andrea La Rose, Research Presentation

This presentation explores the musical and political connections in Frederic Rzewski’s “Which Side Are You On?” and examines the original protest song and transcriptions of improvisations from recordings by Rzewski and Lisa Moore. Building upon the head-solos-head structure of bebop and the chorale-prelude tradition in keyboard works, Rzewski expands the song into a developed personal statement, then invites the performer to respond through improvisation.

9:30AM-10:00AM

MAB 229 - *Sonic Cosmopolitanisms: Improvised Music and Cultural Exchange*

Marina Peterson, Research Presentation

The Tabadol Project was a Lebanese-American musical exchange sponsored by the U.S. State Department. The Project took place in February 2007, when five Lebanese musicians traveled to the United States to work with American musicians and dancers in six cities. The musical genre featured in the exchange was experimental improvised music. Cosmopolitan aspirations provided the conditions of possibility for the State Department to sponsor the Tabadol Project. However, the differing logics of the State Department and of experimental improvisation hinged on an inherent tension of cosmopolitanism: the problem of the nation.

10:00AM-11:00AM

Lutkin Hall – Panel: Telematic Music

Panelists – Pauline Oliveros, Mark Dresser, Jonas Braasch, Chris Chafe, Jefferson Pitcher, Sarah Weaver

A discussion of the telematic music medium and its technology as it builds bridges across distance collaboration. Documentation will be presented from a telematic concert that took place November 16, 2007 involving the panelists, between Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy NY, University of California San Diego in San Diego CA, and Stanford University in Stanford, CA.

MAB 109 – *Music for People*

Mark Hinkley, Workshop Facilitator

In the ideal musical world, it would be common for teachers to create that rare atmosphere in which students can enter into profound listening, deep expressiveness, and sensitive ensemble work. This is what the mission of David Darling and his colleagues at Music for People has been for 20 years. Mark Hinkley, a graduate of MfP's four year training program, will introduce and lead an experiential session using the techniques that evolved over the last two decades in countless trainings and workshops, in the United States and Europe.

Sunday December 16 10:00AM-11:00AM Continued

Indigo Lounge – *Linking Language and Music in Devotion to the Unknown*

Art Lande piano/drums, Mark Miller flute/saxophone/shakuhachi

According to the painter Joan Anderson, "Art is always about devotion to the unknown." How do we build bridges to the unknown? What are our modes of investigation and discovery? In our duo, the medium of language is an important means of exploring new improvisational territory. We use nonsense sounds, words, poetry and improvised story to expand our borders. We will reveal our methods (and our madness) in this performance/demonstration.

11:00AM-12:00PM

MAB 109 – *backGammon*

Stephen Syverud, Director

This performance is an improvisation which is governed and created by the processes of the participants. The improvisational group *backGammon* features 6-9 performers using acoustic and electronic instruments, computer controlled devices, and video projections. Past performances include: Spark Festival in Minneapolis, 35 years of Electronic/Computer Music at Northwestern, ISIM Conference 2006, Computer Music Conference in New Orleans, several clubs/venues in the Chicago area. *backGammon* will participate again in Cage's *Musicircus* in Chicago, fall of 2007.

MAB 125 - *Bridging Acoustic and Electric: An Introduction to Using Music Technology for Improvisers*

Mark Kirschenmann, Presenter

Electric instruments have a permanent place in contemporary and future music. However, negative stigmas and a general lack of technical/artistic sophistication are still prevalent. This presentation offers a glimpse into how I use technology to inform and enhance my musical initiatives, particularly as an improviser. The presentation will offer technical insight into the ways one can electrify an instrument, offer aesthetic possibilities, and hopefully encourage others to do so as well.

Indigo Lounge – *Elixir String Quartet*

Jason Seed, guitar, Glenn Asch, violin, Helen Recich, viola, Dan Armstrong, bass

The Elixir String Quartet session focuses on through-composed material and a collective improvisation sensibility stemming more from New Orleans sensibility than from a bebop kind of thing...although that creeps in too. The pieces range from Eastern European folk music influenced writing to a 12-tone jig, an avant-prog-rock air to classical music in the more obvious form of lots of dots on the page for guitar, violin, viola and bass.

11:30AM-12:00PM

Lutkin Hall – *Petrified*

Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble

The Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble will perform *PETRIFIED*, with choreography by Michele Brangwen and music by Thomas Helton. Inspired by the daring of free avant-garde music, *PETRIFIED* creates a spontaneous performance environment where anything can happen. Thomas Helton is the solo bassist, who uses the full range and expressive power of the instrument. He is joined on the stage by dancers Brooke Barnes, Elizabeth Lucrezio, Lindsey McGill and Michele Brangwen.

1:00PM-2:00PM

Lutkin Hall - *Floating Prayers: Throwing stones of meaning onto the ocean of consciousness. (unknown)*

Kim McCarthy, Composer

Churches, Mosques, Temples, certain mountains and rivers are examples of sacred places, their walls "holding the space" of spiritual activity. Such spaces serve to bring people together in community. Community is the soul of spirit; water one of its conduits. Kwan Yin dips the willow branch into the water of his heart's compassion. Wherever that water is sprinkled, everything is reborn. Community deepens this experience. Drops of water become oceans of healing and Spirit sings. (Discussion follows.)

Sunday December 16 1:00PM-2:00PM Continued

MAB 109 – How to Develop Creative Activity

Anto Pett, Workshop Facilitator

In this workshop Pett will present his improvisation teaching method. After a short theoretical introduction Pett will present his exercise system for developing improvisation abilities. This exercise system can be used for all instruments and singers. It helps to develop concentration of attention, technical skills, emotional expressiveness, speed of thinking and self-assurance. Pett has used these exercises successfully by teaching young musicians who have just started to learn their instrument, and it also gives quick results to top level professional musicians who need reviving of their immense experiences in music for expressing their own ideas.

Indigo Lounge – Empty Cage Quartet

Kris Tiner, Composer/trumpet, Jason Mears, saxophone, Ivan Johnson, bass, Paul Kikuchi, percussion

The Empty Cage Quartet presents a new composition by Kris Tiner that explores the potential of improvisation to build bridges via a dynamic, holistic integration of the personal (intuitive), technical (material), social (systemic) and cultural (intersubjective) aspects of ensemble performance. Incorporating ideas from the field of Integral Studies, transpersonal psychology, and musical set theory, the improviser engages a systemic structure from which emergent zones of expanded group interaction and collective awareness become possible.

1:00PM-1:30PM

MAB 229 – Jammin' at the Subatomic Level

Karl Ramberg, Research Presentation

My project came about because my brother works as a particle physicist at Fermi Lab west of Chicago. He is currently working on an experiment that is searching for dark matter particles. When the scientists look at the cosmos they predict x amount of matter but only see about 20% of x. They theorize that there is a particle that is very massive but weakly interacting that makes up the rest of the predicted matter. I proposed and then came up with a musical instrument that is triggered by the events that the experiment detects. I then play my guitar along with so that I am *Jammin' at the Subatomic Level*.

1:30PM-2:00PM

MAB 229 - "To speak is to make weather." -Ben Marcus

Stephen Hastings-King, Research Presentation

This paper explores possibilities that might be opened up by stripping away the default discourse of mysticism, which is often used to describe or explain collective improvisation. I propose its replacement with a hybrid discourse constructed from social ontology (philosophy) and accounts of embodied cognition understood as the unfolding of complex dynamic systems. It explores improvisation as a space of emergence best conceptualized as one of partial determinacy. The idea is to link improvisation as a practice to the politics of autonomy.

2:00PM-3:00PM

Lutkin Hall – Zing!

James Davis, trumpet/effects, Caroline Davis, alto saxophone/effects, Dave Miller guitar/effects, Matthew Golombisky, electric bass/likable noise, Quin Kirchner, drums/cymbals

Zing! is a Chicago-based musical collective, drawing on the traditions of both acoustic improvised music as well as rock, electronica, and ambient music. This quintet offers her listeners sounds akin to the current Chicago improvised music scene as well as compositions with both rhythmically and metrically complex pieces and simple hard-grooving frameworks. The performance will balance wholly improvised pieces with pre-composed ones.

MAB 109 – A Course in Improvisation for Classical Musicians – One Approach

Jeff Agrell, Presenter

A musician who improvises is empowered to communicate across traditional limits of instrument, level, department, and discipline. The benefits of improvisation study are manifold, but nonjazz improvisation has yet to establish a place in music education. One reason is the lack of precedents and models for the pedagogy and practice of contemporary classical improvisation. This presentation is a description of a university-level course taught by the presenter for the past five years.

Sunday December 16 Continued

2:00PM-2:30PM

MAB 125 – *Extended Techniques in Improvisation*

Charlie Wilmoth, Research Presentation

This presentation concerns improvisation that uses extended techniques as the basis of its sonic vocabulary. This music often employs an unusual style of interaction in which the players' relationships to one another are similar to those of passing clouds, and the music seems to strive to engage with - and in some cases blend in with – the sounds of the environment around it. I try to pinpoint the nature of the connection between this music and its environment and, along the way, discuss its relationship with the jazz tradition.

Indigo Lounge – *Sound Weavings*

Katharina von Rütte, voice, Gayle Young, columbine/amaranth

The voice sketches sounds in the air that spread in the space, blend, connect with the audience and space, meet in the ears and inspire to new sounds, attract and repel, are reflected on all solid, blend again and again. The created music lingers in the space as a big sound tissue until the soundflow stops and fades away.

2:30PM-3:00PM

MAB 125 – *In the World of Fire: Aspects of Myth in Music*

Randall Hall, Research Presentation

This paper will use myth as a framework to examine meaning in music and the act of improvisation. Myth here is defined, in the words of Alan Watts, as “a complex of stories...human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life.” Drawing on the work of thinkers such as Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, and Watts it will look at the subconscious processes that create myth, and how mythic images serve as metaphors for understanding issues regarding humanity, eternity, and transcendence.

Indigo Lounge – *Jefferson Pitcher, electric guitar, Christian Kiefer, acoustic stringed instruments*

Is there a connection between language and sound? Do words embody another layer of sonic storytelling? Jefferson Pitcher and Christian Kiefer have been exploring the subtle ties between literature and sound for over a decade, and believe that language appeals to our senses in a multiplicity of ways. They will debut a guided improvisation including readings from the audience, based on postcard poetry they have corresponded with for years, thus building a community between performers and listeners.

3:00PM-4:00PM

Lutkin Hall – ISIM Conference 2007 Closing Ceremony