

2009 Is That Jazz? Experimental Music Festival
Seattle, Washington

ARTIST BIOS:

Elliott Sharp (New York City)

Elliott Sharp is an American multi-instrumentalist, composer, and performer who has personified the avant-garde experimental music scene in New York City for over thirty years. He has released over 200 recordings spanning the musical spectrum, all with his personal stamp. He leads the projects Carbon and Orchestra Carbon, Tectonics, and Terraplane and has pioneered ways of applying fractal geometry, chaos theory, and genetic metaphors to musical composition and interaction. His collaborators have included Radiosinfonie Frankfurt; pop singer Debbie Harry; Ensemble Modern; Qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan; Kronos String Quartet; Ensemble Rezonanz; cello innovator Frances Marie Uitti; computer artist Perry Hoberman; blues legends Hubert Sumlin and Pops Staples; jazz greats Jack deJohnette, Sonny Sharrock, Arthur Blythe, Oliver Lake, and Billy Hart; turntablist and video artist Christian Marclay; and Bachir Attar, leader of the Master Musicians Of Jahjouka from Morocco. Sharp's work is the subject of a new documentary "Doing The Don't" by noted filmmaker Bert Shapiro.

Christian Asplund (Provo, Utah)

Christian Asplund is a Canadian-American composer-performer (on viola, harmonium and piano) based in Utah where he is Composer-in-Residence at Brigham Young University. He co-founded Seattle Experimental Opera which has produced seven of his operas. He has performed with such musicians as Christian Wolff, Eyvind Kang, Larry Polansky, Daniel Good, Francois Houle, Michael Bisio, Robert Reigle, Tom Baker, Greg Campbell, Jessica Lurie, Amy Denio, Gino Robair, and Phil Gelb in a variety of venues and recordings in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. His scores are published by Frog Peak Music. He appears on CDs on Tzadik, Present Sounds, Sparkling Beatnik, Maritime Fist Gleeclub, and Comprovis Records.

Of his music, Stuart Dempster has said, "Asplund, in his well-crafted compositions, delightfully teases us on those slippery slopes between composition and improvisation," while a jazz reviewer has said Asplund's music "walks a squiggly line that passes through jazz..., free improv, rock, funk and a whole spectrum of 'modern classical' styles, including minimalism, serialism and a handful of other 'isms'..." Other words used by reviewers to describe his music include: passion, panoramic power, pure pointillist, plaintive, painstaking, rhythmically toothy, rocking, remarkable, rollicking, searing, subdued, soothing, submersive, splendid, unique, enjoyable, ethereal, mesmerizing, mind-blowing, otherworldly, absorbing, intelligent, idiosyncratic, distinctive, captivating, bewitching.

Krispen Hartung (Boise, Idaho)

Founder and director of the Boise Creative and Improvised Music Festival, now approaching its fourth year, Krispen Hartung has a 30-year musical background that is a continuously evolving road trip marked by many excursions and detours - from classical guitar, progressive rock, and world-beat, to fusion, traditional jazz, and avant-garde. Hartung's musical identity and creative direction came to fruition when, in 1993, he began using the laptop computer to process the sound of his guitar, either by looping it in creative ways or by radically altering its tone. Krispen's debut solo CD "Places" was released April of 2004 and consists of a series of colorful, innovative, and thought/mood provoking improvised compositions. Since then, Hartung has produced and released 15 additional CD projects, including his most recent live improvisational

project "Abstractions and Associations" with Brian McFadin (Sax), Jared Hallock (percussion), Daryl Shawn (guitar), and Brian Good (sax).

During the last year, Krispen has been recording and performing primarily creative electronic and free improvised music, focusing more on the tonal character of the guitar as a basis for random electro-acoustic manipulation via Reaktor, a wide variety of VST effects, and Cycling 74's MAX/msp. At the "Is That Jazz Festival," Krispen will be playing a new custom instrument built by luthier, Bobby Warren from the San Juan Island. The instrument is one-of-a-kind miniature jazz archtop guitar, only 29 inches long, but full of amazing tone and punch

Cipher: Tom Swafford, violin (Brooklyn, New York)

Tom Swafford is a violinist and composer active in a wide variety of genres in the New York area. He has worked with Cipher, Doublends Vert, The Golden Crackers (with drummer Matt Crane), folk/punk band Meisce, Tom Baker, Jarrad Powell, Wayne Horvitz, Gust Burns, The Degenerate Art Ensemble, Butoh troupe Death Posture, Noise Poet Nobody, Simon Henneman, Julie Baldrige, Tiflin, Beth Fleenor and many others. He moved to New York in 2007 where he plays violin with the rock band Emanuel and the Fear, bluegrass singer-songwriter Andy Mullen and with his own 12-piece group String Power, which performs Tom's original compositions and arrangements of pop, jazz, Turkish, Klezmer and Greek music. Current composition projects include "Anthropomorphic," a puppet musical with lyricist Timmy Young and the Puppetry Arts Theatre and "The Unfortunate Squirrel" with book and lyrics by Sonya Sobieski. Tom has won awards from U.C. Berkeley (Hertz Fellowship, Eisner Prize), The American Academy of Arts and Letters (Charles Ives Scholarship) and has been commissioned by Tufts University and the Seattle Philharmonic Cello Choir.

Cipher: Tari Nelson-Zagar, violin (Seattle, Washington)

Tari Nelson-Zagar is a third generation violinist and improviser whose focus is collaborating with composers, choreographers, and other creative artists. Nelson-Zagar's involvement with contemporary music began in her late teens when, having moved to San Francisco from Montana, she worked in the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra with conductor Kent Nagano and many visiting composers. Tari worked as a professional violinist in orchestras until the mid 1980's when she left the violin for the contrabass, working with many of the most adventurous northwest jazz and improvised music artists of the time. In the mid 90's Tari returned to her home instrument.

Recent work includes performances with Jesse Canterbury in a duo performance at Maybeck Recital Hall, collaboration with Elizabeth Falconer on her Recital Series "Simply Sawai", performances with Bay Area composer Ellen Fullman, West Coast and festival appearances with quartet Cipher, and Thingsome Q, an improvising string quartet.

Favorite collaborations include those with; Jesse Canterbury, Stuart Dempster, John Edwards (a bass player from the UK...), Liz Falconer, Viv Corringham, Tara Flandreau, Ellen Fullman, Al Hood, Wayne Horvitz, Matthew Sperry, Gebhart Uhlman, Jack Wright, and the Seattle Chainsaw Quintet. Festival appearances include several Earshot Jazz Festivals, Tonehole Festivals, Seattle Improvised Music Festivals, ArtsEdge Festival, Montana Artists' Refuge Festival, and the Vancouver du Maurier Jazz Festival.

Cipher: Jesse Canterbury, clarinet (Seattle, Washington)

Clarinetist Jesse Canterbury has been a regular of the Pacific Northwest new music scene for years. He is most active as an improviser, especially as a member of the Tom Baker Quartet, where his work earned him the title "one of the best new improvising clarinetists around" (Jazzreviews.com). In addition to his improvising activities, he keeps an active schedule as a chamber musician, performing music by composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Oliver Messiaen, and Elliott Carter, as well as giving premiers of new works by Pacific Northwest composers. Jesse recently recorded, with the legendary clarinetist and composer William O. Smith, an album of music for two clarinetists, called collage/decollage (Present Sounds). This new release features world-premiere recordings of several new works by Smith, in addition to commissions from François Houle and Tom Baker.

Cipher: Greg Sinibaldi, bass clarinet (Seattle, Washington)

The distinctive voice of saxophonist, bass clarinetist and composer Greg Sinibaldi evolves from a psyche absorbed in both classical and jazz studies. His study of form and structure along with his love of improvisation unite in artfully crafted music that expresses the "phenomenon of exploration" with exquisitely composed melodic harmonies and textures.

Greg's early years were spent in the Northwest playing bebop and traditional jazz arrangements in high school bands. Here he developed an appreciation for jazz forms. He began his college education at Central Washington University, then traveled to Boston to attend the New England Conservatory where he received a BA in Jazz Studies.

While at the Conservatory Greg had the privilege of studying with Joseph Maneri, George Garzone, Jimmy Giuffre, and others.

Returning to Seattle after a brief stint in San Francisco, Greg began writing music and putting exciting projects together; Vena Cava, The Greg Sinibaldi Trio, Cipher, Frieze of Life, the Greg Sinibaldi Band and the trio "Goat". He also began writing large-scale works that combine composition and improvisational elements. He is currently working on a number of scores that will accompany the silent films of Wladislaw Starewicz.

Triplet: Michael Monhart. Saxophone

I'm a New York and Seattle based musician, primarily playing tenor and soprano saxophones. Early on in my career I had the great fortune to study under Jerry Granelli at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. This was in the late 70s/early 80s, a particularly vibrant time for that scene. After moving to Seattle in 1981, I continued to study with Jerry, along with Gary Peacock and Jay Clayton, two other masters of the music who were then teaching at Cornish College. I was very active on the Seattle improvised music scene. Two notable groups were my ongoing collaboration with the always-insightful poet, Bill Shively, and a trio with Christine Bard and Jeff Triestman called Voices from the Moon. At this time I was also in graduate school in Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington. I spent 1987-1990 in Japan doing research for my Master's Degree in Ethno. My research topic was the ritual chant of the Shingon Buddhist sect. I performed actively in Kyoto, with Bill Shively, with local Kyoto musicians and in solo concerts at the jazz clubs there. I returned to Seattle in 1990, resuming Ph.D. studies in Ethno with a specialized focus on Buddhist monastic ritual music. At this time my main group was Stinkhorn with Brian Heaney, John Morris and a succession of great drummers including Mike Peterson and Howard Ouchi. Some 5 years ago Stinkhorn morphed into the very active group Sunship featuring Brian and myself along with Stuart Dempster, Andrew Luthringer and David Revelli. During this time I collaborated often with the masterfully creative Stuart

Dempster both in Sunship and in various combinations of our own and others devising. Other close Seattle based

partnerships include drum legend Greg Keplinger, and the Jack Gold Quartet. Since 2007 I am mostly in New York City playing, composing and continuing my research interests. In NYC a frequent playing partner is stellar bassist and composer Michael Bisio.

Triplet: Greg Campbell, drums (Seattle, Washington)

Greg Campbell plays drum set, vibraphone, percussion, and French horn. He has studied with Dave Holland, Cecil McBee, George Russell, and Tom Collier, and has performed with Muhal Richard Abrams, Wayne Horvitz, Stuart Dempster, Bill Smith, and Francois Houle, among others. He has also been a member of Seattle EXperimental Opera and the Seattle-based groups Brainstun (led by Christian Asplund), Project W, Ota Prota, and Jessica Lurie's Motorbison.

Triplet: Tom Baker, guitar (Seattle, Washington)

Guitarist Tom Baker has been active as a composer, performer and music producer in the Seattle new-music scene since 1994. He is the artistic director of the Seattle Composers' Salon, and co-founder of the Seattle EXperimental Opera (SEXO). Tom performs on fretted and fretless guitars, and has worked with many innovative musicians, including Stuart Dempster, William O. Smith, Christian Asplund, Chinary Ung, Ellen Fullman, Gino Robair, and Henry Threadgill. Tom has led the improvising avant-jazz group *The Tom Baker Quartet* for the past four years. This group's first CD came out in 2007 and received much critical acclaim. Their next CD will be released early in 2009. A prolific composer as well as a busy performer, Tom has written and produced three chamber operas, with a fourth to be completed in 2009. His most recent opera, *Hunger: The Journey of Tamsen Donner*, will be released on CD in the Fall of 2009.

Radiosonde: Beth Graczyk, dancer (Seattle, Washington)

Beth Graczyk is a movement-based artist who works as a contemporary dancer, choreographer, teacher and producer based in Seattle, WA. Performing both nationally and internationally she has worked extensively with Locate Performance Group (Pablo Cornejo, Paige Barnes) (2002-2006), Sheri Cohen & Co. (2000-2004), Corrie Befort (2003-present) and Scott/Powell Performance (2004-present). Beth co-produced and performed in 12 Hour Play and several dance/music improvisations in Seattle and Portland. Her company, "Salt Horse", in collaboration with Corrie Befort and Angelina Baldoz, premiered "this was a cliff" in June 2008 and will tour to Philadelphia and San Francisco in 2009. Beth has received funding through Artist Trust, Mary Gates Research Training Grant, and Evelyn H Green Endowment. She earned a double degree from the University of Washington in Dance and Molecular Biology. Her work in science has been published in Molecular Cell, Nature Cell Biology, Current Biology, and Cell.

Radiosonde: Corrie Befort, dancer (Seattle, Washington)

Recently returned to Seattle from Tokyo/Yokohama Corrie Befort (1978) has been creating dance works for ten years in the Northwest, Minneapolis and Belgium, and in Japan since 2005. Her work is often described as highly detailed, pressing between complex patterning and richly evocative physical imagery; precise yet enigmatic. She engages in energetic collaborations with composers, musicians, videographers/animators and dancers including Tom Baker, Tom Kanthak, Sheri Cohen, Beth Graczyk, Hisao Ihara, Anne Adachi, Tim Olive and many others.

The naturally cinematic nature of Corrie's choreography led her to the dance film genre in 2000. Since then she has produced three dance films, and a fourth is to be released in late 2008. Her films have screened in festivals in the US, Belgium and Japan, and are currently distributed by IndieFlix.com. In 2007 her film *Rota* was awarded a Choreography Media Honor by Dance Camera West at the Directors Guild of America, Hollywood.

Studying ballet, music and fine art from an early age, Corrie attended the Perpich Center for Arts Education in Minneapolis, received her BFA in Dance from Cornish College in 1999. She was the recipient of the danceWEB scholarship to Vienna's ImPulsTanz Festival, and a choreographic residency at the *Rosas/P.A.R.T.S.* School. She has danced for Scott/Powell Performance (1998-2005), Sheri Cohen (2001-2004) and as a guest with Japanese artist Natsuko Tezuka (2005-2007).

Radiosonde: Alia Swersky, dancer (Seattle, Washington)

Alia Swersky is a Seattle based movement artist, improviser, performer and teacher. She has created her own work as well as collaborated with and performed in the works of many local artists. Alia ran the dance program at University Prep for 6 years, is an adjunct faculty member at Cornish College of the Arts, teaches yoga, and is a board member and co-artistic with Dance Art Group (producers of the Seattle Festival of Dance Improvisation). Alia's biggest creative project yet is 2 years old...her amazing son Kaveh Madrone Sky.

Radiosonde: Ezra Dickinson, dancer (Seattle, Washington)

Ezra Dickinson has been an obsessed artist for as long as he can remember; painting, dancing, sculpting, installing, animating, photographing, and playing are what fill everyday life. At birth or some time near after Ezra began drawing and painting. At the age of four Ezra began classical ballet training. At the age of seven Ezra began a seven-year apprenticeship with Good Earth Pottery where he was instructed in both hand built and thrown pottery. At eight Ezra began training at Pacific Northwest Ballet where he trained on full scholarship for twelve years including two years in PNB's Professional Division. At fifteen Ezra began his exploration of Urban Art and Installation, he has subsequently been to jail three times for vandalism. At twenty Ezra became a student in the Dance Department at Cornish College of The Arts, where he received the Merce Cunningham Scholarship, Kreielsheimer Scholarship, President's Scholarship in Dance, Male Dance Scholarship, Outstanding Dance Major Award, and Dean's List. At twenty one Ezra joined the Maureen Whiting Dance Company who he performs for. At twenty-two Ezra began dancing for Zoe Scofield who he also currently performs for. At twenty-four earlier this year Ezra graduated from Cornish with a BFA in Dance.

Radiosonde: Sean Ryan, dancer (Seattle, Washington)

SEAN RYAN (performer) Sean Ryan has danced with choreographer's Laura Curry (touring PINKK as part of SCUBA, the National Touring Dance Alliance,) Paula Josa-Jones/Performanceworks (Boston), Sheri Cohen, & MSS/ JPP (upcoming at Dance Theater Workshop/NYC). He was a founding member of VIA, a dance theater company based in Seattle under Artistic Director Tonya Lockyer, touring internationally. Recent directing credits: the premiere of Allen Johnson's *Another You* (recipient of the Creation Fund Award from the National Performance Network); the West Coast premiere of *Crave* by Sarah Kane (Seattle); *InterCut* created by Charter77 (Seattle); and *Escurial* by Michel de Ghelderode (Calgary); among others. From 2001-2004, Sean coordinated VIA's PlayLAB series, a program devoted to presenting stage readings by regional, national and international playwrights such as Stephanie Timm, Yussef El Guindi, Sarah Kane, Adam Rapp; among others. He is a board member of Rain

City Projects, a non-profit supporting northwest playwright through publishing, playreadings, and travel grants. Currently, he is the regional programs coordinator at On the Boards. Ryan is a graduate of Emerson College, Boston with a BFA honors in Performing Arts.

Radiosonde: Tom Baker, guitar (Seattle, Washington)

-See above

Radiosonde: Greg Campbell, percussion (Seattle, Washington)

-See above

Radiosonde: Brian Cobb, bass (Seattle, Washington)

Bassist Brian Cobb is also an accomplished composer and educator. He has studied composition with Salvatore Macchia, John Bavicchi, Robert Stern, Dennis Leclair, Juan Pampin, and Diane Thome. Through the years as a jazz musician he has toured Europe; recorded with jazz artists Ron Bosse, George Garzone, and Karl Rausch; and performed with Bob Guilotti, Bob Moses, Jeff Galindo, Max Vax, Teodross Avery, and Aaron Goldberg.

Radiosonde: Jesse Canterbury, clarinet (Seattle, Washington)

-See above