**Concert III**

**Program Notes**

Thursday, 9/26/2013
7:00 PM, Weatherspoon Art Museum (free)

**Sam Newsome set (15:00)**

Playing in the solo-unaccompanied format allows me to explore improvisation and various degrees of tonal manipulation. Much of my musical language is sound oriented. I make extensive use of extended techniques such as multi-phonics, percussive slap-tonguing and circular breathing.

Playing standard tunes provides a point of reference by which the listener can better understand how ideas that stem from the aforementioned extended techniques can be integrated with the language of modern jazz. - Sam Newsome

**Sam Newsome** first came into prominence on the New York jazz scene as a member of the Terence Blanchard Quintet in the early 1990s. The group toured all over the world as well as recorded several CDs for the Columbia/Sony label, including the critically-acclaimed "Malcolm X Jazz Suite."

In 2010, Newsome’s Blue Soliloquy recording was given the distinguished five star ★★★★★ (masterpiece) rating by Downbeat Magazine. Today, Mr. Newsome, in addition to being assistant professor of jazz studies at Long Island University’s Brooklyn Campus, continues to tour, record and develop new ways to explore the soprano saxophone's sonic terrain.

See complete bio for Sam Newsome under the Late Night Concert, Thursday, September 26.

**Fantasy for Violin and Electronics (7:00)**

The *Fantasy for Violin and Electronics* is in 5 short sections ranging from lyric and expressive to boldly virtuosic. It owes a bit of a debt to John Eaton. I was one of his electronic music assistants and our ensemble united with the orchestra and singers for performances of his operas at Indiana University. He, by the way, was the first to give a live performance of electronic music in the late 50’s and early 60’s in Rome while he was at the American Academy. He is currently a MacArthur Fellow and Professor of Music at the University of Chicago and has formed his own chamber opera company. Anyway, I learned to greatly appreciate the beauty of his music, and specifically, his use of quarter-tones. I used quarter-tone inflections in the tape part as everyone will hear.

Snippets of the "live" violin music were sampled, digitally edited and used to provide the bulk of the tape dialogue. I address three basic styles of instrument and tape techniques: The first is antiphonal music where the soloist and tape alternate passages. The second involves synchronous music where the soloist does his or her best to stay with the tape. The slight inaccuracies which occur are not specific to instrument and tape music - they happen in just about every concerto I’ve seen where the conductor has one idea of the "correct" tempo while the soloist is busy projecting a varied interpretation. The third instrument and tape technique of composing involves a loosely unified, free interplay where exact synchronization is not intended.
In spite of the aforementioned, this piece has its share of trouble spots but overall, it seems to work. Recent performances, in geological time, include The 1996 Chicago 20th-Century Music Series, The Contemporary Directions Concert Series at the University of Michigan, festivals, university settings and a computer executives’ gathering in silicon valley.

James Aikman, (b. 1959, Indianapolis. Principal teachers: Michael Schelle, Earle Brown, Frederick Fox, Donald Erb, Harvey Sollberger and Louis Andriessen.)

Each new piece evokes a particular musical image, with its own distinct, emotive effect. The intentional strict limitation and control of musical materials enables stylistic unity within individual pieces. It also allows for maximizing contrast between sections of large-scale, multi-movement works. His music has variously been described as, “richly sonorous,” “fascinating,” “plaintively beautiful,” “consciously eclectic,” “exciting, inventive and fresh.” “It was intense.”

With a distinguished catalogue of music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, voice, and electronics, composer James Aikman received his musical and academic training at Butler University, The Jacob’s School of Music of Indiana University (M.Mus., D.Mus.) and through the Royal Conservatory in Holland. Post-graduate, James Aikman earned a Fulbright in Amsterdam then a Fellowship at The University of Michigan, where he serves on the faculty. Aikman’s music has been consistently awarded and honored during the past twenty-five years and has been heard at prestigious festivals and venues, including Amsterdam’s Gaudeamus Musicweek, France’s Festivals International de Musique, London’s Wigmore Hall, the Aspen Music Festival, the OJAI Festival in Los Angeles, Tanglewood, Merkin Hall, and Carnegie Hall.


Davis Brooks’ orchestral affiliations have included the New York Chamber Symphony (for nineteen years), the Mostly Mozart Orchestra at Lincoln Center (for ten years), and concertmaster of the Harrisburg and Waco Symphonies as well as the Chamber Orchestra of New England. Currently, he is associate concertmaster of the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, as well as Professor of Violin at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. Details of additional recordings and activities can be found at davisbrooksviolin.com.

Please see the complete bio for Davis Brooks under his Solo Concert, Friday, September 17 at 3:00 p.m.

Sleight (12:00)  Cameron Britt
A note about the instrument: The EMvibe is a computer-controlled electromagnetically actuated vibraphone that I have been developing over the past several years. The instrument's actuators allow the computer to "bow" the bars electromagnetically. The EMvibe truly blends the electronic and the acoustic: the electronic aspect affords the instrument new capabilities, yet the sound remains purely acoustic. The new capabilities afforded by the electronics invite new ways of interacting with, and controlling the vibraphone.

For as long as I have been working with it, I have felt like there's something magical about the EMvibe. It is, after all, an acoustic instrument that has the potential to play itself without any moving parts or obvious intervention on the part of the performer. At the same time, I believe this quality is one of the instrument's drawbacks: Because the actuating force is invisible, the audience must take on faith that the sounds are coming from the instrument itself and not from speakers hidden somewhere in the performance space. This quote, attributed to Houdini, is apropos to how I approached Sleight: "What the eyes see and the ears hear, the mind believes." In composing this piece I tried to think about ways of interacting with the instrument that would draw a connection between gesture and sound, and make visible the invisible. But like a magician, I was also interested in exploiting the possibility that these connections may only be in the audience's mind.

**N. Cameron Brit** (b. 1974) is a percussionist, composer, and instrument builder. As a percussionist he has performed with many orchestras throughout the Southeast including the North Carolina Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He is active as a creator and interpreter of new music and performs with cellist Tom Kraines in the free improvisation duo Dithyramb. His works have been performed by the Brentano String Quartet, So Percussion, Ensemble Klang, janus, NOW Ensemble, and the electronica duo Matmos. He has worked with the laptop ensembles Sideband and PLOrk and is interested in creating performable electronic instruments in both hardware and software. The EMvibe (an electromagnetically actuated vibraphone), combines his interests in composition, electronic music, instrument design and performance. He is currently teaching percussion at Duke University and will complete his PhD in Composition at Princeton University later this fall.

**Knives of Spain set: (15:00)**

Most of my musical ventures prior to *knives of spain* have been in an instrumental context, performing as a flutist in classical settings, jazz groups, traditional Middle Eastern and Hindustani classical ensembles, and in free improvisation. But over the years I’ve been fortunate to acquire, from friends, family and flea markets, a host of instruments on which I’ve experimented and adapted to my needs. A few years back I began writing songs with these instruments and using my voice, as well. Although at first I contemplated piecing together a band to perform with, I eventually realized a personal goal of undertaking every single aspect of this project on my own – from composing and performing, to recording and releasing my own works.

Because I am a soloist infatuated with eclectic instrumentation, I have chosen to go beyond the conventional singer/songwriter set up in live performances. For *knives of spain* to function as one-woman band, I expand my sound range to include backing tracks on which I play analog synths, flutes, percussion, melodica, accordion, guitar, or whatever else I can get my hands on, and mix these tracks with vocals and live sound. This allows me the freedom
to vary the texture of my songs, to perform on a variety of instruments, and to creatively combine acoustic and electronic mediums.

_**knives of spain**_ is 21st-century trobairitz music from North Carolina-based multi-instrumentalist Gwen Young. Her eclectic folk/pop features Crumar analog synths, electrified and acoustic classical guitar, flutes, hand percussion, bells, accordion, melodica and voice. Sometimes she plays all these at once. Since forming her one-woman band in 2010, she has self-produced a full length LP, _Opening Sequence_, and an EP, _knives of spain_, both available at _knivesofspain.com_. Gwen is the recipient of a 2012 Regional Artist Grant from the United Arts Council of Greensboro.