



cello city ONLINE

Newsletter of the New Directions Cello Association & Festival Inc.
Vol 18, No.3 Spring 2011

Welcome to the Nexus of the Next Step in Cello!

Different Cello!

Delirious Cello!

Distinctive Cello!

Dangerous Cello!

Undisciplined Cello!

Delicious Cello!

Defiant Cello!

Decomposed Cello!

Danceable Cello!

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DON'T FORGET TO VISIT:

- [Celli-Communications](#) - the NDCA Online Forum
- [Cello City Store](#) - CDs, sheet music and more!



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Well, the two main things are: ***WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE!!! And WE HOPE YOU CAN COME TO THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL!!!***

Our new webmaster is Neil Zusman. He lives here in Ithaca NY, where I live and Sera Smolen lives, essentially in the heart of New Directions Cello territory. If you have been to any of our Ithaca festivals (2008-2010) you have seen Neil selling stuff at our Cello City Store. Neil has done an amazing job creating a fun new look for the site and transferring all the important stuff from the old site. If you try to go to the old site you will be redirected to the new site so fast you won't even know it...but it has a new URL: <http://www.newdirectionscello.org>

This year's festival will be another amazing new directions experience. We are featuring one of the most recognizable names in new directions cello: Eugene Friesen, returning for his second New Directions appearance. He will be giving us his amazing cello and vocals and playing with Tim Ray on piano (who played for many years with Lyle Lovett) and Café da Silva on percussion. We also are proud to welcome Renata Bratt with her New Almaden Trio, Sera Smolen with Tom Mank, Susan Hoover and friends. Mike Block and Kevin Fox will each perform solo but they both sing and play cello, so it's not really a solo thing...We hope to see you there! Get all the info at: <http://www.newdirectionscello.org>

Our first ever fundraiser for the New Directions Cello Fund went quite well. We mailed out brochures to our mailing list in December and we raised over \$1,700 on top of the amazing donation from Einar Jeff Holm of \$10,000. This will all help us establish an endowment which will help support the festival for years to come. Many thanks to all who contributed. If you didn't get a chance to donate, it's never too late!

Memberships are due by May 1st. Those who contributed to the New Directions Cello Fund had their memberships automatically renewed. If you didn't contribute, please send in your membership today! You can send a check made out to NDCA to:

NDCA
123 Rachel Carson Way
Ithaca NY 14850

Or call us with your credit card at (607) 277-1686. It's safe to leave it on our machine or leave your number and we'll call you back. Or, Paypal to this email: chris@newdirectionscello.org

Thank you! See you at the festival!

Peace, love and cello,

Chris

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Chris White, Director
New Directions Cello Association and Festival

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NEW DIRECTIONS CELLO FESTIVAL 2011

The [New Directions Cello Festival 2011](#) will be held June 10-12, 2011 at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. Guest artists will include [Mike Block](#), [Renata Bratt](#), [Kevin Fox](#), [Eugene Friesen](#) and [Sera Smolen](#), playing solo or with their respective bands, as well as leading instructional workshops. On Friday and Saturday evenings, the guest artists will perform. On Friday afternoon, Saturday all day and Sunday morning, workshops will happen. The rest of the time - starting Thursday night and ending sometime Sunday - there will be spontaneous cello jams. Many NDCF participants cite these jams as their favorite part of the festival!

Are you a cellist who has mostly played classical music, but would like to learn about new styles?

Are you a beginner, excited about the cello, but not sure which direction you'd like to take?

Are you a seasoned non-classical player who has known some success in your town, but would like to meet others of your "clan"?

Just about anybody who plays the cello, loves the cello, or even barely tolerates the cello will LOVE being at the New Directions Cello Festival! I have literally seen people's lives changed (including my own) because of it. It has been described as a "love-in" disguised as a festival; the vibe of support, camaraderie (which is perhaps too weak a word!) is something palpable. No matter your level of ability, you will feel welcomed - loved! - and will learn tons! The only complaint participants have ever had is that it ends too soon.

Registration form is [here](#).

The sponsors for the 2011 festival are [Super Sensitive Strings](#), [David Gage String Instruments](#), [NS Design](#) and [D'Addario](#).

See you in Ithaca!



New Directions Cello Festival Workshops 2010



This year, there will be over 20 workshops and facilitated jam sessions over the course of the weekend! If you are one of our younger players (or the parent of) with or without experience improvising, a university cello major, an adult amateur, or a professional teacher looking to learn how to include the National Standards for Music Education into your practice... If you are a recording artist and a seasoned performer, or a cellist who does not fit into any of these descriptions, come one come all! There will be wonderful workshops for you!

Mike Block

Pizzicato - We will learn non-traditional techniques, ranging from good bass groove in multiple genres, chords, slapping, and flamenco, and explore when and why to use them appropriately and effectively.

Improvising with Others - Do you think of improvisation as taking a "solo"? We will use improvisation as a tool to interact with group members, and as a method for efficiently creating compositions.

Renata Bratt

Chording (and Chopping!) on Cello - Learn and perform chords on the cello. Playing chords improves three things: our understanding of music theory - how chords work together with melody, learning the positions on every string, and intonation. In addition, playing chords teaches how to accompany others. Besides adding rhythmic flair, chopping gives our bow hands an essential workout; it teaches our fingers to move independently, lends agility with string crossing. It also helps cross-train spiccato, sautille, setting the bow and boosts wrist flexibility!

Play it and back it up! - Perform fiddle tunes and accompany them too. For tunes, learn where the slurs and accents go to make this style "pop!" Adding grace notes or ornaments is key. Accompanying fiddle tunes is fun; everyone can do it. By identifying the chord structure of the tune (music provided), learn to construct two to four string chords, bass lines, then tie it all together with the grooving rhythmic patterns provided in Chording (and Chopping!).

Jazz Improvisation - We'll learn basic jazz rhythmic structures, the blues scale, basic melodic motifs, playing over chord changes, chords and backup harmony.

Kevin Fox

Workshops titles TBA (but we're expecting/hoping he'll sharing some insights about singing and playing!)

Eugene Friesen

Choros on Cellos - The choro repertoire of Brazil is perfectly suited for cello. With beautiful melodies, surprising harmonic twists and infectious rhythm, choros highlight a unique facet of our instrument and offer ample opportunities for innovation and improvisation. Assisted by Brazilian percussionist Café da Silva and pianist Tim Ray, Eugene will demonstrate and teach his "choro pizz" technique, and briefly survey the repertoire.

Freedom and Imagination at the Cello - Eugene Friesen will outline the path to musical liberation for cellists; the balance between rigor and surrender, techniques to apply musical theory and ear training to the cello, and survival as an independent musician.

TJ Borden

Liberated Sound: Outside the Box Sonic Exploration and the Cello - How do we organize sound on the spot without the help of a tonal center or a steady pulse? Geared towards those who are interested in creating musical worlds that redefine which sounds are and aren't "acceptable" in music.

The Cello as a Found Object - Explore beyond arco and pizzicato. Use the tools you have to extract a wide range of sounds and textures from your cello.

New Directions Cello Festival Workshops Cont'd...

Stephen Katz

Intermediate/Beginning Workshop - Flying Pizzicato Fundamentals & Rudiments: get off the ground with Stephen's highly rhythmic, contrapuntal Flying Pizz techniques.

Intermediate/Advanced Workshop - Flying Pizzicato Repertoire: Wrap your fingers around some intricate excerpts from Stephen's new Flying Pizzicato cd.

Corbin Keep

Steal This Music! - Transcribing and adapting music from other instruments to cello.

Sera Smolen

Off the Page - Based on a new collection of pieces which allows cellists to learn to modulate as they improvise, we will play heads and take solos.

Xerox the Clouds - with Susan Hoover. We will explore the world of creating cello music with poetry. We will break into groups, and end with performances of poetry with cello.

All my Love's in Vain - Blues jam session. We will begin with E blues, a favorite key for guitarists the world 'round...but also a scale played by even beginning cellists. We will also play C blues and D blues, providing bass lines and charts to read as we play.



Sachino Tzinadze

Cello fantasy - Explore playing by ear and creating your own music

Chris White

Storm Over Asia - Using this silent film as an example, we will explore the how-to's of improvising music to a silent film

Storm Over Asia - Jam session. After the workshop, enjoy free improvisation over a silent film!

Swing, Bossa and Jazz - What are the differences between different types of bass lines? Learn to create bass lines for tunes in three styles, then play the head and improvise over the music.

CELLIN' OUT!

WITH TOM CULVER

CELLI B. GOODE



In the last '*Cellin' Out*' article, we looked at a few ways in which the cello can emulate its big brother, the bass. This time around, we're going to take a look at one of the many ways in which the cello can rock out like its cousin, the guitar. We'll look at a widely used pattern on guitar that works remarkably well on cello. I actually prefer to play this 'guitar riff' on cello. It lays under the fingers better than on the guitar. This is mostly because the strings of the cello are tuned in 5ths, rather than 4ths.

To illustrate the use of this riff, we'll take a look at a song by one of the pioneers of rock n' roll, Chuck Berry. Berry was one of the most pivotal and influential guitarists in the early days of rock and roll. He took the sounds of early 1950's Chicago blues and injected a faster, more lively character into it. Johnny B. Goode is a great example of how this classic guitar riff works equally as well on a rock 'n' roll tune as it does on a blues tune.

Berry's studio version of *Johnny B. Goode* is in the key of Bb, but he has performed it live in a variety of keys throughout his career. For our purposes, we'll look at it in the key of A. The chord movement is pretty typical of a 12 bar blues/early rock 'n' roll progression. Instead of just sitting on the root and 5th of each chord though, the rhythm guitar line is given a little more harmonic movement by going back and forth from root/5th to root/6th.

Stylistic consideration: This style can be bowed (or strummed) in many ways, though I prefer to bow closer to the frog and slightly 'off' the string. Accenting beats 2 and 4 adds a nice 'backbeat' especially when playing without a drummer.

[Video example #1](#)

Adding the root/7th to the pattern, you can jam along with another Chuck Berry tune, *Roll Over Beethoven*, which was also made popular by the Beatles.

[Video example #2](#)

Once you've learned this pattern, it is very easy to apply it to any key. Most guitar based blues-rock bands will play in the keys of E or A, so you'd probably want to familiarize yourself with this pattern in those keys first. In addition, slowing the tempo down dramatically and using the same riffs would easily get you playing the classic Chicago blues style, ala Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Howlin' Wolf, etc.

You don't have to look very far to see the impact that Chuck Berry and other early R&R pioneers had on the rock music that followed over the next several decades. One additional variation to the riff can be heard in the song *Rock N' Roll* by Led Zeppelin, which pays homage to the styling of Berry, Little Richard, etc. In addition to the root/5th, root/6th, root/flat 7th as seen above, the blues scale is further exploited by using a flat 3rd, which can be bent up, or in the case of the cello, slid up slightly to the major 3rd, adding a bit of ambiguity as to whether the chord is major or minor.

[Video example #3](#)

There are, of course, many more ways for us cellists to play the role of the guitar. This classic riff is a great way to get started, though, and one which is relatively easy to pick up and have some fun with.

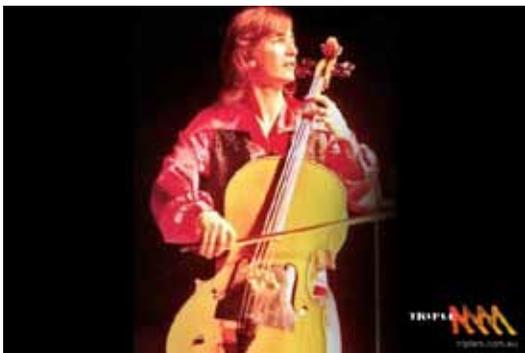
Now all you'll need is a good rock cellist name; 'Ed-die VanCello', 'Johnny Rosin' or perhaps 'Bo Fiddly' come to mind... I'll work on it for next time, but until then, **'CELL OUT!'**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFINGS

[Jody Redhage](#) (NDCF 2009) has been touring with Grammy winning jazz bassist and singer [Esperanza Spalding](#) for the 2010-2011 season, in support of Spalding's recent album, "Chamber Music Society." Jody will be releasing a new album of her own on Naxos in July, a solo project of music for voice, cello, & electronics, written by NY area new music composers..

Mike Edwards, a former cellist for [Electric Light Orchestra](#), died on Sep 3rd, 2010, after a freak collision with a rolling bale of hay which struck the van he was driving. He was 62. According to police, Edwards was driving his van in southwestern England when he hit a 1300-pound bale of hay, which had rolled down a hill to the road.

In the 1970s, ELO was one of the first rock bands to feature amplified rock cello. Edwards played with the band from 1972 to 1975. According to the *Daily Mail*, he was known for playing his cello with an orange or grapefruit, and for a bit of stagecraft in which his cello would explode after he finished playing a solo. The *Mail* also reports that Edwards left the band in 1975 to convert to Buddhism, changing his name to Deva Pramada, and that he became a cello teacher.



In January, [Zoe Keating](#) (NDCF 2007) wrote that she "just got back from a trip to NAMM (which for those of you who don't know, is the trade show of trade shows for musicians. Every conceivable band-fashion - sequin pants! leather pants! spandex pants! no pants! - was well-represented. Cellobaby seemed to enjoy all it very much - don't worry, he had earplugs - but then, Cellobaby is quite easy to please!""

[Claire Fitch](#) writes, "Cello life is great over here in Ireland right now. I'm improvising and performing with all sorts of artists, not just musicians, and it's really opened up the possibilities. Last summer I jammed at many Irish Festivals... Electric Picnic, Body and Soul Gathering, Kilkenny Arts and Drogheda Fringe as well as loads of smaller gallery and performance spaces in Dublin. This summer

INTERVIEWS

Transcending all Categories *An interview with Eugene Friesen, by Sera Smolen*



Eugene Friesen lives in Vermont and is a master of the cello. He has recorded numerous solo and ensemble CDs, won Grammy Awards as a member of the Paul Winter Consort, and has performed all over the world. He blends traditional classical music with Brazilian and Siberian folk melodies, wild improvisational jazz, and his own original compositions, demonstrating that there is no limit to the music that can be created with a cello.

One of Mr. Friesen's missions is to make great music of all kinds accessible to audiences of all ages. He has worked and recorded with such diverse artists as Dave Brubeck, Toots Thielemans, Betty Buckley, Will Ackerman, Joe Lovano and Dream Theater. Eugene's passion for the responsive flow of improvisatory music has also been featured in concerts with Trio Globo: Friesen, Howard Levy and Glen Velez. He has performed as a soloist at the International Cello Festival in Manchester, England; Rencontres d'Ensembles de Violoncelles in Beauvais, France; the World Cello Congress in Baltimore, Maryland; and the Rio International Cello Encounter in Rio de Janeiro. Recording credits include five albums of original music: *New Friend*, *Arms Around You*, *The Song of Rivers*, *In the Shade of Angels*, and *Sono Miho*. A love for children and music education led Eugene to create his popular program for young audiences, *CelloMan*, and has fueled his work teaching new cello techniques and improvisation in the United States, Asia, Europe and South America. Eugene is an artist-in-residence at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. He contributes to groundbreaking and visionary music teaching as a professor at the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Sera Smolen: "As a guest artist at the University of Connecticut, you captured our hearts and our deep respect with your expressive, powerful playing. How would you describe the experiences you have on stage?"

Eugene Friesen: "Improvising in concert has been important learning for me. Something about the sound that emerges when you're part of a musical flow is, for me, so different than the sound I cultivate in the practice room. From listening to concert recordings, I discovered that my bow is much more

connected to the intent of my communication than when I practice. In that way, the kind of "voice" that emerges in my onstage playing continues to be the standard I reach for in the studio."

SS: "Do your new compositions come as you play, exploring ideas at the cello, are you inspired by the language you are hearing from certain musicians, or do you have a purely spiritual inspiration you turn into music at your cello, or some of each?"

EF: "Every piece of music has a little different genesis. I've been inspired from my students in the last dozen years. Some truly amazing young musicians come through Berklee and I can't help but be influenced by their strengths in various styles. The biggest influence is the mode of practicing I've found. It's a way of applying the elements of harmony and ear training to the cello that has given me enhanced freedom in playing what I hear inside. As a composer, my work with Berklee World Strings has become a major focus of my creative output. I try to create one new piece or arrangement for the group each semester. The prospect of having one's work performed by a group of top string students is motivating. Since the ensemble's mission involves rhythm and improvisation, it's great fun to create work that is challenging for them yet meaningful for a listener."

SS: "You have cultivated a long standing teaching and coaching practice for improvising musicians. What have you learned about music education in our culture from your experiences teaching?"

EF: "The status quo for a classical string education is changing at last! For too long we've involved ourselves solely as worshippers of ancient music. Of course there's nothing wrong with knowing intimately the inspired masterpieces of our musical culture. But finally we're beginning to apply the elements of music to our instruments, and that's when personal creativity can be called on. In fact, that personal creativity is what then drives our practice and ignites our curiosity. Even if your goal is to per-

form classical music, I believe that nourishing the spark of musical creativity will improve everything about your listening, understanding and playing."

SS: "What are the important ways to develop as improvisers at the university level?"

EF: "To put it briefly: transcribing, transposing, arpeggiating and jamming with your friends! Much more to be said about each obviously, but there you have it!"

SS: "What helps people find their authentic voice at the instrument?"

EF: "I'm always curious about what music people love. It's natural to a growing musical awareness if what you love changes. I want to encourage people to follow their natural musical attractions because there's so much to learn in ANY music."

SS: "How do you recommend classically trained cellists to best develop rhythmically?"

EF: "Find a drummer to practice with! Practice from drum books. Play along with your favorite grooves; even if it's a single note - and even a wrong note - just make your bow groove with what you're hearing. And of course, Plan A: give your metronome a name and develop an intimate relationship with him/her - offbeats, syncopations, polyrhythm - it's all born at home."

SS: "Harmonically?"

EF: "Arpeggiate!"

SS: "...vocally?"

EF: "It's been helpful for me to sing with my playing, and to sing tunes I want to play well. Listening to singers is influencing the most successful young instrumentalists. The influence of gospel style in R&B and hip-hop and rap is so huge. For some reason the world is asking to hear us play that way!"

SS: "Is there anything you are looking forward to working on the next time you have some time from your busy touring schedule?"

EF: "I'm composing a large piece for choir and strings to be premiered at the Shenandoah Bach Festival next June, and working on the publication of the book I've written with my wife Wendy, *Improvisation for Classically Trained Musicians*."

SS: "Thank you. We are looking forward to hearing you at the New Directions Cello Festival in Ithaca NY this June 10-12, 2011!"



On Becoming a Complete Cellist *An interview with Renata Bratt* *by Sera Smolen*

Renata Bratt, who will be a guest artist at the 2011 New Directions Cello Festival, June 10-12, is definitely a complete cellist. Starting as a classical player who pursued her study to the PhD level with illustrious artist teachers, Peter and Gabor Rejto, she has gone on to become a recording artist, collaborator, composer, scholarly writer and a master teacher in her own right. Her equally illustrious string jazz coaches include David Baker, David Balakrishnan, Matt Glaser, David Hollender and Mark Summer.

Dubbed as an "ace performer" by Rolling Stone for her work with Cindy Lee Berryhill's Garage Orchestra, Renata has performed with luminaries such as Liz Carroll and John Doyle, Darol Anger and Alasdair Fraser and played back-up with Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, David Sanborn, Lyle Lovett, and Dionne Warwick. In addition, she has been an invited classical recitalist at the Spanish Embassy in Rome.

She has taught classical styles, jazz improvisation and fiddling techniques at outstanding national string workshops including the Mancini Institute, The Mark O'Connor String Conference, Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling Camp, IAJE, ASTA, MENC, Suzuki institutes and conferences. She is a past president of the Suzuki Music Association of California, a founding member of the national American String Teachers Association Alternative String Styles Advisory Committee and the Kuumbwa Jazz Education committee in Santa Cruz, CA.

In Cello City Ink, (former incarnation of Cello City Online) we learned about Renata in a previous interview and read about her books, *Celtic Grooves* and *The Fiddling Cellist*. We also had the pleasure of participating in her workshops at the New Directions Cello Festival at Sacramento State University in California in 2006.

Sera Smolen: "I would like to start by recommending your web site, <http://www.renatabratt.com>. "Listening to Get You Started" is a wonderful listening list compiled by a group of jazz string musicians!"

Renata Bratt: "I'm glad you like the listening list. I've got some ideas for a new list that would be for bluegrass/newgrass/fiddling styles which should be up in a couple of months."

SS: "Your playing spans many centuries and so many styles! How would you describe the process a cellist might engage in to become a complete cellist?"

RB: "The basic components for playing and thinking like a complete cellist are:

1. Listen to lots of music and go to concerts where you can observe that music.
2. Make sure to attend at least one summer music camp every year in order to immerse yourself in a new style. You don't have to do every style all the time...in fact it makes more sense to add styles to your palette one at a time. Every style doesn't have to be perfect - until and unless you find the one you really really love. Even that style will never be perfect, of course. None of us can ever be perfect - we're just learning as best we can.
3. It helps to find things you love about whatever style you are pursuing at any given time.
4. Always say yes when someone asks you to play music outside of your comfort zone.
5. Be willing to really sound BAD for a while."

SS: "How did you integrate the different kinds of training this requires?"

RB: "I started with classical, and got really good with that and really tried to become a great sight reader I started playing in jazz band to get even better at sight-reading and fell in love with jazz. I took lots of lessons and went to jazz camps. Meanwhile, I started playing rock gigs with my friend, singer songwriter Cindy Lee Berryhill. Practicing jazz made me practice everything in all keys - so tunes like Ein Heldenleben got a lot easier (In this orchestra piece, we find just the same lick played over and over in different keys!). Playing rock with Cindy Lee Berryhill also helped my sense of pulse and ability to play without music on the stage. That said, I think a more sensible approach for a classical player would be to learn rock and fiddle tunes first (the chords are MUCH more sensible), while learning to accompany them, and then learn jazz."

SS: "As a practicer, do you have phases where you

function more like a classical player, then switch to practice more like a jazz player? Are there ways one can alternate warm up routines in order to keep both vocabularies present day to day, both sensibilities working beautifully side by side?"

RB: "For classical chops, I practice Bach suites quite a bit, and keep my knowledge of the Suzuki literature going. I practice books 5-8 so I don't lose my memory of them. Also, due to my demonic adult students, I've been playing Popper Etudes again. Not all of them - just the pretty ones. Now I like them.

As a jazz player, I practice the Bach Suites in order to think about harmonic motion. It's great to listen to how Bach makes those chords line up in a linear way. Both my jazz bass lines and my jazz soloing owe a lot to Bach. I do try to do a bit of alternation with fiddling and jazz - just because the inflections are a bit different. Astonishingly, learning to play grace notes in Celtic music has helped me tremendously with authentic jazz phrasing. When you listen to a jazz performer, you realize that he or she is constantly ornamenting the melody with grace notes and rolls, just like a Celtic musician. We do know those styles are related.... Hallelujah, they interact beautifully, side by side."

SS: "As a performer, how would you describe the artistic rewards of being able to perform classical, fiddling, and jazz concerts?"

RB: "I do have a variety of musical friends - but also, more importantly, I have a variety of musical heroes. For me, it is very important to be a musical groupie, not just a music player! Groupies love music and musicians. I do get to play with more interesting folks because of my intense fascination with all of their styles. When I was living in San Diego I once had what I thought was a perfect day: I spent the early afternoon recording rock with Cindy Lee Berryhill, played a classical quartet recital in the early evening and made it to the last half of my big band jazz rehearsal. Another day I got called to sub with the San Diego symphony while I was doing sound check at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall. I got on an early morning flight and subbed playing Richard Strauss the next day. Woo hoo! And back up to Slims in San Francisco! Nowadays, playing a variety of different music styles keeps me sane and happy. I prefer to do one style of music at a time now, because it's easier for me to keep my wits about me. I do love being able to sit in with an Irish player like Liz Carroll and then play fiddle/jazz music with Darol Anger. I've been fortunate to sit in on some great jam sessions because I know lots of music styles - and I get some cool studio gigs because of it."

SS: "When you are in various groups, you play harmonies, bass lines, supporting musical lines, the written and improvised melodies. This must allow you to create cello parts which are unique and interesting."

RB: "I love backing up players. So much so, that when I write music, I usually have someone else in mind as the tune player. Sometimes, at fiddle camp, we refer to the tune players as the "tune slaves." That's because in fiddle style music the accompanist is the one who really gets to play around. Even in jazz, the comping players ("Accompanying") have a lot of latitude. When playing "back-up" your ears are ultra-opened. In essence, you get to fill in all of the gaps that you hear. Is the harmony missing? I can supply it! Is the rhythm missing? I can supply it. Is everyone else playing short choppy rhythms? I can play pretty long tones. It's very liberating to play this way - and takes a while to get to that point too!"

SS: "As a teacher, you have been dedicated to the process of educating the complete cellist. What does this involve, from the beginning? When and how do you start this with Suzuki students?"

RB: "For younger learners, playing by ear is most important, then learning to read music (duets and beginning orchestra help!). With Suzuki students, we learn Suzuki tunes interleaved with easier fiddle tunes. I also teach the 12 bar blues from the beginning. With fiddle tunes, first I teach some very easy accompanying, and talk about scales as well as chords: the I, IV and the V. My students "mess around in what ever key they are learning their fiddle tune in. I don't call it improvising. That sounds scary. I try to get all my students to go to fiddle camp as well as Suzuki Institutes. I start teaching "jazz" soloing a bit later, usually starting in about Suzuki Book 3. But before then, I encourage lots of playing around on the cello - harmonics - playing up and down the fingerboard, playing with "chops," lots of playful music making. Then jazz. A prepared student learns like a dream..."

SS: "Could you tell us how you use your books as a teacher?"

RB: "I have cool back-up recordings my husband has created for me for various fiddle camps and Suzuki Institutes. In the past, I've very much enjoyed using the back-up tracks from Randy Sabien's Jazz Philharmonic books from Alfred and Martin Norgaard's Jazz Fiddle Wizard Jr.'s books from Mel Bay."

SS: "You refer to the book 3 improviser, and a book 5 improviser. What are the skills, competencies, or knowledge which would characterize these two

kinds of student improvisers?"

RB: "A Book 3 improviser can play within a scale (diatonically) with interesting rhythms. He should be able to play basic question and answer phrases. A Book 5 improviser can do the above, and start to add chromatic playing to her solos because she has listened to improvisers and is now starting to copy what she has heard, adding "decorative" notes to her basic melody lines. Her phrases should be a bit longer - a musical "question" and it's improvised "answer" could be 4 bars now instead of 2."

SS: "What skills would a high school senior have as an improviser?"

RB: "A high school senior should be able to improvise within a modal or diatonic framework, and be able to change keys within the solo, if necessary. I do have current high school senior playing in his honor jazz band at school. He can play solos that get somewhere, for example, starting out low and slow...getting more intense as they go along, and then ending up nicely with an actual phrase ending at the end of the solo. He can change keys within the solo if he needs to. He can play interesting rhythms that are different from the accompanying rhythms, but are within the framework of the tune."

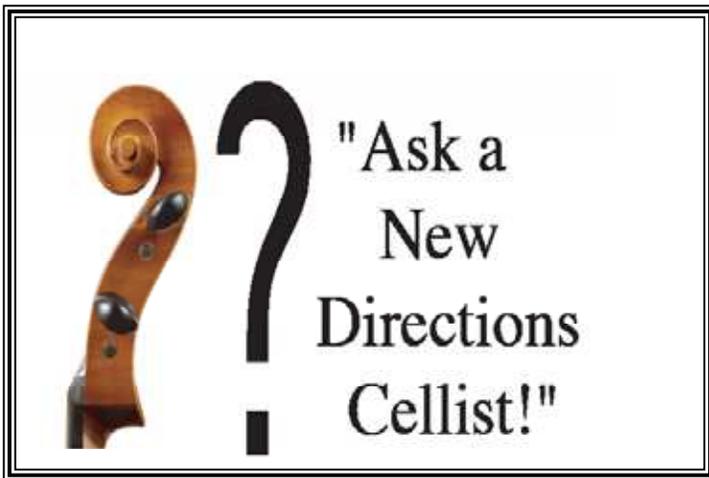
SS: "In a perfect world, what kind of playing, improvising and performing of world musical styles would university level cellists be doing?"

RB: "A university cello major should be playing in her college jazz band, fiddle or rock group. She should be taking jazz classes or fiddle classes and playing in small ensembles. She should be writing tunes for those ensembles as well as performing. Improvisers make terrific composers."

SS: "We are all looking forward to hearing you perform at our upcoming festival, and also are looking forward to your workshops! Will you be performing any of your new compositions, or from any of your current projects?"

RB: "I do have a new CD I enjoyed making very much. I have also been working on a new CD with New Almaden Trio. I just started working on an album with women fiddle players. I just did some great stuff at the Wintergrass Festival (you can see some of that on the front page of my website - I just added it).

Lots of music to create out there!"



The beauty of improvisation is that when things take an unexpected turn, you can roll with it and end up somewhere unanticipated and wonderful. Such is certainly the case in this installment of Ask a New Directions Cellist!

As the answers rolled in to the question: "Who/what have been your major influences that have shaped you as a New Directions style cellist?" one man's name kept appearing in people's answers: David Darling. Though I did not include myself amongst the respondents, guess who had a huge influence on me? Right the first time. I was 17 when David came with the Paul Winter Consort to the university in my hometown of Bellingham, Washington. Playing the cello and improvising the way David did that night seemed so natural, like it was already a part of me, that I scarcely realized what a profound effect his performance had on my playing and approach to the cello until many years later.

Guitarists have an immense wealth of recorded guitar solos going back many years. Many of these solos are so well known that they have become part of the bedrock of popular culture. How about famous cello solos? Other than the first few bars of the Prelude from the first Bach Suite - recognizable by at least some of Western society - what do we have? Not much! How about non-classical cello solos? They are pretty few and far between!

Though its fame is not as notorious as, say Van Halen's "Eruption", or any number of solos by Jimmy Page or Jimi Hendrix, there is one very important cello solo which I would like to bring attention to. It's heard in a piece called Whole Earth Chant by the Paul Winter Consort. The album is called Icarus, and was released January 1st, 1972. The solo is by David Darling. Listen to it [here](#). In my opinion, this solo marks a crucial moment in the history of cello playing; it's a turning point. In one incendiary minute, this cellist took what had been up to then,



a petticoated, prim and proper, oh-so-lovely instrument and positively ravished her!

Clearly, the cello was ready for this, as were cellists everywhere. It took several more years, but crazy amazing rock cello solos are not all that uncommon now. But back in 1972, playing a cello like this was positively revolutionary. As the responses to this issue's question clearly attest, David himself was - and is - a very important part of what has become a revolution in cello playing.

On March 3rd of this year, David Darling turned 70, so what better time to say, from all of us in New Directions Cello Land: Happy Birthday, David, and thank you for all that you have given us and continue to give!

Ok, on to the answers now!

Who/what have been your major influences that have shaped you as a New Directions style cellist?

Sera Smolen (USA)

"I am one of the legions of cellists who got started as a result of David Darling's musicianship, which embraces all styles, and his teaching, which is absolutely supportive and encouraging. My interest is in how we can find our own voices, how we can become citizens of the world--and how to map the kinds of learning this process asks of us. I have interviewed many of the New Directions guest artists, and have attended the workshops at the festival for the past 16 years learn things from each one. In addition to that, I have taken lessons with a sarod player from Nepal, which has influenced me a lot. [The Anthroposophists](#) revolutionized my understanding of the relationship between music and

the human being. I have loved working with dancers, sculptors, painters and poets, endeavoring to "translate" their beautiful art into cello music."

<http://www.serasmolen.com/>

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Sean Grissom (USA)

"I like to think that there have been two streams of influences - pedagogical and environmental. My main classical teacher, Channing Robbins, taught me to play the cello, and to think on my own as to fingerings and approaches. I had a fiddle teacher in Houston, Dave Perkins, who showed me the light to the joy of music and improvisation through fiddle tunes. Finally, Papa John Creach and three tours taught me how to perform, rock out, and to really think about soloing and what to say musically. I use the word environment, because playing on the street is what shaped all the learning I had above into what I am today. Street/Subway Performing taught me that there are NO small gigs, and that we 'play' an instrument - it can NEVER be work! I have played many gigs in many different venues worldwide, and I STILL go back to the subways with the same enthusiasm. I feel that if I'm ever too proud or think that I'm too good to set up on the street to play, I WILL quit!"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UismPGkPpZA>

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Chris White (USA)

"I think that playing the guitar and learning from listening to others (Gerry Garcia/Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan, The Band, Van Morrison, The Beatles, Leo Kottke, etc.) and trying to imitate them may have had the single biggest influence on my style as a New Directions cellist. When I started improvising on cello, there were very few people doing anything on cello that inspired me, so I took what I had learned on the guitar and applied it to cello. I already had begun learning some jazz on the guitar as well and already had the feel of pop, blues and jazz "in me." Among cellists, David Darling inspired with his sound and David Eyges inspired just by the fact that he was leading a jazz-type combo as a cellist and making records."

<http://www.newdirectionscello.com/chriswhite/index.htm>

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Eric Longsworth (FR)

"David Darling and Hank Roberts were the first cellists who made me realize that a cellist could play other music than classical, followed by David Eyges, Abdul Wadud, and Ernst Reiseger. I've been influ-

enced by a host of instrumentalists playing many styles of music, but these cellists showed me that there are no limits to cello playing."

<http://www.myspace.com/longswortheric>

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Kristen Miller (USA)

"Studying African and Middle Eastern music, listening to Led Zeppelin, Chris Whitley, White Stripes, Dead Can Dance. Also, very inspired by modern dance and abstract expressionistic art. And lately, silent film."

<http://www.kristenmillermusic.com>

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Stephanie Winters (USA)

"Twenty years ago, when I was transitioning out of classical music into playing in bands and with songwriters, I took workshops and lessons with David Darling. I remember him saying "play with love". I didn't take that thought seriously at the time, as the sentiment seemed trite to me. When I began to make my living playing concerts rather than teaching or playing pick-up gigs, I came to realize the power of this advice and how it moved audiences. Very recently David helped me to realize the value of shifting my internal voice when I play from one of self-criticism to loving observation."

<http://www.stephaniewinters.com>

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Daniel Pezzotti (CH)

"My major influences have been Hermeto Pascoal from Brazil and those jazz-cats who have used the cello first like Oscar Pettiford, Harry Babasin or even Ron Carter!"

<http://www.pezzotti.ch>

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Beth Welch (USA)

"For about 20 years I have been and continue to be inspired by Mark Summer. I listen to bass players and guitar players for ideas that transfer well to the cello: Ray Brown, Jaco Pastorius, John Scofield and Joe Pass as well as the Brazilian guitarist who played with Stan Getz in the 60's. Katrina Wreede, a superb violist in the SF Bay Area with whom I work occasionally, always inspires me with her imaginative and groovin' examples of comping and soloing."

<http://www.differentstrokesmusic.com>

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Trevor Exter (USA)

"Panic, comedy, desperate self-loathing, a mean streak, ghosts, tacos, sex, insanity... and Guns N Roses."

<http://www.extervskimock.com>

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Erich Kory (CAN)

"David Darling - Icarus and the Jamman (Lexicon)"

<http://www.cellovision.com/>

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Mark Dudrow (USA)

"Major musical influences (just a few off the top of my head- by no means a complete list!): Jamming: Carlos Santana, Jimi Hendrix, Brian Eno, Allman Bros, Jimmy Page, Adrian Belew, Darol Anger, Mozart, Bach. Tone and phrasing: Vassar Clements, Johnny Cash, Pablo Casals, Stefan Grappelli, Joni Mitchell, David Bowie. Technique: Lucinda Breed, Renata Bratt. Uninhibited willingness to do ANYTHING with or to a cello: Michael Kott, Rushad Eggleston, Corbin Keep."

<http://www.markdudrow.com>

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Marston Smith (USA)

"Bernard Greehouse, my cello teacher at SUNY at Stony Brook, once came to my house for a party and saw a project I had been working on throughout the winter. It was a fabulous little castle model that I had spent a zillion hours figuring out the moats, portcullis, pulley systems to raise the stones for elaborate war trebuchets. Berni said "Dude, if you spent one tenth of your time practicing the cello that you spent on this..." no he actually said that I must capture the feeling, the art, the history, the emotion in this small model and put it into my cello!"

<http://www.lordofthecello.com/>

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Natalie Haas (USA)

"Most of my influences have been fiddlers, since I was completely unaware of the whole New Directions movement when I started getting into fiddle music. My largest cellistic influence was (and is!)

the great Rushad Eggleston; and as far as fiddlers go, it is a long list — Alasdair Fraser, Darol Anger, Laura Risk, my sister, Brittany Haas, Martin Hayes, Natalie MacMaster, Annbjorg Lien, Ellika Frisell, Andre Brunet...I could go on & on (basically every fiddle teacher that ever passed through the Valley of the Moon fiddle camp, where I grew up). I taught myself how to translate the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic techniques they were demonstrating on the fiddle onto the cello. I also love and am constantly inspired & influenced by the music of Swedish group Vasen."

<http://www.nataliehaas.com>

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David Darling (USA)

"When I was in 7th grade, a friend of mine played me Miles Davis and I was hooked. Although I was studying classical cello very seriously at the time, I began trying to play jazz bass on my cello. I then decided to start a band. My orchestra teacher let me borrow a bass from school and I began playing bass in my band, mostly playing standard swing tunes etc. Later on, I decided that I liked the saxophone so much that, once I was able to get my hands on one, I was soon playing lead alto as well.

All of these experiences informed my cello playing.

As I got more deeply into jazz, I noticed that there were a [few major bass players who also played the cello once in a while](#). Also during that time I heard Fred Katz...so I began to play the cello in this new way. I became an improviser in many styles, including imitating classical music. As I developed my playing in the Winter Consort days, I began applying world music styles to the cello including Brazilian, African and Indian music."

<http://www.daviddarling.com/>

CELLITUBBIES: NEW DIRECTIONS CELLISTS ON YOUTUBE

Not so many years ago, if you wanted an electric cello, you had to build it. Off-the-shelf instruments simply did not exist. How things have changed! Electric cellos, while still not quite as common as guitars, can nevertheless be easily obtained at regular music stores in many places right around the globe. The widespread availability of these instruments may be helping to usher in new ways of playing the cello - or at least having fun with it!

Take, for example, the art of playing standing up. Once practically unheard of, the practice has become quite common, particularly amongst electric players. But it doesn't stop there. Now, moving about while playing - not exactly dancing - but what rather might be called "stage moves" have entered the picture - no kidding! Because most electric cellos consist of little more than a neck and at best, a perfunctory nod to the large wooden body of the traditional cello, the player's body can be clearly seen behind and "through" the instruments. This "body-less" design, as well as the comparatively light weight of electric cellos, have doubtless helped this new approach to come into being. Another aspect of the trend has to do with bowing; sweeping the bow in dramatic flourishes also seems to be catching on in a big way.

String trios and quartets, with standing, bow flourishing cellists are popping up everywhere:

[Maske](#) (Australia), [Ashanti Strings](#) (UK), [Scala](#) (UK), [Bond](#) (UK), [Bellatrix](#) (Korea), [Amadeus](#) (Romania), [Fortissimo](#) (Greece) and [Infinity](#) (Russia) and [Coda](#) (South Africa).

Before you get too absorbed in the above however, take a minute to check out these solo electric cellists, both of whom can be seen in the groups above (Ashanti Strings & Coda, respectively) but who definitely shine on their own as well.

[Lizzie Mae](#) is a London-based cellist/singer who has taken the Bow Flourish to another level. In her "repertoire" are, in no particular order, *The Point*, *The Wave*, *The Swagger*, *The Rotating Pull (Soft and Hard)*, *The Oscillation*, and *The 180° Point Your Bow Intensely at the Whole Audience* (to name but a few!)



Above: Carol Thorns, pictured with a red Silent Cello™

As fun, full-on and provocative as Lizzie's moves are, look out, 'cause there's competition from South Africa!

Whatever [Carol Thorn's](#) flourishes may lack in variety are more than made up for in sheer grace, cleanliness of line and fluidity of motion!

Until the next installment of Cellitubbies, have fun with your own explorations of bow flourishes - just be careful that you don't accidentally poke someone in the eye!

CD REVIEW: *The Summer of Cello* by Barry Phillips

The Summer of Cello is a delicious collection of songs by 1960s rock bands, arranged for cello (& only cello). The number of overdubbed cello tracks varies from a sparse two, to a lush, orchestral sixteen. The title, a play on "The Summer of Love" is quite appropriate, as Barry Phillips clearly has a deep love for this music, which made such a deep impression on him.

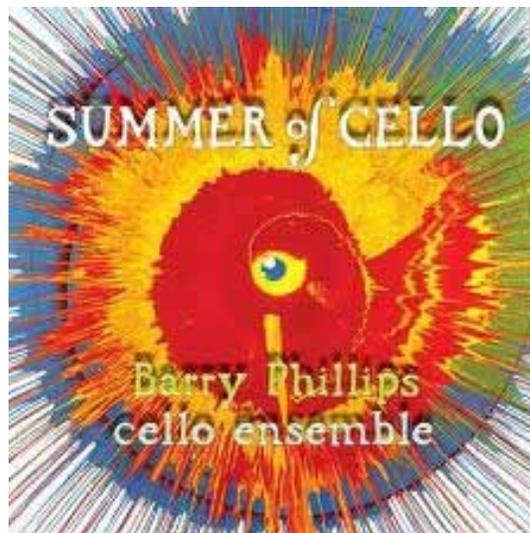
There are a number of factors which conspire to make this record work.

It can be a tricky business when it comes to performing melodies instrumentally, which were originally sung with lyrics. Without the words, rock melodies in particular can quickly descend into repetitive banality. Phillips manages for the most part to bypass this issue by playing the melodies with a lot of colour, finesse and passion and continually changing things up in the arrangements to keep the listener interested. Another winning factor is his choice of tunes. Obligatory Beatles and Stones opuses naturally have their revered places here, but so do lesser known songs. There's even a Strawberry Alarm Clock tune (*Incense and Peppermints*). Variety, in choice of tunes, as well as different cello techniques, makes for an instrumental album that not only holds up to sustained listening, but, in certain moments, is nothing less than sublime.

A stunning, standout track is Phillips' take on *Tomorrow Never Knows* by Lennon/McCartney. Use of a custom built "sympathetic cello" (which beautifully emulates a sitar) and an absolutely brilliant approach to the reverse tape effect heard in the famous original, make for a track that is equal parts jaw dropping and deeply moving.

You might be tempted to put headphones on and bogart this album, but better to share the love by playing it loud 'n' proud. Make a peace sign while you're at it...

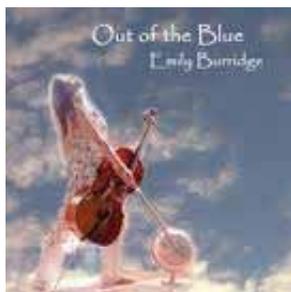
<http://www.barryphillipsmusic.com/>



MUSIC IN THE MAIL

Every so often a package lands on the NDCA's doorstep. It is usually unexpected, and may come from near or far. Many thanks to those who have sent these gems. Here are the cds that have arrived since our last issue:

"Out of the Blue & ...Into the Amazon" Emily Burridge, cello, 2010. Solo and multitracked cellos, enhanced with other sounds. These ambient, thematic, spiritually inspired original compositions are not only lovely, they are a musical call to global awakening. www.emilyburridge.com



"Exter vs. Kimock" Trevor Exter cello and voice, John Kimock drums, 2011. Seven originals composed and arranged by Exter and Kimock with lyrics by Exter. www.Extervskimock.com



"CellosTwo" Mark Dudrow and Michael Kott, cellos, 2010. Dueling cello improvisations, recorded in one day. twistedcello@yahoo.com



THE CELLOWDOWN: FINAL WORDS

If there is anything you, the cello-devoted reader, would like to contribute to Cello City Online, or have something you would like to see included here, please email: corbinkeep@telus.net!

If you are a member of the New Directions Cello Association and have not paid your yearly membership dues, please visit: <http://www.newdirectionscello.org/join>. If you're not a member, you can sign up on the same page. (Online Paypal payments coming soon)

Until next time, may celloopportunitites abound, cellooptimism flourish, endless celloptions present themselves, as cellists everywhere move towards Worldwide Cellomnipotence!

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you know who you think may enjoy it!

