

Cello **Online** *city*

Welcome to the Nexus of the Next Step in Cello!

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- [The New Directions Cello Facebook page](#)

Message from the Director

By Chris White

Dear New Directions Cellists,

On the eve of our 20th annual New Directions Cello Festival, I find myself looking back at some of the things that have happened, not only at the festivals, but also in my own life, and the world at large. Personally, during the past 20 years, I have lost my father, my first wife, my younger brother and gotten remarried. In that same span of time, the cello – how it is played, musical settings where it is heard, and even the instrument itself – has undergone changes, many of them unimaginable two decades ago. I don't think anyone can say for certain how big of a role the New Directions Cello Festival has played in the expansion of the cello. It may be coincidence that the incredible growth in non-classical uses of this instrument coincides with the first 20 years of the festival, but I doubt it!

Back when I first started improvising on the cello in the 1970s, it was quite uncommon to hear cellists playing anything but classical music. Now, cello can be heard in most any genre you can think of. Singing cellists, rock cellists and electric cellists are, if not commonplace, much more prevalent. They are making records, creating videos and having more impact every year. Electric cellos, once solely the province of custom built instruments, have gained in popularity to the point that they can be bought off the shelf in music stores around the globe. There are non-classical cello Facebook groups and other websites, where kindred cellists everywhere can share ideas, videos and recordings. Back in 1995, when New Directions began, no one in the organization – such as it was – had a computer or a cell phone!

New Directions Festivals are unique year to year; each guest artist is different and brings his or her own flavors and ideas to the mix. Through it all, though, there is a vibe of mutual support and encouragement – even love, in the truest sense of the word – which is common to all of the festivals. That feeling is transferred and even amplified from year to year. Participants who return every year help to carry on the traditions: the late night jams in the dorm (usually more than one going on at a time),



the non-competitive atmosphere in the workshops and throughout the festival, the trips to Viva or Moosewood in Ithaca for a meal... the hikes in the gorges...

I am proud of our festival and what it has accomplished over the course of twenty years. People's lives have quite literally been changed; I know this from direct experience. Here's to the next twenty years, and the endless, exciting, ongoing journey that is New Directions Cello.

Cellistically Yours,

– Chris

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New Directions Cello Festival 2014: 20th Anniversary!

Ithaca College, Ithaca NY, June 13 - 15, 2014

Join us for the 20th annual New Directions Cello Festival

Booking the guest artists was somewhat of an ordeal this year – there was no shortage of logistical difficulties and weird flukey things as the process went on. Now that all six acts are confirmed, I can not help but marvel at what a truly incredible lineup this is! The 20th is indeed shaping up to be something extra special!

Guest artists:



Stephen Braun

This Berlin based jazz cellist has our ears on fire and our eyes popping out of our heads with his incredible chops, versatility and originality. How can such a young cellist be **this good**?



Emma Beaton

Emma sings and plays cello. For this young woman, musical expression is utterly innate – music is who and what she is. She was lead singer for five years in the acclaimed band Joy Kills Sorrow and as a cellist is considered by her teachers Natalie Hass, Rushad Eggleston, Mike Block to be, respectively, "fantasic!" "awesome!" and "**awesome.**"



Mike Block and Sandeep Das

Yo-Yo Ma has called Mike "The ideal musician of the 21st Century." Sandeep has been nominated twice for a Grammy. Mike has, hands down, presented some of the best workshops we've ever had at New Directions; his solo concert in 2010 was a perfect combination of heartfelt and jaw-dropping.



Cello en Vogue

A group of improvising and composing female cellists from Germany, who take the cello far beyond its classical traditions. They have been known to employ curved bows, saws, wine glasses, electronics and even a steel cello into their soundscapes. *(Sadly, the steel cello will not be brought to the US, due to the prohibitive cost of flying it.)*



Bill Frisell and Hank Roberts

These world renowned artists have spent their long careers innovating on cello and guitar, pushing the boundaries of not only their respective instruments, but of music itself. They have been collaborating musically together for 39 years, but they have never performed as a duo before.



Pierre Michaud

Solo cello, voice with video accompaniments. Pierre has drawn on many, many musical influences and channeled them into an amazing body of original work. His technical facility on the cello is nothing less than stunning and made even more so by its originality.

NDCA 2014 Workshops

Ithaca College, Ithaca NY, June 13 - 15, 2014

Hank Roberts and Bill Frisell

Demonstration

Hank Roberts and Bill Frisell will play 2 or 3 tunes and then take questions and talk about how they do what they do.

Hank Roberts

Discussion: "Artist, Cellist, Human Being"

Leave your cello in the case and let's talk about some of the big issues facing cellists today; both behind and away from the instrument.

Mike Block

The Fundamentals of Rhythmic String Playing

Welcome to Groovelandia! We will explore "strum bowing," common accent patterns, "ghost notes," and a few chopping patterns that will get you grooving like a long-time resident! **All levels.**

Mike Block

The Pop Machine™

This class is **meant** to be fun. But no promises... We will learn a wicked awesome pop song by ear, which means melody (vocally **and** on cello), chords, groove, and riffs! **Then** we will create an arrangement of it and raid the other workshops. **All levels.**

Corbin Keep

Charts 'n Parts

You've got the gig: someone has asked you to play cello in their band. However, there are no cello parts and not even any chord charts. All you have is a list of YouTube links to the songs. The gig is Saturday. There's never been a cello in the group before. You need to create your own parts. Now.

Pierre Michaud

2 Cellos and a Single Bow "Marguerite"

Through original compositions, come and experience the amazing way that arco and pizzicato sounds complement each other. **Intermediate/advanced.**

Pierre Michaud

2 Cellos and a Single Bow "Cello Reggae"

Through original compositions, come and experience the amazing way that arco and pizzicato sounds complement each other. **Intermediate/advanced.**

Stephen Braun

Pizzicato

Walking bass lines, bass grooves, chords and tapping.

Stephen Braun

Bowing

Swing phrasing, Latin bow technic, chopping, developing grooves and odd meters.

Stephen Braun

Percussion

Sounds on a cello, left and right hand percussion.

Stephen Braun

Melodic Structures

"Call and response," playing with melodic or rhythmic motives.

Stephen Braun

Harmonic Structures

Turnarounds, blues, rhythm changes and jazz standards.

Cello en Vogue

Ping Pong

Cello en Vogue collaborating with Forrest Larsen create a "space" in the room. Workshop participants will experiment with improvising. Ideas include the possibilities of communicating across the room.

Chris White

Latin Jazz Cello

Chords, melodies, bass lines and solos.

Beginner/intermediate.

Chris White

Latin Jazz Cello

Chords, melodies, bass lines and solos.

Intermediate/advanced.

Abby Newton

Workshop to be announced

Emma Beaton

Workshop(s) to be announced

Jam sessions:

Stephen Braun

Jam Session 1

For all students – improvising in groups, call and response, modal and free group improvisations, exercises and possibilities to play live without music, plus techniques and sounds on the cello.

Stephen Braun

Jam Session 2

For advanced students – playing arrangements, learning different functions for playing in a group: bass, harmonies, rhythms, melodies, solos, playing jazz standards and harmonizing songs and learning to make arrangements.

Cello en Vogue

Innercity

Working with concepts from the improvising cello group "Cello en Vogue" – Creating pieces with specific colors of sound including all parts of the instrument, with electronics and short waves by Forrest Larsen.

Please join us for this 20th annual festival! You can [sign up on our website](#). For a limited time there is still a **discounted early registration price** of \$300 for this amazing 3 day weekend. As of May 16 the price will go up to \$350. So don't wait, sign up now. If you join the NDCA at any level you will be entitled to an additional 10% discount which, in most cases, will save you more than you paid for your membership!

CD Review

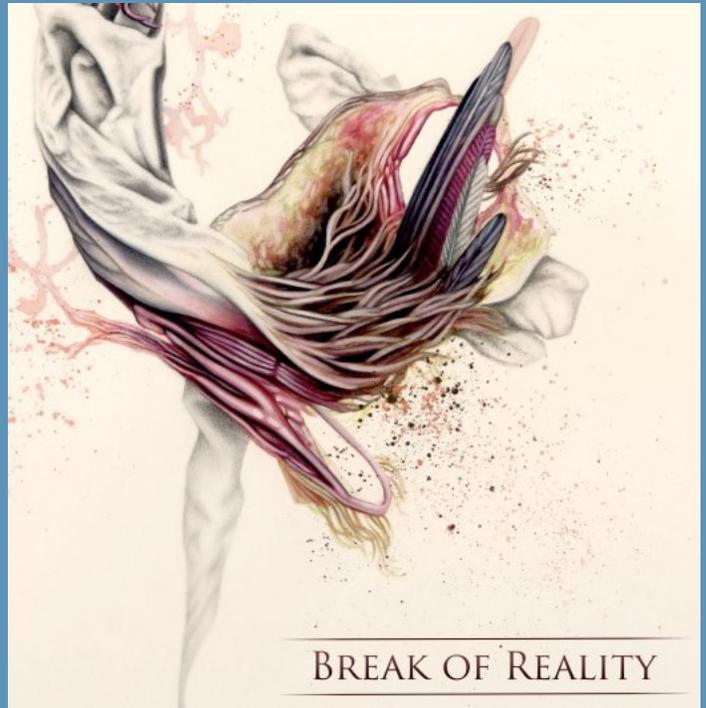
Break of Reality: *Ten*

The first theme in Beethoven's Eroica is, by many accounts, a fairly nondescript ditty. But look where *that* piece goes! Not only was the Eroica Beethoven's own favourite of all his symphonies, it is considered by many to be one of the great landmarks, a major turning point in musical history. Along the same lines, Break of Reality's *Ten* has, as many of its core themes and building blocks, ideas which on their own, might not seem all that compelling – *at first*. But like our man Ludwig, the members of BOR have worked and worked with those themes and ended up creating exquisite, subtle and viscerally moving music from them. Upon further listening, it becomes clear that those seemingly humble ideas are perhaps far less humble than they may have at first appeared.

My experience of *Ten*, upon repeated listenings, is that not only is every track a winner, the cd is downright addictive. Ultra-fun polyrhythmic cello/drum rock riffs give way to searingly gorgeous passages of lush legato. In some of those passages, you can hear echoes of harmonically inside twentieth century composers like Barber or Sibelius. The influence of more recent sounds, such as ninth-heavy modern pop melodies, are also very much in evidence.

About those melodies: in the context of *Ten*, I use the term 'melody' in a fairly loose sense. This is, for the most part, riff based music, which derives much of its emotion from harmony, not melodies in the usual sense of that word. Though the tracks *will* get stuck in your head, you may not find yourself walking around whistling their tunes. I point this out not as a criticism, but rather as its opposite – a shout out. Creating riff based music that packs such a huge emotional wallop is an incredible achievement.

Band leader Patrick Laird and his mates draw strongly from both the classical tradition and rock. From the classical side of the spectrum, the listener is treated to deeply felt, sumptuous bowed passages, motivic development and gorgeous cadenzas; from rock, its rhythms, riffs and to a large extent, harmony.



Amalgamating the two genres is nothing new, but Break of Reality's take is very fresh. They have completely broken from comparisons to other cellorock ensembles and have forged their own distinct sound.

Regardless of how you choose to analyze it, this album is really, really good stuff. It has become an important part of my personal soundtrack for 2014.

***Ten* is an eleven.**

InCelligence Briefings

Chris Chafe (pictured here playing his “Celletto,” an electronic cello) is a composer, cellist, music researcher and director of Stanford University’s Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics.

Chris has definitely gone in a new direction by co-inventing the Brain Stethoscope which is both brain scanner and musical instrument.



It’s time to lobby for a cello version of this new guitar product.



Music in the Mail

Backbeat Cellos

Priscilla Hawkins, Patricia Valentine – cellos/vocals;
Jeff Minnieweather – percussion.

Fun, jazzy, cellistic renditions of works by various composers:
Mingus, Brubeck, Piazzolla, Traveling Wilburys, etc.



The CelLowdown

Final Words

Cello City Online has an important mission, which is to inform people about what is new exciting and different in the world of cello, especially cello which spans genres, techniques and technologies that expand beyond the classical tradition. What would make this mission even more successful? You! Ideas, pitches for articles, how-to-columns, cds to review... You name it.

[Corbin Keep](#), editor

[Chris White](#), director

[Sera Smolen](#), assistant director and education coordinator

[Stephen Katz](#), membership director

To keep abreast and abow of all things New Directions Cello, visit the [official New Directions site](#), as well as the [New Directions Cello Facebook Page](#).

For New Directions Cello style recordings, sheet music and method books, visit the [Cello City Store](#).

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