

# *Cello* Online

Welcome to the Nexus of the Next Step in Cello!

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[Click here to register for the festival and link to the site registration page.](#)

# Message from the Director

## By Chris White

Dear friends,  
We have assembled an amazing festival this year! But there's one thing missing. YOU! Our current registration numbers are low, even by the standards that were decreased during the depression of 2008. I have talked to others organizing festivals, workshops, camps, etc. and most of them tell me their numbers are down too. One person said to me, "I think people are just freaked out about the government right now," which may be true. Aren't we all?

But, though I may be biased, New Directions is unique. It is like nothing else in the world. Our guest artists don't come to the festival for the money. They come because they believe that what we are doing is helping to bring the cello into the 21st century. We try to cover their expenses and give them a very modest honorarium, but they come to meet you, to meet the other guest artists, to see that what they are doing is part of a bigger picture. And, because our numbers are small, the interactions and connections are rich.

So please come and join us for an unforgettable long weekend in Cello City. If our prices are too high, let us know and we'll help make it more affordable for your budget.

Cellistically Yours,

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**Chris White, Founder & Artistic Director**  
*New Directions Cello Association and Festival*

123 Rachel Carson Way  
Ithaca NY 14850

The NDCA & F is a 501c3 non-profit corporation

[chris@newdirectionscello.org](mailto:chris@newdirectionscello.org)  
[www.newdirectionscello.org](http://www.newdirectionscello.org)

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/136856902991541/>

[https://vimeo.com/149563431?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm\\_campaign=28749](https://vimeo.com/149563431?utm_source=email&utm_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm_campaign=28749)

<http://newdirectionscello.org/about/chris-white-2/>

[www.cdbaby.com/cd/cayugajazz](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/cayugajazz)

[www.cdbaby.com/cd/cloudchamberorchestra](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/cloudchamberorchestra)

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017!

## June 16-18, Ithaca, NY

2017 is year 23 of the New Directions Cello Festival. When it comes to counting years for an event like this, 23 is not a particularly auspicious number, compared to say, 20, or 25. But do not let that homily 23



fool you: New Directions 2017 promises to be a downright amazing festival! One for the ages!

You may not have heard of some of the guest artists before: **Yaniel Matos**, from São Paulo. **Jake Charkey**, from Mumbai, to name but two. But once you have heard them, met them, learned from them and quite possibly - jammed with them, we doubt that you will ever forget them!

Also joining us will be **Gunther Tiedemann** from Cologne, Germany. Gunther was a guest artist back in 2008, and we are thrilled to have him back. Consummate, clear; he is not only a ridiculously good player, he is equally good at conveying his

ideas to workshop participants.

The fabulous **Malcolm Parson**, who hails from New Orleans, will also be with us. Malcom currently holds down the cello chair in the Turtle Island String Quartet and is a shining example of how the traditional classical sound can brilliantly coexist with more modern cello styles.

**Tomeka Reid**, from Chicago: Tomeka has an incredible pedigree, and her playing has an unbelievable vibe to it - 'transcendent' springs to mind (for more about Tomeka, please check out her interview in the Winter, 2016 issue of Cello City Online).

**Zach Brown**, from NYC: Zach led his first New Directions workshops in 2015, while still an undergraduate at Ithaca College. The workshops were runaway favourites of participants that year.

Also leading workshops will be festival founder **Chris White**, as well as New Directions stalwarts **Abby Newton**, **Sera Smolen**, **Tom Culver** and **Corbin Keep**.

More details about all of the workshops offered this year can be found in this issue of Cello City Online!



[Click here to register for the festival and link to the site registration page.](#)

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017

## Guest Artists:



**Jake Charkey (Mumbai, India)**

Multi-genre mastery: Jake travels from red hot classical to Hindustani, with many, many, many (double, triple, quadruple) stops in between.



**Malcolm Parson (New Orleans)**

"...the most creative cellist of his generation" - Eugene Friesen  
'Nuff said.



**Tomeka Reid with Artifacts Trio (Chicago)**

If someone said to us, "New Directions has existed for the past 23 years for the sole purpose of eventually hosting this artist," we would enthusiastically nod our heads in agreement.



**Gunther Tiedemann (Cologne, Germany)**

Superb player, teacher. Insanely good. Insanely. Daft Punk's *Get Lucky* on solo cello? Oh yeah.



**Zach Brown (NYC)**

Joyous, inclusive, infectiously delicious playing from a young cellist whose time has arrived.



**Yaniel Matos (São Paulo, Brazil)**

Cuban cello. Brazilian cello. Multi award winning cello. Heart stoppingly deep playing. You will be changed.

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017

## Workshops & Schedule of Events

(please note: times are subject to change)



### Friday, June 16

#### **1:00 PM Yaniel Matos: Cuban Therapy Jam Session: Mandinga Mondongo Sandunga**

We will look at a classic rhythm in Cuban jazz, and one syncopated rhythm. Everyone will be invited (but not required) to take a solo improvisation. (all levels)

#### **2:10 PM Zach Brown: The Modern Cellist**

The cello can do anything and be everything. It is especially important now, at this juncture in musical history, that each cellist discover how this plays into their own personal development. (all levels)

#### **3:20 PM Chris White: Creating and Performing on Solo Cello**

Using three or four of his original compositions and arrangements, Chris will share some of the techniques he has developed for writing and arranging for solo cello, including improvisation. Creating a cello piece that can hold up without accompaniment or looping requires knowledge of chords, keys, scales, and more. Incorporating improvisation in the context of a solo cello piece requires advanced skills, knowledge and experience: prepare to see behind the curtain! (intermediate/advanced)

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017

## Workshops & Schedule of Events, continued

### **4:30 PM Cello Big Band: Rehearsal #1**

The Cello Big Band (CBB) is a cello choir made up of any cellist associated with the festival (participants, guest artists, staff) interested in reading and performing works for many cellos, featuring contemporary arrangements and compositions, many of which have sections for improvisation.

### **Evening Concert 7:30 - 10:30 PM**

7:30 PM Jake Charkey

8:30 PM Tomeka Reid with Artifacts Trio

9:30 PM Gunther Tiedemann & Thomas Rueckert

### **Saturday, June 17**

#### ***9:00 AM Abby Newton: Scottish Cello***

Let's leave the norm..! We'll learn a Crooked Tune and explore the different ways that make Crooked Tunes crooked! Then we'll jam on the tune with backup rhythm and counter melody ideas.

#### ***9:00 AM Corbin Keep: Tricks, techniques and technologies of transcribing music from recordings.***

Lifting solos and licks directly from recordings is a fabulous way to improve one's ear and be taken in new directions on the cello. In this workshop, we will examine some tricks for making transcribing easier, as well as getting the most out of our transcriptions. (all levels)

#### ***10:10 AM Tomeka Reid: Improvising over the blues***

Learn the blues scale in all keys and how to solo over a basic 12 bar blues form. (beginning/intermediate)

#### ***10:10 AM Jake Charkey: Introduction to North Indian Classical music***

A brief overview of North Indian Classical music and introduction to the techniques used for playing Indian music. Participants will learn a several exercises which can be used to develop the left hand for both Indian music and other styles. (all levels)

#### ***11:20 Gunther Tiedemann: Strumming Chords on the Cello***

We will learn fingerings for standard chord types: major, minor, diminished, half diminished and augmented with 6th, 7th, or major 7th, combined with strumming patterns or a mixture of bass notes and strumming. We will then incorporate these into the chord progressions of some songs.

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017

## Workshops & Schedule of Events, continued

(intermediate/advanced)

### **11:20 AM Sera Smolen: Off the Page**

Play blues, ii-V-I's, funk, a Japanese pentatonic piece, Bossa, a gypsy scale and more. We will read through a collection of charts, using 0-3 sharps and flats. These songs are designed to teach cellists how to modulate keys and improvise in different styles. (beginning/intermediate)

### **1:30 PM Malcolm Parson: The Art of Creating Walking Bass Lines I**

For cellists who are interested in playing a key role in accompanying fellow musicians and colleagues, we will focus on utilizing the cello as a bass. Come ready to explore pizzicato techniques, construct successful bass lines, and the beginning phases of improvising a cohesive solo. Have you ever wanted to be able to read chord symbols too? This is the session for you! (beginning/intermediate)

### **1:30 PM Jake Charkey: Introduction to North Indian Classical Music on Cello pt. II**

A continuation of the techniques used for Indian classical music, including some rhythmic concepts. Participants will learn a composition and we will discuss how some of the concepts covered in the two workshops can be applied in other improvising contexts. (advanced)

### **2:40 PM Tomeka Reid: Free Improvisation**

Using techniques utilized by Anthony Braxton and Butch Morris, we will create compositions as ensemble. (all levels)

### **2:40 PM Tom Culver: Improvisation Sections in the Cello Big Band Music**

Director of this year's Cello Big Band, Tom Culver, will guide us through some ideas on how to take improvised solos in this year's CBB charts.

### **3:50 PM Panel Discussion: On Being a 21st Century Cellist**

Several of this year's guest artists and clinicians will participate in an open discussion, sharing their experiences and insights on how to be a well-rounded cellist and how to survive in today's world as a musician.

### **3:50 PM Sera Smolen: Silent Movie Jam**

Sera will choose a silent movie and talk about improvising along with it. Everyone will have a chance to try their hand at this fun way to interact with images on the screen and create an improvised soundtrack.

# New Directions Cello Festival 2017

## Workshops & Schedule of Events, continued

5:00 PM Cello Big Band Rehearsal # 2 (please see Friday schedule description)

### Evening Concert 7:30 - 10:30

7:30 PM Zach Brown and Friends

8:30 PM Malcolm Parson

9:30 PM Yaniel Matos

### Sunday, June 18th

#### ***9:00 AM Jake Charkey: Alaap Jam Session***

Join Jake for an early Sunday morning North Indian Alaap to be played peacefully in a call and response format. (all levels)

#### ***9:00 AM Malcolm Parson: The Art of Creating Walking Bass Lines II***

For cellists who are interested in playing a key role in accompanying fellow musicians and colleagues, we will focus on strategies for creating a bass line which outlines the chord changes. Come ready to explore pizzicato techniques, constructing successful bass lines, and the beginning phases of improvising a cohesive solo. (intermediate/advanced)

#### ***10:10 AM Yaniel Matos: Cello Samba Rumba***

This workshop is about Cuban and Brazilian grooves, and how can you put them together with improvisation. We will begin by learning rhythms; later we will create a groove together. We can all take a solo improvisation as well. First the rumba, then the samba! (all levels)

11:10 AM - 12:25 PM Cello Big Band Dress Rehearsal

### Farewell Concert

1:30 PM Open Mic for Participants (six 5-minute slots)

2:00 PM Cello Big Band Performance

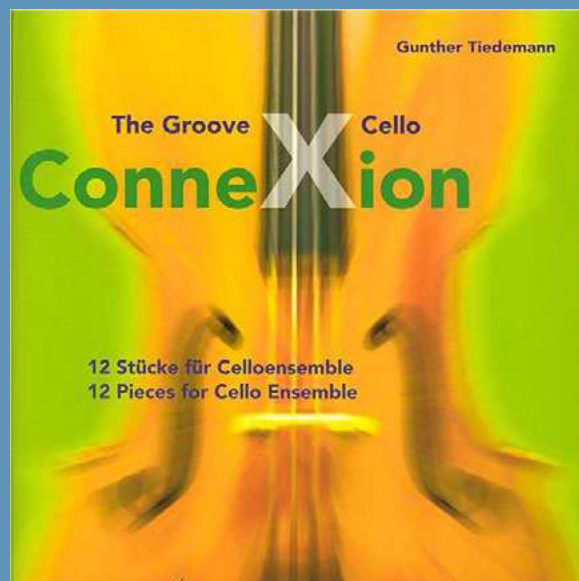


# Book Review by Sera Smolen

## The Groove Cello ConneXion

*The Groove Cello ConneXion: 12 pieces for Cello Ensemble & The Groove String ConneXion: 12 pieces for String Ensemble, by Gunther Tiedemann, published by Breitkopf & Härtel, 2015*

I have known Gunther Tiedemann for many years as an active performer, internationally. He has a lifelong passion for popular musical forms, and has spent many years cultivating ways to play these idioms on the cello. Tiedemann is also a visionary teacher at the Rheinische Musikschule Köln, one of the oldest and most prestigious music academies in Germany. There, he directs the Cello Big Band, Cello Combo and is the main driver behind non-classical cello studies offered at the school. A prolific composer and arranger, he is in charge of the repertoire for the aforementioned ensembles, as well as the Celloversum Project, and String Big Band at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln.



I feel that *The Groove Cello ConneXion* and its companion, *The Groove String ConneXion*, are akin to a sequel to the book *Groovy Strings*, by Köln based group, The String Thing, with whom Tiedemann played for many years. *Groovy Strings* consists of 26 original pieces, which can be used for duets, trios, string orchestra, or with a play-along CD. One might say that *Groovy Strings* was created especially for teachers. The music is basically playable in first position for violin, viola, cello and/or bass, and the material can be learned initially as body percussion. I have always loved how this book uses small canons to illustrate both rhythmic and musical ideas so they can be played initially in unison. The canons are then included as building blocks for longer pieces, including improvisation. The writing reflects experience and insights gained through years of active playing and teaching many levels and ages of string players.

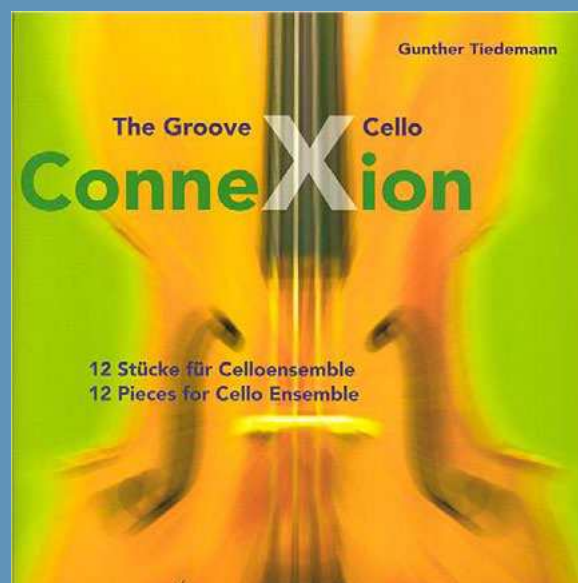
*The Groove Cello ConneXion* and *The Groove String ConneXion* are designed to assist string ensembles in achieving the “next level” of playing, which extends beyond the skills in *Groovy Strings*. Players learn to interact in fresh ways, playing in different genres, without a rhythm section. They learn to create music in intertwined, simultaneous parts and to take improvised solos, with percussive elements, swing, and feel. Clear instructions are provided for each piece; the role of each instrument and what playing techniques are required.

# Book Review by Sera Smolen

## The Groove Cello ConneXion, cont.

The numerous playing techniques can be viewed and heard on DVD and CD, in well-explained, practical terms. There also is an extra glossary PDF, which further explains each of the techniques. In addition to using this music for cello ensemble, string trio or string orchestra, it can also accommodate unique combinations of instruments, wide ranges of abilities, or even missing parts. Another wonderful feature is that the pieces are presented in such a way that sections of the form can be lengthened or adjusted by each group of players, like building blocks.

The writing reflects experience and insights gained through years of actively playing and teaching many levels and ages of string players. It has been wonderful for me to hear Gunther playing this material with his students in Cologne, Germany. These pieces are exciting to play in real life and in real time.



I cannot recommend these books highly enough!

1. **Ruching Blues** (Tiedemann) This song is in a 12 bar blues form. The instructions for each part, as well as for each section of the song, teach musicality, expression and instrumental techniques, using a wonderful rhythmic vocabulary.
2. **Pluck Party** (Tiedemann) This piece features pizzicato hammer-ons and pull-offs. The commentary provides many rhythmic strategies for the ensemble, including "active rests." Notes here provide lovely, tasteful options for performance practice. Pluck Party, like all of the pieces in this collection, can be shaped by the ensemble; if players wish to repeat a section more than once, it will be fine.
3. **Bratfisch** (Tiedemann) Indications tell us that this piece requires 'distortion' and 'feedback' sounds. This sizzling, irresistible music invites backbeats and close-to-the-bridge playing. A solo, seemingly for 'electric guitar,' radiates energy. Tiedemann both implies and presents elements of this solo, without notating it precisely, inviting players to explore their own zone.
4. **The Pink Panther** (Mancini, arr. Tiedemann) In this arrangement of this well loved, classic piece, a string group is invited to create saxophone sounds and emulate the great big bands. The glissando at the end is reminiscent of pulling the plug out of a running vacuum cleaner!

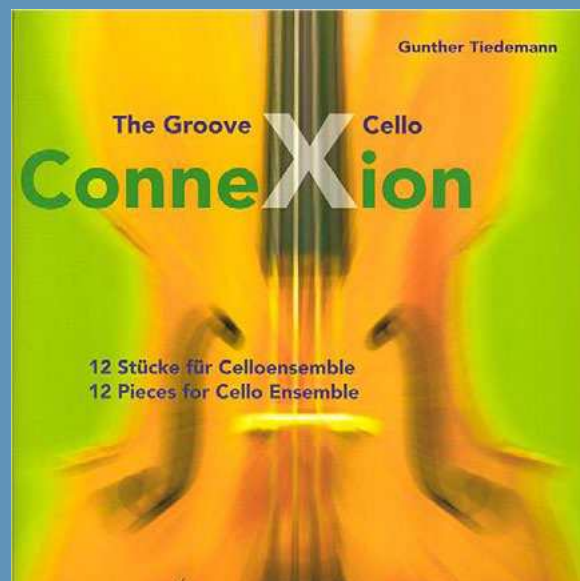
# Book Review by Sera Smolen

## The Groove Cello ConneXion, cont.

5. *Spiritual Suite - Swing Low, Sweet Chariot/Go Down Moses/ Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen/ O When the Saints Go Marching In (Traditional; arr. Tiedemann)*

These songs are inspired by jazz and gospel styles. Here, players are invited to create sounds typical of vocal ensembles.

6. *Banana Suite: Monkeys Breakfast Theme/Chimps Snack Theme/ Baboons Dinner theme/ Banana theme (Tiedemann)* Each movement includes rousing bass lines and Latin rhythms. Useful instructions are offered in the commentary for the ideal combination of juiciness, audacity, brilliance and groove.



- Dr. Sera Smolen  
April, 2017

To order The Groove Cello ConneXion: <https://www.breitkopf.com/work/9444>

To order The Groove String ConneXion: <https://www.breitkopf.com/work/9445>

# New Directions Cello: Before & Beyond

## newdirectionscello

Since its beginning in 1995, the New Directions Cello Festival and Association has continued to evolve and thrive as a nexus point for the ever burgeoning world of non-classical cello. When New Directions began, all those years ago, cello in a setting other than classical was rare. Now, it is all but commonplace. As the cello continues to evolve, technically and technologically, always embracing and enhancing new genres and new frontiers, New Directions is here. Part meeting place, part scribe, witnessing and documenting the evolution of our beloved instrument, it serves to foster and midwife heretofore unknown directions for the cello. May it ever be so! Performances, workshops, jams; life changing, cellistic communion: that's the New Directions Cello Festival.

In 2018, New Directions will mark a new milestone: our first ever festival in Europe! Dates remain subject to change, but are firmer by the day: July 13-15, 2018, in Cologne, Germany. Huge thanks to Gunther Tiedemann (New Directions guest artist, 2008 and 2017) for his hard, ongoing work in helping to make this dream a reality!

# 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!

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, please visit the **Cello City Store**.

New Directions is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.  
Chris White, Director: [chris@newdirectionscello.org](mailto:chris@newdirectionscello.org),  
Sera Smolen, Assistant/Educational Director: [serasmolen@gmail.com](mailto:serasmolen@gmail.com) and  
Corbin Keep, Assistant Director/Editor Cello City Online: [corbinkeep@telus.net](mailto:corbinkeep@telus.net)