

# Cello Online

Welcome to the Nexus of the Next Step in Cello!

## In this issue:

- [Message from the Director](#)
- [New Directions Cello Festival!](#)
- [Interviews with Freelance Cellist Katie McShane](#)
- [Book Review/Exploration: \*Return to Child\*](#)
- [Beyond Strings: A Look at Stringless Electronic Cellos](#)
- [New Directions Cello Festival Workshops: A Retrospective and Overview](#)
- [CelliTubbies: New Directions Cellists on Youtube – Cellistic Cognition](#)
- [InCelligence Briefings](#)
- [CD Review: \*Blood and Air\* by Abi Wade](#)
- [Music in the Mail](#)
- [The Cellowdown – Final Words](#)

## Don't forget to visit:

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

# This issue's theme: Cello Education

## Readin', Writin', 'Rhythmtic

This may be the tardiest issue ever of Cello City (online, or the ink version!), however we did get it out eventually. It's a bit of a departure, as many of the features that some have come to know and love are absent. Fear not, as most, if not all of them will be back next issue. Meanwhile, we have some different stuff cooked up just in time for Christmas, with a focus – slightly more than usual – on the subject of education with regard to things New Directions. Hope you enjoy it!

– Corbin

*"I've never missed a gig, but I've been very, very late."*

– Keith Richards, *Life*

# Message from the Director

By Chris White

Dear New Directions Cellists,

Happy Holidays to you all! Hopefully there will be some exciting music in your lives this season. We are a bit behind on getting this newsletter out to you, but hopefully it will be worth the wait. We are excited to have this issue's focus be on education. As our editor, Corbin Keep said, "In a way all the issues are about education," but this one has extra focus thanks to our Education Director (who is also the Assistant Director of the festival), Sera Smolen.

I have been excited to see the New Directions Cello Festival [facebook page](#) growing little by little in numbers of people in the group (318 right now) as well as in the amount and quality of the traffic it's getting. Thanks to all of you who have posted and also to those who follow what's going on there. Be sure to tell your cello-loving friends about the group and encourage them to join in the fun at or log onto facebook and search New Directions Cello Festival.

We received a generous gift this fall in the form of stock. Thanks so much to Mr. & Mrs. Anonymous! We have been very fortunate to receive some large donations in recent years, some in the form of stocks. If you would like to make a donation of any size, please contact us. These gifts help us make our festival better and further our mission – to foster the exchange of music and ideas in the field of non-classical and alternative cello styles.

New Directions 2013 is shaping up! At this point we are looking forward to welcoming [Alex Kelly](#), [Sean Grissom](#), [Laura Moody](#) & [Cloud Chamber Orchestra](#) to our 19th annual festival, and we will be announcing 2 other guest artists soon. We hope you can join us for another memorable long weekend of Cello-Mania in Ithaca, New York.

Deck the Hall with bows and cellos!

– Chris



**Chris White, Director**

*New Directions Cello Association and Festival  
123 Rachel Carson Way  
Ithaca NY 14850  
(607) 277 1686 (phone & fax)*

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

# New Directions Cello Festival!

## Ithaca College, Ithaca NY, June 7 - 9, 2013

### Join us for the 19th annual New Directions Cello Festival

Cellists gather from around the country and the world to learn and share about how the cello is being used in different styles of music. If you love the cello, you will love New Directions!

#### Guest artists:



#### Laura Moody

UK-based Laura Moody is one of the best, most original singing cellists we've ever encountered, and here in New Directions Cello Land, we've heard a few!

"...for enjoyable astonishment, nothing quite beats singer-cellist Laura Moody. She plays lyrically; then as if (her cello) were a box for sound effects. Sings her own almost-pop songs, gurgles, hoots, wails, taps her throat with her bow. Yet it's all seamless, as if she, the cello and the music are a single organism." – *The Irish Times*



#### Alex Kelly

Alex, a San Francisco-based cellist, composer, conductor and author of the cello method book *Learning the Seven Points on the Cello Fingerboard*, will present his solo cello show, which, if his brand new cd, *Solos*, is any indication, will feature a fabulous smorgasbord of genres and techniques.



#### Sean Grissom

Internationally known as the "Cajun Cellist," Sean has performed his unique brand of country, cajun, classical, swing, and rock from the subways of NYC to the concert halls of Europe and the Far East. Equal parts hilarious, jaw-dropping and fun.

### Cloud Chamber Orchestra

An Ithaca, NY based trio, which improvises sound tracks to silent films, features New Directions Cello Festival director Chris White with Robby Aceto on electric guitars and Peter Dodge on numerous instruments and voice. Their music has been described as "searing, haunting, mesmerizing... this beautiful, deeply considered, and exquisitely rendered music wends itself deep into the listener, and leaves us somewhere we do not know, but where we need to be."

**More guest artists to be announced!**

# Interview with freelance cellist Katie McShane

By Sera Smolen



## The Impact of the New Directions Festival on University Cello Volunteers

The festival has often had a big effect on the cello majors at the universities where we have held festivals; University of Connecticut, Sacramento State, Lawrence University, Berklee College of Music, and Ithaca College. Sera Smolen recently interviewed Katie McShane, a cello major at Ithaca College in Ithaca NY.

**Sera Smolen:** "How did you start experimenting with improvisation?"

**Katie McShane:** "The first time I improvised with my cello was at the New Directions Cello Festival in June of 2011. That was the first time that I realized I was 'allowed' to improvise, and that I was capable of doing it. I had so much fun at that festival – the experience really changed my perception of things."

**SS:** "What avenues do you use to continue with your improvisation?"

**KM:** "After the festival in 2011, I explored improvisation with friends and at small festivals throughout the year, but it wasn't until I graduated from Ithaca College this past May that I really started to take ownership over my improvisation. Once I graduated, I knew that I needed to find my voice if I wanted to sustain myself in music, and that has meant figuring out how to play the music that I've always listened to (third-stream/progressive jazz) rather than the music that has been written for my instrument. Now improvisation is my primary vehicle for performance, and I am trying to find my place in sound. I am experimenting with projects with guitar players and drummers, and I am playing almost solely amplified."

**SS:** "Does it seem to support your playing?"

**KM:** "Once I began improvising in the style of music that I heard myself in, I stopped having to watch my fingers to find hand positions, my intonation locked in, and my

bow control improved tremendously. Now, I create my own exercises to work on technique and I find that each time I sit down I am discovering something about my instrument, something about myself. In short, improvisation has made me one with my cello."

**SS:** "It sounds as though improvisation changed things for you!"

**KM:** "I used to feel terrible, whenever I performed for anyone, but now I have no stage fright and am excited to perform whenever I can. Through improvising I've become a deeper listener and a much more sensitive musician and person. Improvising feels like a spiritual search to me and I am learning so much each time that I sit down to play, whether alone or with friends. Improvisation has also turned me into a composer, which is something I never thought I would be!"



# Book review/exploration: *Return to Child*

By Sera Smolen



***Return to Child: Music for People's Guide to Improvising Music and Authentic Group Leadership***, written and compiled by James Oshinsky.

***Return to Child*** is a book about the work done by David Darling in the group called "Music for People." So many of the alternative cellists I have interviewed since the beginning of our festival have told me their musical lives were transformed from their encounters with David Darling. I, also, would never have become the cellist I am now if not for David Darling. He is considered one of the most important "gurus" of improvising cellists. I took the "Music for People" **training courses** and recommend them highly.

*"Music for People transformed my relationship with music and my work as a teacher. Many of my students at DePauw have told me that learning MfP approaches and techniques have changed not only their music making but their lives as well. Return to Child... holds the keys you can use to unlock the extraordinary potential within yourself."*

– **Dr. Eric Edberg**, Professor of Music (Cello), DePauw University School of Music

*"David Darling is a great musician and a passionate and humble man. He believes that the most important music is your music, not his. I'm grateful for the privilege of having been his colleague for over three decades... David has become the master of this path..."*

– **Paul Winter**, saxophonist, composer, two time Grammy award winner

*"Return to Child is a fabulous companion to the ingenious techniques used by David Darling at Music for People workshops, where both amateurs and professionals come for inspiration. With special magic, these techniques go right to the source of improvisation and lead to transcendent performances. These are the same principles I have been dedicated to in my own work with the Inner Game of Music. I applaud and recommend Return to Child to everyone interested in their own journey into the soul of the musician and the spirit of music."*

– **Barry Green**, double bass soloist, teacher, author of *The Inner Game of Music* and *The Mastery of Music*

There have been many New Directions Cello Festivals where we have begun the workshops with a Music for People workshop. Many of us love David Darling's Musical "Bill of Rights:"

- Human beings need to express themselves daily in a way that invites physical and emotional release.
- Musical self-expression is a joyful and healthy means of communication available to absolutely everyone.
- There are as many different ways to make music as there are people.
- The human voice is the most natural and powerful vehicle for musical self-expression. The differences in our voices add richness and depth to music.
- Sincerely expressed emotion is at the root of meaningful musical expression.
- Your music is more authentically expressed when your body is involved in your musical expression.
- The European tradition of music is only one sound. All other cultures and traditions deserve equal attention.



- Any combination of people and instruments can make music together.
- There are no unmusical people, only those with no musical experience.
- Music improvisation is a unique and positive way to build skills for life expression.
- In improvisation, as in life, we must be responsible for the vibrations we send one another.

(Copyright 2004, 2008 MusicforPeople.org. Permission is granted to reproduce this page for educational purposes.)

Here is an excerpt from *Return to Child* to just get you started thinking along the lines of this school of improvisation:

Let's start with a clean slate. Forget, if you can, everything you ever learned about music and music-making. Release it all. Start with the idea that anyone who takes the risk of making music is worthy of respect. You can even say it out loud – "There is Dignity in Risk."

You may have experiences that say otherwise – judgments or critical thoughts about whether you are "doing it right" or whether you are "good enough." For now, put those thoughts aside. Release them. Think positively.

Say, "I am an improviser," or "I am a drummer who chants," or "Yes, I can play Blues (or Baroque, or Salsa)." Give yourself permission to nurture the seeds of creativity inside you. You can become what you believe you are and open yourself to more possibilities. Framing your goals in positive terms will assist you in manifesting them in the physical world and making them real.

Be cautious about unwittingly adopting conditions for approving of yourself and your musicianship – "I'll be an improviser IF I do x, y, or z." Let all such conditions go. They do not help you feel good about who you are as a musician, and they do not help you grow as a human being. Say instead, "I am willing to play my music."

The whole community of Music for People stands behind you and supports you in making your music a real and living thing.

As you go through the activities in this book – the warm ups, the exercises, and the recording of your own sounds – you may find yourself in a judgmental or critical state of mind from time to time. The most important thing you can do is learn how to **R E L E A S E** and let such thoughts pass right through you without moving in. Releasing all judgment and starting over is useful over and over again. Smile. Breathe. Begin again.

### Practice Suggestions

First, cultivate a sense of play and adventure, and approach making sounds with wonder and enthusiasm. Second, work with your body. Get loose and comfortable. Begin your sound-making with breathing and with mouth sounds before singing or making music.

Let go of judgment about performing, and warm up with an ear to the extremes of sound which you can make with your voice and instrument. By going to these extremes often in practice, you can eventually come to control them.

As a third step, prepare to be both accompanist and soloist, cultivating the regularity, stamina, and sensitivity that a good accompanist needs.

Here is an excerpt from a section called: **Ten Questions you can ask yourself about a Music for People activity.**

The few questions here can allow us to cultivate our own natural musicianship in some wonderful ways.

- When you practice, how do you get started doing it? How can it function as a warm up? How can it function as a melodic activity? Or a harmony activity? Or a rhythm activity? What would you change to emphasize these different elements?

- How would you use it as a solo activity? How would you adapt it for an adult? Or a small group? Or a large group?
- How can your participation in this activity expand your musicality? What do you love about it? How does it challenge you?
- What familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? What cultures use this activity the most? What styles or time periods of music use it?
- How can you use this activity in performance?

(Copyright 2007 MusicforPeople.org. Permission is granted to reproduce this page for educational purposes.)

“Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play” is one of the many tried and true practice strategies of Music for People. Here we can follow a careful description of the how-tos of this way of playing:

Music for People encourages musicians to develop fluency in their playing in the most natural ways. We all enter our musical worlds as singers, from the earliest times in our childhood. As we become trained instrumentalists, we sometimes lose the natural connection between our impulse to make music, our ability to turn that impulse into vocal sounds, and our ability to transfer the impulse all the way through to notes on an instrument. A musician is fluent when he or she can “sing with their fingers.” As living, breathing beings, our voice is what is closest to our inner source of musical expression. When Music for People leaders encourage participants and students to “Play What You Sing, and Sing What You Play,” they are promoting a technique that can re-connect people’s voice with their soul, and their instrument with their voice.

### **Getting started with “Play What You Sing”**

The best way to start this technique is to start simply, with no more than three or four notes. “Play What You Sing” involves singing a few notes, then finding those exact notes on your instrument. At first, finding even the first note can be a challenge. You may need to sing your first note and hold it for a while as you zero in on matching the pitch on your instrument. Then sing the second note and find that note on the instrument.

As you get better at using your instrument to follow your voice, you are building the connection between what you sing and where those notes are located on your instrument.

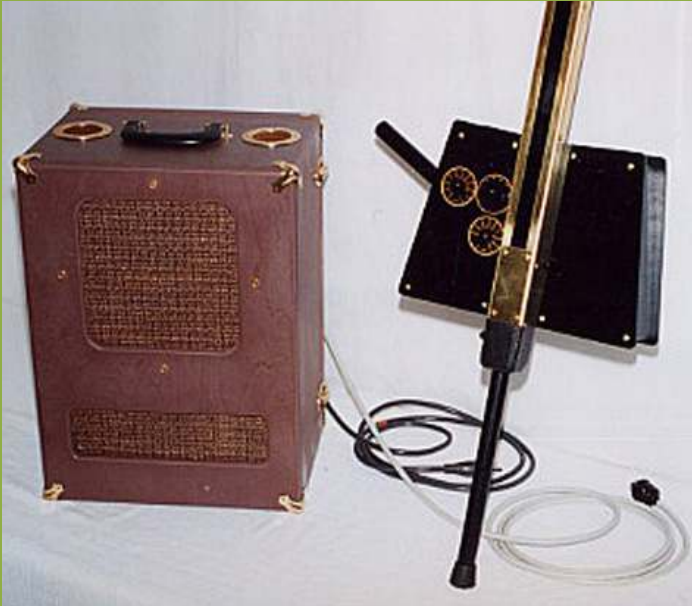
Getting started with “Sing What You Play” works in the opposite direction. You play a short phrase on your instrument, and then sing that phrase, note for note. At first, the technique involves pitch matching. To go deeper into the technique, try matching both the timbre and pitch. Pay attention to the dynamics of each note that you play, and try to have your voice attack the note in just the same way, vibrato in just the same way, and die out in just the same way. Try to do what Bobby McFerrin does so well in making his voice be a trumpet, a cello, or a drum set...

The more outrageous your vocalizing, the greater challenge it can be to match the sounds on your instrument. The voice can also be a path to tap into a variety of expressive energies. Sing oooh!-energy sounds and yea!-energy sounds and find those qualities on your instrument. Sing an expletive and play it; sing a favorite prayer; sing and play grief, joy, and everything in between. Play all of those qualities. Read “The Book of Qualities” and play your impression of Greed, Jealousy, Intensity, or Sincerity.

“Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing” aids your articulation of both melody and rhythm. As you listen deeply to the sequence of intervals, and to the timing of your phrases, you are entering into the profoundness of them. When you bring a depth of listening into your imitation, you develop fluency and comfort with nuances of expressive playing and singing.

# Beyond Strings: A Look at Stringless Electronic Cellos

## By Corbin Keep



*Theremin Cello, circa 1930s*

Forget electric cello. Forget *strings*. In this article we'll take a look at electronic, stringless cellos.

The acoustic cello as we know it today was more or less standardized in the 1800s, giving rise to cellos which, for the most part, still adhere to the same dimensions and design today. Electric cellos, at the core level of how they produce their sound, are the same as acoustics, in that both employ a rosined bow on strings. From there, the two technologies diverge; acoustics use a resonating box to amplify the sound, whereas electric instruments use microphone or pickup technology to deliver sound via a loudspeaker.

Electric cellos were certainly a possibility as soon as the electric guitar was invented in the 1930s, however with the exception of sporadic experimentation by individuals and a handful of boutique manufacturers, it was not until the 1990s that electric cellos became available as a mass produced, off-the-shelf item.

It's interesting to note that stringless, electronic cellos predate electric cellos by decades. Indeed, the first incarnation of such an instrument, the **Theremin** in 1921, predates loudspeakers as we know them! In 1932, the first cello version of the Theremin was introduced.

(Notice in the photo below how the player's stance is identical to many modern-day rock cellists who play standing up – talk about being ahead of one's time!)



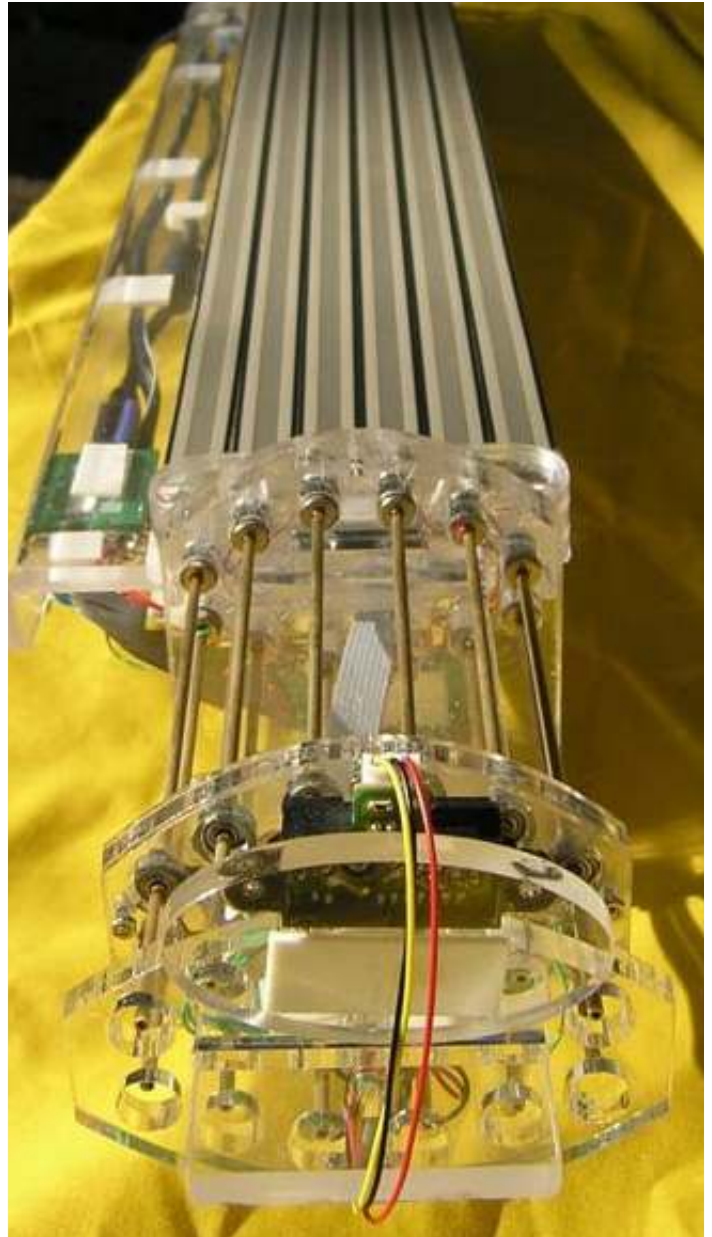
*Leon Theremin and his Theremin Cello, 1932*

Since the Theremin cello, other string-less electronic cellos have been developed. Among them:

### The "Electro Cello"

In 1946, following 18 years of research, Dr. Hugo Benioff of the California Institute of Technology unveiled his **Electro Cello**. "No sound is produced by the strings," explained the inventor, "but vibrations actuate electrical current to produce the amplified tones."

American experimental cellist **Frances Mari Uitti** plays this **Six-String-less Cello**:



*Dr. Hugo Benioff plays his Electro Cello*

And also this version with 12 strings:



Inventor David Levi plans to bring his Magnetovore Magnetic Cello to limited production soon:



2012 is the 70th anniversary of the Theremin cello. As interesting and unique as string-less electronic cellos are, if the past 70 years are anything to go by, it seems likely that they will remain in the category of "niche instruments" for some time to come.

# New Directions Cello Festival Workshops: A Retrospective and Overview – By Sera Smolen

Workshops have been at the heart of the New Directions Cello Festival since its inception. At the first NDCF in 1995, held at the Knitting Factory in NYC, all 8 or 10 of us gathered, breathlessly anticipating 3 workshops. We learned about Cajun bowing from Sean Grissom, about electronics from Jeffrey Krieger, and about the few electric cellos which were available at the time. We were reeling from this absolutely phenomenal, breaking news from the cello front lines!

Now, 18 years later, during any given festival, there are at least 75 participants. They can choose between 25-30 different workshops and facilitator-led jam sessions, peruse an exhibition room with electric cellos and cutting-edge gear, participate in the Cello Big Band and play with other cellists late into the night in impromptu jam sessions.

Over the years, the NDCF has presented over 300 Workshops, Jam Sessions, Teacher Training Sessions and Cello Big Band rehearsals/performances. In the workshops participants are invited to play their cellos in an accepting, positive environment, with skillful instruction. Instructor-led Jam Sessions offer more time in the hour to play, exploring certain parameters with facilitators leading through playing and role modeling, and not as much teaching. The Exhibition Room exposes participants to new instruments and gear. There is also a large selection of CDs, sheet music and non-classical cello method materials.

There are usually demonstration sessions of gear, which are sometimes tantamount to workshops themselves. The Cello Big Band gives everyone an opportunity to experience new styles and genres, as well as chord symbols, innovative notation and playing techniques being developed by composers. Most of the pieces played blend written music with improvisation.

Teacher Training Seminars assist both experienced and developing teachers ways to approach various aspects of teaching cello in styles other than classical.

Some of the topics covered: how to address national standards in music education, pedagogies of improvisation, composition and non-classical genres such as jazz, rock and world music.

Another important dimension of the educational value of the NDCF is partially “behind the scenes.” Each year, we have collegiate cello majors assisting with many parameters of the festival. They are there to learn about hosting an international festival, and all the layers of thinking and planning that go into these kinds of events, and they are also an invaluable help in making the festival run smoothly.

In a typical NDCF workshop, you will find a mix of non-professional amateurs, seasoned recording artists, university professors, public school and private teachers, students of all ages (7 & up) and levels, and even rank beginners. In many workshops we’ll see people sitting together with a wide range of approaches to the cello; one might be a classical recitalist who typically learns and practices reading music, while his neighbor is a freelance professional singing blues cellist who doesn’t read a note. We may see a college professor who holds a master’s degree in early music, sitting next to a young improvising electric cellist whose biggest influences are beatboxing and rap. Yet the common denominator, what has remained substrate to the festival for all these years, is connection.

Players from all over the world, of extremely disparate backgrounds and interests, engage in a musical exchange for a weekend which has proven to be, in many cases, no less than life-changing. Perhaps it is because of the diversity and the excitement of encountering new things, that the overall vibe of the festival, year after year, is one of inclusivity. NDCF performers, who on the face of it, one would think might feel intimidated playing in front of an audience of fellow cello players, often report the opposite; they feel supported and deeply appreciated. Competition, it seems, is not a word found in the New Directions Cello Festival dictionary.

We have enjoyed workshops on a very wide range of topics. Among them:

### **Playing over changes**

This is an endlessly fascinating topic, requiring insight and understanding of the fingerboard, music theory, knowledge of playing styles and technical facility in order to cultivate a unique expressive voice while playing over chord changes. Each year, we have at least one workshop on this important, rich body of skills. Each facilitator tends to present a different approach, with different explanations and different priorities to focus on. The workshops offer an opportunity for participants to experiment musically on their cellos as they learn these skills, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance.

### **Avant-garde workshops**

This style affords opportunities to play using all 12 tones of the chromatic scale, as well as many tones and textures which cannot be found there. Traditional rules of harmony and rhythm may be drastically altered or abandoned completely. Guest artists who specialize in this genre are an important breed of musician; they expose participants to approaches and opportunities to rethink everything they thought they knew about the cello, if not music itself. We have had some fascinating workshops in this style, presenting us with different ideas, challenges and points to focus on. These workshops give participants new musical experiences to savor, and different musical landscapes to continue to explore long after the workshop has ended.

### **World music workshops**

We have had workshops introducing and exploring Indian Ragas, Cajun bowing, Brazilian choros, Celtic, Turkish and other world musics, presented by specialists who have spent their professional lives performing and studying these styles of playing. It is truly awe-inspiring to become musical citizens of the world together, to appreciate and be transformed by different paradigms for beauty and be to a part of fostering musical connection across the planet.

### **Inter-disciplinary workshops**

When two disciplines interact with one another, it invariably strengthens both disciplines. We have had workshops integrating cello and poetry, cello and painting, cello and video, cello and dance, cello and silent movies, cello and voice, cello and percussion. One memorable performance featured solo cello with a tap dancer. Some of the multi-disciplinary workshops have been led by presenters who have not only explored the two respective disciplines, but also the special terrain into which both disciplines overlap.

### **Integrating cello and voice... cello and guitar... cello and...**

We have had opportunities to learn from players who sing, and singers who play. Some cellists at the festival once were – or still are – guitarists, and their experience on that instrument has opened doors to new cello techniques. To attend the New Directions Cello Festival affords participants the opportunity to receive instruction in these new techniques with teachers who are usually happy to answer additional questions throughout the weekend. Participants have learned vocal techniques, ways to practice singing and playing the cello simultaneously, how to pluck, strum, hammer-on, pull-off, or otherwise attack the cello strings in new ways, chopping, ponticello feedback and so much more. Many of the workshop leaders will offer handouts of printed music and/or instructions for participants to take home. Some NDCF workshops are so diverse and unique that categorizing them becomes impossible. Needless to say, if one wants to learn about playing the cello in ways that transcend classical traditions, the NDCF is a good place to be!

### **Electric cellos, electronics and gear**

We have drawn the interest of instrument makers from around the world, who have created a wide range of beautiful electric cellos and occasionally, unique acoustic instruments. The NDCF exhibition room also has a collection of electronic components for cellos; pedals, loopers, pickups, amplifiers, etc. etc.

There are sessions each year dedicated to new instruments and gear. Presenters in the exhibition room may demonstrate how to use various instruments, amps, pedals, bows, strings, mutes, computer programs or mics, and sometimes these sessions become performances. A question and answer period follows, as well as opportunity for participants to try the gear out for themselves. There is an exciting dialogue around these vital topics, which has been developed and sustained over the years. We are very grateful to each and every craftsperson who takes the time and effort to bring their equipment and expertise to this important exchange!

### **Cello Big Band**

The Cello Big Band premieres compositions by contemporary composers and guest artists each year. The ACBB is the place where each participant becomes a performer at the festival. As most everyone – presenters and staff included – plays in the Big Band, it is an opportunity for participants to not only listen to the presenters play and rehearse, but also to play alongside them. The experience exposes cellists to new ways of writing for cello ensemble, and the integration of written and improvised music. A hallmark of a ACBB performance: the improvised solos which at points will come out of every corner of the band, often played by participants who are trying out their new-found skills.

### **Jam sessions**

A jam session is an hour of playing with a leader who will tend to teach less during that hour, and play more. In this way, participants learn experientially about blues, chopping, North Indian glissando styles, or other ways of playing which might be new to them. A participant might be inspired by the novel use of the bow by the facilitator, or by the space given to play over an electronic soundtrack, or by the Latin grooves of the presenter's backup band. As participants learn to create their own bass lines, or improvise over infectious Brazilian rhythms, a musical topography may be co-created which has the power to deeply transform; experiential learning at its finest.

### **Open mic sessions**

On the final afternoon of each festival, there is an open mic session on the main stage which anyone can sign up for. Some of the performances heard over the years by young 'amateurs' have been among the most memorable of the weekend, further blurring the line between presenter and participant. (At New Directions, we are all participants!)

### **Teacher training**

The New Directions Cello Festival has had teacher training sessions with nationally acclaimed guest artists who have served as ambassadors for new paradigms in music making. Akua Dixon, of Quartette Indigo, has developed the Hip Hop Blues Project, inviting young players around New York City to play hip hop and blues together throughout the metropolitan area. The string techniques taught are deeply and insightfully pedagogical, and the music making builds skills for life.

Alice Kanack, developer of Creative Ability Development, has been internationally recognized for her work in building musical communities in New York City and Rochester NY. The brain researchers who have worked closely with her appreciate how Creative Ability Development integrates the creative part of the brain, making musicians' minds more like Nobel Prize winners.

Abby Newton, who has been performing and cultivating "new directions cello" longer than anyone we know, is a researched, published expert in Celtic styles who has been invited all over the world to share her knowledge.

### **University cello majors help run the festival**

Putting on an international festival requires at least a year of careful planning. During the final week, when it all comes together, directors and staff must make a skillful, coordinated effort in order to fulfill the dream for another great festival. Cello majors have assisted us beautifully at all the universities we have visited over the years: University of Connecticut, Berklee School of Music, Lawrence University, Sacramento State and Ithaca College.



We highly commend and deeply thank all of the cello professors at these schools, without whose help we literally could not have done what we have. Cello majors attend NDCF workshops, write for this newsletter, attend concerts and jam sessions. We will sometimes see them step forward with their own original music, participating in the Open Mic sessions.

Additionally, we have been able to offer the cello majors at each university the opportunity to assist a guest artist during their performance. It has been so memorable over the years to hear university cello majors performing with world famous guest artists, learning new styles, new approaches to notation, how to follow an improvisational conductor, and so much more.

### **Young People's Cello-Bratton**

NDCF features a festival-within-a-festival, each year, specifically for kids, called the "Young People's Cello-Bratton." Typically there are workshops and jam sessions each hour at different skill levels. Young players can choose which sessions they'd like to be in and what they are interested in learning about. Young people add a wonderful dimension to the festival each year. Often they tell us that the exhibition room of electric cellos was their favorite session of the day. Watching some of these kids over the years, who became exposed to new directions cello concepts and techniques at an early age, is quite amazing.

### **Let us know what ideas you may have**

The world of improvisation for string players has evolved tremendously over the years since we had our first festival with 3 workshops! Now we enjoy being part of an international exchange between educators and players who are all building together, the music of our shared future. If you would like to participate in the New Directions Cello Festival, please feel free to contact the Director, Chris White [chrisw@newdirectionscello.org](mailto:chrisw@newdirectionscello.org) or myself.

– **Sera Smolen**

Assistant Director and Education Coordinator  
[serasmolen@gmail.com](mailto:serasmolen@gmail.com)



*Dave Eggar at NDCF 2012*



*Ashia Grzesik at NDCF 2012*

# CelliTubbies

## New Directions Cellists on YouTube!

**Cellistic Cognition:** Some Serious Instruction for  
Your Holiday Practice!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00rnKcQs5TY>



# InCelligence Briefings

Jacob Szekely of the [String Project Los Angeles](#), has launched a new video teaching series for learning jazz on the cello, [The Improvisor's Guide to the Cello](#). Jacob has some wonderful fresh approaches, among them, employing pentatonic shapes and breaking free of the more limiting classical ways of fingering scales. The series is very affordable, as subscribers can pay a low price per episode, rather than having to spring for the whole thing.



Yes, those are cellos, impaled on stakes high up on the cliffs of Cumbria, UK. No, they aren't being punished. Well at least we don't think so. They are being played by the wind as part of an environmental musical art project by Pierre Sauvageot called [Harmonic Fields](#).



[Eric Longworth](#) (NDCF '95 and '00), who lives in France, has a new cd featuring the "World Kora Trio," which consists of Longworth – electric cello, Chérif Soumano – kora, and Jean Luc Di Fraya – percussion/voice. The group did a tour of Mexico this past spring and [performed](#) at the Montreal Jazz Festival in June. "Moved by a common desire for discovery and musical give-and-take, these three musicians from different backgrounds forge a single musical sensibility to create a fine and moving music, gliding between tradition and modernity... guided by exploration."



# CD Review

## Abi Wade's "Blood and Air" (ep)

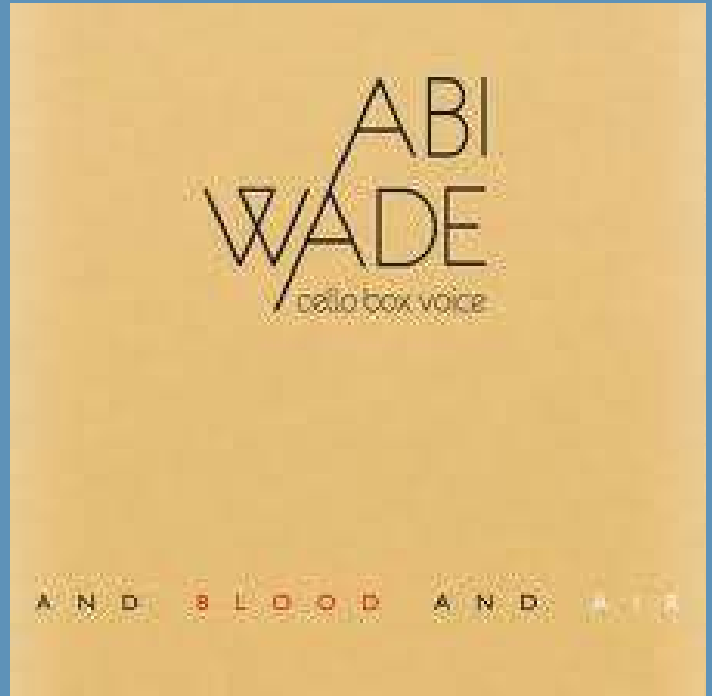
<http://abiwade.com>

This debut ep by singer/cellist/foot percussionist Abi Wade is a charming glimpse into the music of someone who has created something new and very much her own with the cello. Wade not only plays cello with her own techniques (like this sweet bow-on-body one) but also utilizes various forms of foot percussion to accompany her cello and voice. Personally, I find it a joy to see and hear cellists who use their own abilities to expand their solo polyrhythmic/phonic capabilities, rather than relying on loopers and the like.

"**Blood and Air**" consists of four songs, composed and arranged by Wade, each of which features different cello techniques and percussion. Wade is an excellent singer and the songs tend toward a moving, plaintive sort of vibe, with occasional hints of bluesy-ness. The album falters slightly – to my ears – in a tendency toward over-repetitiveness; there are some nice grooves, however they sometimes go on a bit long without changing. That said, upon repeated listenings, I've found myself more and more captured by the emotion of the music and better able to appreciate subtle changes which were less evident the first few times I heard it.

Abi Wade is an emerging artist to watch; my prediction and hope is that the unique niche she is carving out for herself will continue to grow and flower, and I eagerly await her next recording.

– Corbin



# 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 CD's that have arrived since our last issue.



**"Thousand Words" – The Portland Cello Project 2010**, featuring 11 cellists playing a wide variety of styles by various composers, some of whom are members of the group. Additional instruments include percussion, guitar, vibes & marimba. Cellists are Galen Cohen, Gideon Freudmann, Anna Fritz, Ashia Grzesik, Kevin Jackson, Douglas Jenkins, Justin Kagan, Sonja Myklebust, Collin Oldham, Skip vonKuske and Emma K. Wood.

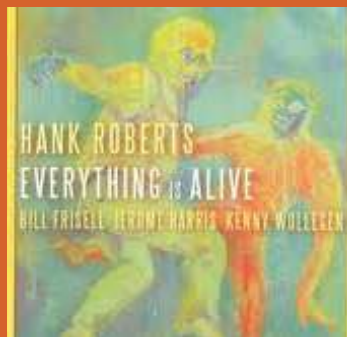
**"Just Cello Just Classic Rock" – Sean Grissom 2012.** A collection of classic rock tunes like *Wild Horses, I Shot the Sherriff, Hotel California, Roxanne* and even *Freebird* done by Sean with solo cello and looped cello. (Available in the [Cello City Store](#).)  
ENDPIN Music Publishing  
212-580-0366



**"Imaginary Africa" – Mauro Basilio 2011.** Africa as a cello would imagine it. Mauro – electric cello, electronics, beat boxing and vocals. Fall Mbaye – drums & perc. Dvora Davis – vocals, Simone Garino – sax, Christoph Fuhrer – live painting, Maria Clara Cucchi – live painting. A Youtube excerpt can be viewed [here](#).



**"Celloversum" – Cello Combo & Cello Big Band, directed and arranged Gunther Tiedemann [NDCF 2008] 2011.** A collection of 10 tunes from the Rhine Music School in Cologne, Germany. Youtube excerpt [here](#).



**"Everything is Alive" – Hank Roberts 2011.** Original compositions by Hank Roberts. Hank – cello, Bill Frissell – guitar, Jerome Harris – acoustic bass guitar, acoustic guitar, voice and Kenny Wollesen – drums & percussion.

# 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 that spans genres, techniques and technologies which 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 [corbinkeep@telus.net](mailto:corbinkeep@telus.net)  
**Chris White**, director [chris@newdirectionscello.org](mailto:chris@newdirectionscello.org)  
**Sera Smolen**, assistant director and education coordinator  
[serasmolen@gmail.com](mailto:serasmolen@gmail.com)

Don't forget to visit:

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

If you would like to unsubscribe to Cello City Online, please email [corbinkeep@telus.net](mailto:corbinkeep@telus.net)

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



*Matt Turner at NDCF 2012*



*Ithaca Fiddling Cellists at NDCF 2012*

### Photography credits

- "Christmas Interlude" by **Kariann Photography** (cover page)
- "Cello" by **Lizzard9009** (page 1)
- "Dusty Cello Strings" by **TM Photography** (page 4)
- "Dave Eggar at NDCF 2012" by **David Phillips** (page 16)
- "Ashia Grzesik at NDCF 2012" by **David Phillips** (page 16)
- "Matt Turner at NDCF 2012" by **William Staffeld** (page 21)
- "Ithaca Fiddling Cellists at NDCF 2012" by **David Phillips** (page 21)
- "Scroll" by **Kapyrna** (page 17)