

# Cello Online

Welcome to the Nexus of the Next Step in Cello!

## In this issue:

- [Message from the Director](#)
- [New Directions Cello Festival!](#)
- [NDCF 2013 Workshops](#)
- [Cellin' Out: \*The Multi-tasking Cellist\*, by Laura Moody](#)
- [CelliTubbies: New Directions Cellists on Youtube – Bach in a Blender](#)
- [Concert Review: \*Cello Joe\*, by Corbin Keep](#)
- [Interview with Laura Moody, by Sera Smolen](#)
- [CD Review: Mike Block's "Brick by Brick"](#)
- [InCelligence Briefings](#)
- [Music in the Mail](#)

## Don't forget to visit:

- [Cello City Store – CDs, sheet music and more](#)
- [The New Directions Cello Facebook page](#)

# Message from the Director

By Chris White

Dear New Directions Cellists,

At this time of year, I am mostly focused on the preparations for our upcoming festival. The **19th annual New Directions Cello Festival** will be held at **Ithaca College, June 7 - 9, 2013**. Our outstanding lineup of guest artists will be **Alex Kelly (CA)**, **Ben Sollee (KY)**, **Cloud Chamber Orchestra (NY)**, **Daniel Levin Trio (NY)**, **Laura Moody (UK)** and **Rushad Eggleston (CA)**.

On a personal cellistic level, I have been working on my flying pizzicato (ala Stephen Katz) and chopping techniques. Those techniques, along with playing and singing, strumming chords, playing bass lines and improvising, are all part of what I would consider "new directions" cello techniques that didn't exist when I was a young cello student and are part of what is so darned exciting about being a cellist in the 21st century! Just look at the cool workshops and guest artists that we're having at the festival this year and I ask you, don't you have to be there?

See you at the fest!

– 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 from around the world, of all levels, interests and stripes, gather to learn and share about how the cello is being used in different styles of music. From Cajun Cello to Classic Rock Cello, Chicago Blues Cello to Celtic Cello, Country Cello to Calypso Cello, Choreographical Cello to Certifiable Cello... It all happens at New Directions!

#### Guest artists:



#### Alex Kelly (CA, USA)

Dr. Kelly, who holds three bachelor's degrees, two master's degrees, and a doctorate in music, is the author of "The Seven Points," a cello method book which presents a unique fingerboard mapping technique. Over 1000 of the books have sold to date. He has premiered over 150 new works, played on over 200 albums and has performed all over the globe. He now straddles the professional teaching world and the "underground" cello world. Each term, he manages between 100 and 125 students, including those in the Urban School Chamber Orchestra, the electronic musicians and composers at the College of Marin, and private students. Alex likes to perform a multi-genre solo show, featuring original compositions, using electronics and live looping techniques.



#### Ben Sollee (KY, USA)

Combining deeply rhythmic cello playing, novel techniques (banjo fingerpicks? – yes!) and exquisite vocals that go to the quick of you, Sollee's unique mix of folk, bluegrass, jazz and R&B is an aural feast for the senses. His commitment to great music is matched only by his commitment to the environment and other important causes; Sollee travels to 1/3 of his gigs by bicycle and has pedaled over 3600 miles over the past three years. He also regularly gives his time and energy to organizations such as Oxfam, for whom he has played a number of benefit concerts. Ben has collaborated with many great musicians, including multi-grammy award winner Bela Fleck, Jeremy Kittel, Casey Driessen, Abigail Washburn and many more.



### Cloud Chamber Orchestra

Formed in 2008 to create live improvised music scores for silent film, Cloud Chamber Orchestra has forged a well-earned reputation for creating inventive, deeply textural, often startling improvised music for screenings of silent films. Drawing from a wealth of musical sensibilities, they fearlessly incorporate incredibly diverse musical styles and employ a wide-range of instruments including cello, trumpet, baritone horn, electric/prepared guitar, piano, hand percussion, voice, toy instruments, circuit-bending, electronica, atmospheric looping, and tape effects. Comprised of three well-known veteran musicians, Robby Aceto, Peter Dodge and Chris White; their performances are, by design, one-time events, never to be repeated! "...gorgeous, meditative... an album of spectral beauty..." – *Anil Prasad, Innerviews*



### Daniel Levin (NYC)

"A major new voice on his instrument and in improvised music" – *The Boston Phoenix*. Levin has recorded six cds as leader of the Daniel Levin Quartet, plus a trio record and a solo record, "Inner Landscape," about which *The New York City Jazz Record* wrote, "his technique is unquestioned and he revels in the physicality of the instrument." Daniel's music has received wide critical acclaim, both in the USA and abroad. In *Jazz Magazine*, Franck Bergerot noted that "Daniel Levin est aujourd'hui une figure majeure du violoncelle" ("is a major figure in the world of cello today") and the *Penguin Guide to Jazz* states that Levin is "very much the man to watch." In 2010, Levin was the recipient of a Jerome Foundation award. He has worked with Anthony Braxton, Billy Bang, Borah Bergman, Tim Berne, Gerald Cleaver, Andrew Cyrille, Mark Dresser, Tony Malaby, Joe Morris, Joe McPhee, Ken Vandermark, and many others.



### [Laura Moody \(London, UK\)](#)

Fascinated not only with words and songwriting, but also with a wide array of idiosyncratic sonic textures, Laura eschews laptops and loop pedals to explore what is possible using only solo cello and her voice to create unique, avant-pop, original music. You could say that her ability to play the cello and sing simultaneously is virtuosic and amazing – it is – but that’d be like saying that Michelangelo was “pretty good with a chisel.” Moody plays the cello in truly new ways of her own invention – and in so doing, takes the art of singing and playing to heretofore unscaled heights. She composes what she considers to be essentially pop songs – though nobody else ever seems to agree with that definition! Her songs are influenced by the many genres of music she has been involved with in her professional career, including beatboxing, electronica, contemporary and classical music and various kinds of pop music. “It seemed almost as if she had taken every musical influence that had come her way and put them in a blender... What surprised me most was just how often it became mesmerizing.” – [The Arts Desk](#)



### [Rushad Eggleston \(CA, USA\)](#)

Rushad is a revolutionary cellist, composer, poet-philosopher, and entertainer whose unforgettable performances captivate and inspire all generations and types. With an intimate knowledge of classical music, jazz, coupled with an infamously infectious sense of rhythm, Rushad is a whole futuristic wonder-band, expressed through one person. Using his cello as his steering wheel, Rushad will take you on a rocket-fuelled melodic journey through space and time, from the ridiculous to the sublime. Hopping nimbly around the stage with his cello strapped to his body, while passionately singing songs that range from stuck-in-your-head-for-weeks, to elaborate yet compelling miniature operas in his own language of Sneath, Eggleston is an incomparable soulful jester of modern times. He has performed at renowned venues (including Carnegie Hall) in 45 states and 13 countries, and has taught hundreds of youngsters worldwide how to let loose their musical imaginations and rock out on the cello.

# NDCA 2013 Workshops

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

Abby Newton

*Tunes, Rhythms and More from the Celtic World*

Delving into the myriad ways in which the cello is used in Celtic music, both modern and ancient.

Alex Kelly

*The Seven Points*

Map the fingerboard, demystify upper positions, then get your freak on with alternative cello techniques.

Alex Kelly

*Introduction to Loop-based Composition*

Concepts and techniques of self-accompaniment.

Also how to amplify a cello and options for your rig.

Barry Kornhouser

*The Harmonic Cello: Study Strategies for Language Expansion: A*

The chromatic scale can be played within an expanded position, 7 half steps X 4 strings = 28 notes or 2 & 1/4 octaves. A small universe of possibilities lives within this cello terrain, including the notes of every chord and scale – in every key.

Barry Kornhouser

*The Harmonic Cello: Study Strategies for Language Expansion: B*

Intervals are the building blocks of all things harmonic. From the perspective of intervals, we will explore inversions, dyad arpeggios, modes, voice leading and their use on the cello.

Ben Sollee

*(Workshop titles tba)*

Corbin Keep

*Taken from Guitar, Tailored for Cello*

Tapping, Travis picking and other techniques.

Corbin Keep

*Rhythm Based Music Creation*

Blurring the lines between improvisation and composition.

Chris White

*New Tunes*

Play new tunes and bass lines by Chris White, improvising over the chord changes

**Cloud Chamber Orchestra, featuring Chris White**  
*Improvising with Silent Movies*

Create improvised soundtracks to silent films.

**Daniel Levin**  
*Solos/Duos/Trios*

Strengthen your individual voice and vocabulary in the solo format. Expand to duos and trios, maintaining your independence and personal integrity while being responsive and sensitive to the group.

**Laura Moody**  
*The Moving Cellist*

Using physical theatre exercises, we will explore bringing our entire physicality into our cello playing, and employ these possibilities to tell a story.

**Laura Moody**  
*Cello Song*

There are worlds of possibility opened up, using voice and cello together. Both instruments create beats, harmonies and composite sounds.

**Lizzie Simkin, cellist and Regi Carpenter, storyteller**  
*The Sounds of Story*

Explore the collaborative process between musicians and the spoken word to create a score that supports and tells a story.

**Rushad Eggleston**  
*Gateway to the Infinite Bounce*

Mr. Eggleston breaks down his springy rhythmical style, accessing the timeless bounce of thurrowogoufnees.

**Stephen Katz**  
*Ride the Flying Pizzicato Brain Train*

Explorations into the wonderful world of Flying Pizzicato.

**Stephen Katz**  
*Flying Pizzicato and Bach's Cello Suites*

A brand new way to sit at the feet of Greatness.

## **Jam sessions:**

**Alex Kelly**  
*Two, Three, and Four Part Improvisation and Composition Techniques*

Exploring how our roles change in an ensemble with the addition of more parts.

**Laura Moody**  
*Total Performance*

We will write a story together and then tell it as a collective music-movement-voice improvisation.

**The New Directions Blues Band**  
*All my Love's in Vain*

We will have a jam session dedicated to the blues.

**Rushad Eggleston**  
*Thunder-fueled Jick Bronco Party*

Explore creating soundtracks for imaginary landscapes using interlocking rhythms, the power of unison cello chords, mixing the heavy and the friendly, and suddenly, Jick.

# Cellin' Out!

*The Multi-tasking Cellist*, by Laura Moody

What is it about cellists? Something about our instrument makes us want to branch out and do more with the cello... be more with the cello... sing, dance, act, cut loose, rock out... Why do we cellists in particular have this compulsion to move beyond the accepted norms of our instrument? Maybe it is because in the act of playing the cello, you are already singing, you are already dancing. The movement and sensitivity of your body as you play already so exactly corresponds to the sound that comes out, that you and your cello, together, at once become the dancer and the music. And that sound, the "breath" of the bow in and out, up-bow and down-bow, the body of the instrument ringing with vibration, high into its heart and deep into its belly, is already a voice beyond all wildest dreams. It sings in your arms. And it does so much more, seemingly without limits. I have been playing the cello for twenty-seven years now, and the endless mystery and possibilities of the instrument itself are still my greatest inspiration.

My enthusiasm to write songs, and to sing and play them simultaneously, is perhaps an urge to become a “complete instrument” in myself. I also find the demands of multi-tasking strangely liberating. I get terrible performance nerves, but there’s something about giving myself so much to do that overrides that fear, so there’s no choice but to throw myself in and relinquish control. But before I get to that point, there’s quite a lot of work to do. Here are my top tips for cello multi-tasking. I’m mostly talking about playing and singing, but these points can apply to any kind of multi-tasking with the cello. In the video examples I will be taking you through some of the processes I used to create my song “Oh Mother” (you can see the complete song performed [here](#)).

### **1) You can’t have too much technique**

Technique is, simply, freedom. So often in training technique can feel like a pre-ordained target you have to try and hit, like a gymnast performing the perfect somersault. But I prefer to think of it as the freedom to be able to play the things you want to play. If you decide there’s something you really want to be able to do on the cello, then chances are you can develop a technique for it. When singing and playing, I find I can’t be constantly monitoring my cello playing, so it has become very important to me that I have a very good sense of the geography of the instrument, in other words, that I’m pretty confident where all the notes are without thinking. I find that nothing beats good old fashioned scales and arpeggios for this. I use the Carl Flesch system that goes up and down all the strings, plus I use other traditional exercises and studies. I kind of consider it “cleaning” for my playing (and my cello playing can get seriously dirty!) When it comes to performance, I need to be able to trust that my fingers are just going to the right spots, as much as a pianist or guitarist might.

### **2) Muscle memory is your best friend**

I studied cello with a tiny, terrifying and totally wonderful Russian lady who after every instruction in a new or better bit of technique used to stare at me intensely and say,

“and now you do this one thousand THOUSAND times!” She was dead right. Muscle memory, or motor learning, is the process by which a movement, or more often a sequence of movements, through repetition can become second nature. And once you can do something without much conscious effort, you can quite easily do something else at the same time. If, for example, you can do such complex tasks as walking while talking, or writing an email while eating falafel, then you can almost certainly learn to play a pattern on your cello while singing.

I’m afraid it’s all a bit like the old “How do I get to Carnegie Hall” joke. Yes, practise is the only way. But somehow I find that when I’m practising with a mind to “I wonder if this is possible...”, or “this is ridiculous, but it would sound so cool if I could...”, as opposed to “these octaves have to be perfect in the cadenza, otherwise I’m a FAILURE,” it doesn’t feel like such a trial. Be imaginative, patient, and practise the stuff you really want to be able to do.

### **Video 1: Building a Beat With Muscle Memory**

### **3) Be one instrument**

Whether it’s playing and singing, or playing and moving (or whatever it is you choose to do), try to experience what you are doing as “one thing.” I do this by breaking down what I’m doing really slowly, moment by moment, in order to pay attention not only to coordinating all the particular elements, but also to hearing them and feeling them in a unified way. Try to hear your cello and voice as one sound. A really good way to do this is to practise playing and singing scales in different intervals. Try anything – 3rds, 5ths, 6ths, unison, augmented 4ths if you’re feeling spicy. You might find your voice wavers when you’re thinking about the cello and vice versa, but stick at it. You may want to get more comfortable and familiar with your singing voice so it becomes more stable, but sooner or later an “aha” moment will occur and you’ll start hearing and feeling everything as one.

### **Video 2: Coordinating Cello and Voice as One**

#### 4) *Switch your focus around*

Once you're confident with step 3, then focusing your attention more on one element or the other is easy and you can do it in a split second. It's also confidence in our old friend muscle memory that allows us to leave one element "running" while we get more involved elsewhere.

#### 5) *Don't limit yourself with conventional technique*

Yes, traditional technique and scales are very useful, but there's so much more to try. The cello is a magic box of different sounds and colours. Use different parts of the instrument, use different parts of you! Don't be limited by what you consider to be "proper" cello playing. If you can only get that awesome effect by gripping the bow with your toes and slowly gnawing through the C-string with your teeth over the course of an hour (you know someone, somewhere has written that piece), then I say you go for it. Instrument insurance premiums aside, nobody will get hurt if you have to do something unconventional to get the sound you want. But please look after your teeth.

#### [Video 3: Unconventional Technique](#)

#### 6) *Be a magpie*

I very much subscribe to the theory that everything is a remix, a re-imagining and recontextualising of everything that has gone before, and that nothing is out of bounds. I have borrowed ideas from hip-hop, dance music, heart rate monitors, Elvis, voice training exercises, Sly and the Family Stone, Charlotte Bronte and beatboxing. And that's just one song. We are each unique in containing a particular mix of elements that have inspired, interested and engaged us. Why be mean or sanctimonious, when deciding what might be "appropriate" for use with your cello? Why keep your cello, your voice/body and the many ideas that inspire you separate? Together you can make one hell of a team.

#### [Video 4: Being a Magpie](#)



# CelliTubbies

## Bach in a Blender

Q: How many ways can one arrange the Prelude to the first Bach Cello Suite?

A: The number is infinite, of course! Here are a few fun examples of cellists who have taken this timeless piece of music to fun new places:

[Claude Lamothe](#)

[Sean Grissom](#)

[Dave Eggar](#)



# Concert Review

## *Cello Joe*, by Corbin Keep

Not so long ago, cellist-singer-songwriters were an extremely rare breed. These days, they are, if not exactly common, certainly much more prevalent than ever before. Just as thousands upon thousands of guitar players have evolved, over decades, a vocabulary of chords, idiomatic licks and patterns, which songwriters draw on in creating new works, a similar thing is happening with the cello. While each singing cellist is unique, there are certain commonalities, which you could think of as cellistic versions of the guitar's G, C and D chords – staple sounds which most everyone uses.

What I find particularly exciting are some of the unique cello techniques, which comprise this new vocabulary. In the realm of bowed cello, we're hearing a full, resonant mix of chopping/perpendicular bow work with other bowed patterns, often utilized with chords that advantageously employ open strings (key of D, anyone?). Sans bow, there are also techniques coming online, which transcend both classical pizzicato and oft-muffled sounding, imitative-of-guitar style strumming.

These innovations are absolutely specific to the cello and are not only something new, but are also very much something that *works*. Before these new sounds were developed, a single cello accompanying a singer was often relegated to bowed chords played in repetitive patterns using standard classical techniques – which often sounded boring – or faux walking bass, or other less interesting pizz approaches drawn from the classical tradition.

Enter Joey Chang, aka [Cello Joe](#). I had the pleasure of hearing him this past weekend at a café in his hometown of Los Altos, CA. Chang has evolved his own style of rhythmic bowed cello, but to allude to the introduction above, has also clearly called upon the modern singing cellists' "collective consciousness" in the development of his style. With the addition of some wicked beatboxing, Chang's rhythmic cello playing is a *lot* of fun to listen to.

One of Cello Joe's talents is creating simple, über-catchy, singalong hooks. I walked into the room partway through the enviro-chorus "The Earth is a garden, not a grocery

store" and all but instantly, could not help but sing along – in harmony, no less. I was joining in with a good portion of the standing room only crowd, who were clearly enjoying themselves as much as I was. The next several songs also sported memorable, easy to sing along with sections.

The first time I saw Cello Joe perform, about 3 and 1/2 years ago, he brought the house down with, of all things, a fabulous version of a children's song, done in various accents. He is an artist who certainly has the chops to do complex music – and does – however he also knows how and when to keep things simple and accessible. The beauty of this approach is how inclusive it is. The audience feels part of things, rather than just being entertained or dazzled by amazing technique and music that goes by them without connecting deeply.

Cello Joe is, as is made clear in both his song lyrics and onstage patter, a very environmentally and socially conscious person. He also puts his feet where his mouth is – in a good way: he travels by bike to many of his gigs. He has toured by bike in several countries, including England, the Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Mexico and Australia. Talk about not only standing up for, but also sitting down for the environment!

A coincidental aside: I had just done a little ditty for inclusion in this newsletter about the [Prakticello](#), which I discovered online, and was surprised to see that Cello Joe uses one onstage. It makes sense, as the Prakticello disassembles into a very small package. The sound is not stellar, however if it's played amplified, it doesn't sound that much different than a regular cello with a pickup on it, run through an amplifier.

I very much look forward to the next time I can hear Cello Joe and sing along with his songs. How often can one walk away from a cello performance saying that?!

# Interview with Laura Moody

By Sera Smolen

## Laura Moody, Guest Artist New Directions Cello Festival, 2013

"...she managed to create an explosion of emotion... Rarely have I seen an audience engage with a performer so warmly. The performance was truly mesmerising, and a visual delight as much as an auditory one."

– *Love York.com Magazine*

London, UK-based alternative cellist, vocalist and songwriter Laura Moody explores everything which could possibly be done using solo cello, movement and voice to create a totally unique, acoustic sound.

The huge palette of influences which Moody brings to her art – and her ability to integrate them into what she does – is nothing less than astonishing. Word play/songwriting, a multiplicity of diverse musical genres (leftfield pop, beatboxing, electronica, etc.), sounds and noises not usually associated with music, as well as dance are combined to create rich textures, which she performs on an 18th century cello, combined with her four octave voice. The result is part music, part dance, part theatre – and 100% enthralling. Moody is a member of the pioneering contemporary classical Elysian Quartet, who recently performed Stockhausen's Helicopter Quartet, in which the musicians ride in helicopters as they play.



“Laura’s collaboration with all kinds of artists... are what flavours her music. She seems to have soaked up fragments of these diverse influences, binding them together with her own fascination with her cello, and putting it all across with swagger, passion and wit.”

– *The Yorker Magazine*

**Sera Smolen:** How did you begin to synthesize so many influences together?

**Laura Moody:** Movement, music, songs, words and voice seem to combine for me into a holistic art form. As a child, I really got into music through dance. When I was 7, I started playing cello and it felt like a way of dancing that also made music. Integrating sound and movement lined EVERYTHING up for me. Playing the cello gave me an identity and became an outlet for feelings that I didn’t have a way to express. I found my voice. I became calmer. The correlation made so much sense to me, that I did better in school and everything. As I continued with this, my love for singing, words and writing songs led me to discover more and more ways of bringing these elements together. But still to this day, there is something particularly about playing the cello that allows the world to make more sense to me.

**SS:** Who were your teachers?

**LM:** There is a real love of the arts in our family. We were encouraged to try things, and we were taken seriously. Cordelia Dyer was my teacher at primary school. In primary school, I absolutely adored the ground she walked on. We’re still friends. Next, I studied with Colin Jackson of the Royal Opera House Orchestra. Typically, my cello lessons would be at the Opera House, occasionally right on the set for *La Boheme*, or whatever opera was being staged just then. Alexander Baillie helped me a great deal. Natalia Pavlutskyia was a big influence, a wonderful teacher of mine at Trinity College of Music. I re-learned everything with her. She said to repeat everything one thousand THOUSAND times in order to master it. A “makeover” like this can only happen with the right person at the right time. Before that, I didn’t really think

about what I was doing. The technical foundation Natalia Pavlutskyia gave me was strong enough to “build taller buildings” than before.

I did my first degree in music at York University. There, I found myself in a new world, where composing, performing, mixing genres, experimental musical theatre, avante garde ideas and extended techniques were part of a normal day. I fit in well there. In my academic research, I explored how the voice expresses identity. I still perform at York University.

**SS:** Tell us about the Elysian Quartet.

**LM:** We met at Trinity College of Music. The first thing we did together was “Black Angels,” by George Crumb. We are at our best in contemporary music and exclusively play contemporary, experimental and improvised music. Recently, our big performance was of of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s “Helicopter String Quartet,” with each member performing from their own individual helicopter. You can take a listen to this on the BBC web site.

**SS:** The Elysian Quartet also performs totally improvised quartets too. How do you create this music?

**LM:** Yes, we had been playing together for 7 years when we started performing improvised pieces. Because of the repertoire we played, we already had a shared musical history and vocabulary. This allowed us to understand instantly what the other players were doing and let the music form in a way that was completely open. Sometimes though, we use certain structures, especially when we are devising live soundtracks to silent films. We will decide on which sounds, kinds of rhythms or chord structure we are going to use for a particular section, but otherwise leave it open.

**SS:** What did you do to become the multi-tasking cellist?

**LM:** My first job after college was my first lesson in multi-tasking with a physical theatre company called *The Gogmagogs*. The aim was to release the physical expression

of string players. We were 3 violins, viola, two cellos, and bass. We were doing all the movement, all the mime, and playing music at same time. It was a great lesson in training muscle memory. It totally shifted my parameters!

There was a point when I decided to re-learn how to sing. I had done classical singing when I was a teenager, but it didn't seem like it was quite mine. I began to re-discover the voice in a non idiomatic way, using speech level singing. This gave me freedom to do different things. Around the same time, I was touring with a beat boxer. I liked the way beat boxing uses different parts of the voice to build up a beat. I decided to do it with the cello (see [The Multitasking Cellist, video link #1](#)), and have not stopped since then.

It is very interesting with just two instruments, voice and cello, to try to make decisions, musically. What do the priorities need to be? If I am using just cello and just voice, and I want a "snare" sound, I have to make that a priority over something else. These choices send me to interesting places, imaginatively. Voice conveys identity. Singing conveys different ideologies. Using different voices can convey madness, which can convey a very interesting picture!! Also with the voice and cello, I have two instruments, so I create composite sounds.

Integrating singing, playing and dance builds up a complete art form. If you bring in voice and cello, there is so much to work with. If you bring together movement and cello, movement and choreography, there is again so much to work with. I now work with a contemporary dance company. The dancers all sing and the musicians all move. We exchange knowledge together.



# CD Review

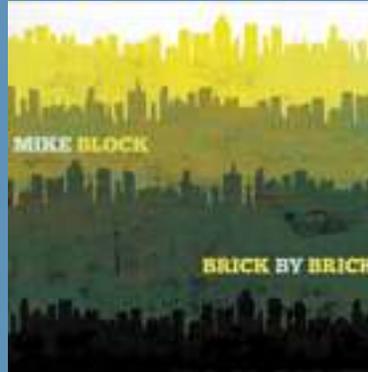
## Mike Block's "Brick by Brick"

This cd is wonderful. It's from the heart, technically brilliant, and downright amazing at points. The title track, *Brick by Brick*, a sobering, but uplifting solo cello/voice song about rebuilding after hurricane Sandy, opens the proceedings. The cd continues in the solo cello/voice vein for seven tracks, then things switch to live, with full bluegrass band accompaniment (fiddle, mandolin, bass).

Upon my first few listenings, I did find the transition from studio/solo to live/band a bit sudden, sort of like the [UFO scene](#) in the movie *Life of Brian*, wherein a Biblical epic suddenly goes all Star Wars, then just as suddenly reverts back to Biblical epic. Once your ears have caught up with the sudden transition, however, the band is great and Block and his cello, of course, figure prominently in the mix. Next, there is a live track of Block playing solo and singing. This performance is equal parts jaw-dropping and jocular. The audience's engagement and appreciation is palpable on the recording; it's one of those live recorded moments, where the vibe really comes across.

The final two tracks are full band arrangements, the first of which is another rendition of *Brick by Brick*. It's such a good tune, that hearing it a second time is just fine. The two versions create a pair of (almost) bookends for the album, nicely tying the solo playing and the live band tracks together.

If you like fresh, fiery, fervid music, delivered with humour and joy, or if you want to hear just how great a single cello can be as accompaniment for singing, I highly recommend *Brick by Brick*.



# InCelligence Briefings

A nice [article](#) from the Provo, UT Herald about "Big Fiddler" [Liz Davis Maxfield](#) (NDCF 2010).



Cellist [Mike Block](#) (NDCF 2011) will be giving two free concerts on April 9 with fiddler [Hanneke Cassel](#) at the [State University of New York at Oneonta](#).

[Abby Newton](#) (NDCF 2000 & 2009) is offering a new series of workshops at her studio in the Catskills this summer. *Crossing to Scotland in the Catskills – Summer, 2013*. Cello Retreat I – June 27-30. Cello Retreat II – July 25-28 and Fiddle & Cello Weekend – August 1-4 with [Rosie Newton](#), fiddle. Daily classes, outdoor activities and community céilidh.

[Gideon Freudmann](#) (NDCF 1995, 1997 & 2007) remains as active as ever. Based in Portland OR, here were some of the highlights from Gideon's year of 2012:

- Four more placements in the final season of *Weeds* – concluding a very fortunate run
- One of his tunes was licensed for a Chrysler commercial
- Played on *A Prairie Home Companion* with the [Portland Cello Project](#)
- Released *Rain Monsters*, his 17th album

A travel sized [practice cello!](#)



The Practicello assembled.



A Practicello case compared to a regular cello case.

# Music in the Mail

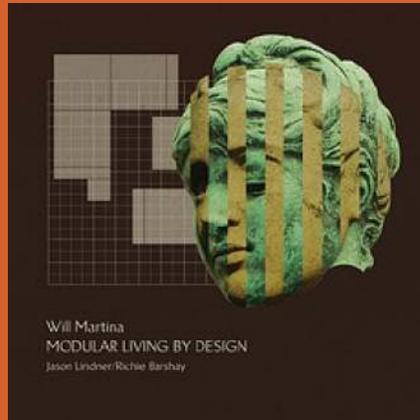
Every so often a package lands on the NDCA's doorstep. It is usually unexpected, and may come from near or far. Many thanks to those who have sent these gems. Here are the CD's that have arrived since our last issue.



**ViBO Simfani** – 2012. Pawel Walerowski – cello, Victor Lin – violin, Theresa Calpotura – guitar, Mike Masuda – drums/percussion. All sing as well. Folk and world music. Pawel has attended New Directions as a participant several times and is always a mainstay of the late night jams; he's a great player!



**Exter vs. Kimock** – 2011. Trevor Exter (NDCF 2008) cello and voice, John Kimock drums. A 7 song EP featuring their original pop/rock tunes.



**Will Martina – *Modular Living By Design*** – 2013. Will Martina – cello, Jason Lindner – piano/Rhodes, Richie Barshay – drums/percussion. Original jazz. This is the second album by Will and his trio. Their first cd was reviewed in the Spring, 2012 issue of Cello City Online. At some point we hope to have these fine musicians as guest artists at the New Directions festival.

**Don't forget to visit:**

- [Cello City Store](#) – CDs, sheet music and more
- [The New Directions Cello Facebook page](#)

**Photography credits**

- "Curves," by [celestialSpinach](#) (cover page)
- "Dusty Cello Strings," by [TM Photography](#) (page 5)
- "Cello," by [Lizzard9009](#) (page 7)
- "Scroll," by [Kapyrna](#) (page 9)