THE NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA, AND DESIGN AND THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENT

Improvisation in Cross-Cultural Perspectives

MARCH 18, 2011
The Fenway Center: 77 St. Stephen Street
ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM
In recent years improvisation has been recognized as central to many musical practices in the world. Often providing a setting for interaction that promotes an “embodied collective learning,” improvisation has come to be viewed as fostering socialization, enculturation, cultural formation, and community development. The goal of this one-day symposium is to engage scholars, performers, and students in a discourse that includes a wide range of issues and topics on improvisation. The symposium intends to spotlight the contributions of ethnomusicology to the study of improvisation, and highlight the role of ethnography in understanding this musical practice in cross-cultural perspectives. “Improvisation in Cross-Cultural Perspectives” should be thought of as a continuation or expansion of the 2009 “Music and Cultural Diplomacy” symposium (www.music.neu.edu/mcd), since it aims to further the much-needed discussion of the role that music plays in fostering mutual understanding, enhanced communication, and improved interaction and cooperation between cultures.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY MINOR
The minor in ethnomusicology allows students to study music from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students may combine ethnomusicology studies with many majors, either within the department of music (Music Industry, Music Technology, Music History & Analysis, Musical Theater, and Performance), or in other schools or colleges within the university. Although students working within the minor will focus on music in culture, in an effort to make the minor more contemporary, ethnomusicology might also focus on music as it relates to a number of topics that include technology, architecture, media studies, or communication studies. Northeastern ethnomusicology faculty consists of:

Susan Asai
Asian American music, music and identity, Japanese folk performing arts, performance studies

Leonard Brown
African-American music, Afro-Caribbean music, African music

Alessandra Ciucci
Morocco, North Africa, Arab popular music, music of the Mediterranean, music and gender

Emmett Price
African-American music with a focus on social, political, economic, youth culture, cultural and religious analysis

Julie Strand
West Africa, Burkina Faso, xylophones, music and language, field research

COLLEGE OF ARTS, MEDIA AND DESIGN
The disciplines within the College of Arts, Media and Design are drivers of growth and innovation. Creative fields and evolving technology make it possible to connect people and ideas as never before, serving as strong catalysts for change and expanding the understanding of our shared humanity. The college integrates progressive programs of study in Architecture, Art + Design, Cinema Studies, Communication Studies, Creative Industries, Journalism, Music, and Theatre with powerful experiential learning opportunities, enabling students to discover their passion and explore the ever-expanding prospects in their field. The integrated strengths of the college feed a culture of innovation that puts students at the leading edge in all forms of communication.
**SUSAN ASAI** Organizer  
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  

**ALESSANDRA CIUCCI** Organizer  
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
Alessandra Ciucci is a Lecturer in the Departments of Music, International Affairs, and Sociology & Anthropology at Northeastern University. She has published several articles on a class of Moroccan professional female singer-dancers (*shikhat*), and on a genre of sung poetry in Morocco (*aita*). Ciucci has received fellowships from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Grant, the American Institute for Maghrib Studies, and the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women. Prior to joining Northeastern, she was a Mellon Fellow in the Music Department at Columbia University.

**XAVIER COSTA** Opening Remarks  
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
Xavier Costa, Dean of the College of Arts, Media and Design at Northeastern University, holds MS degrees in architecture and historic preservation, as well as a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. He has held academic positions at Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of North London, and served as a curator at La Biennale in Venice and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Costa is the chief curator of architecture and art programs for the Mies van der Rohe Foundation in Barcelona. He also serves on the advisory committee of Carnegie Mellon University’s Remaking Cities Institute.

**ANTHONY DE RITIS** Opening Remarks  
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
Composer Anthony De Ritis is Professor and Chair of the Music Department at Northeastern University. He has had compositions performed nationally, including at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, Harvard’s Sanders Theatre as part of the Bank of America Celebrity Series, Taipei’s Zhong Shan Hall, and UNESCO headquarters in Paris. He is the founder and lead developer of the Online Conservatory, a collaboration between the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Northeastern University. Since 2007, De Ritis has participated in a number of activities related to Music and Cultural Diplomacy.
## SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session/Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:15</td>
<td>Opening Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alessandra Ciucci, Anthony De Ritis, Susan Asai, Xavier Costa</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15-10:45</td>
<td>Defining and Recognizing Improvisation</td>
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<td>Robert Labaree, <em>Living with the “I-word”: The Problem of Improvisation</em></td>
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<td>Julie Strand, <em>Identifying Style and the Limits of Improvisation in African Music</em></td>
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<td>George Ruckert, <em>Improvisation in the Context of Hindustani Music</em></td>
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<td>10:45 – 11:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Jazz and Improvisation</td>
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<td>Rebecca Cline, <em>Improvising with Clave</em></td>
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<td>Leonard Brown, <em>‘I Want To Be In That Number’: Personal Views and Approaches to Improvisation</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:15</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>12:15 – 1:15</td>
<td>Improvisation as Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brita Heimarck, *The Path of Improvisation: Inner/Outer Explorations and</td>
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<td>Communications through Music</td>
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<td>Miya Masaoka, <em>Plants and Improvisation</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15 – 2:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>2:30 – 3:30</td>
<td>In the Course of Performance</td>
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<td>Virginia Danielson, <em>Improvisation, Beauty and Power in Arabic Sung Poetry</em></td>
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<td>Richard Jankowsky, <em>The Ritual Dynamics of Musical Repetition, Variation, and Transformation</em></td>
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<td>3:30 – 3:45</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>3:45 – 4:15</td>
<td>Keynote Speaker</td>
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<td>Stephen Blum, Professor of Ethnomusicology, CUNY Graduate Center,</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Why Do We Need Cross-Cultural Studies of Improvisation?</em></td>
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<td>4:15-6:30 Dinner (on your own)</td>
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<td>6:30 – 7:00 Pre-Concert Reception</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>Concert: Ozan Aksoy Trio and Music of Anatolia</td>
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STHEPHER BLUM
CUNY GRADUATE CENTER

Stephen Blum is Professor of Ethnomusicology at the City University of New York Graduate Center. He has published several articles, books, and encyclopedia articles on general topics (composition, improvisation, music analysis, modern music history, cultural exchange) and on specific musical practices of Iran, Kurdistan, Central Asia, Europe, and North America. He has been active in the Society for Ethnomusicology and currently serves on the editorial board of Ethnomusicology, and on the advisory panel of the Analytical Approaches to World Music Journal.

LEONARD BROWN
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Leonard Brown is Associate Professor at Northeastern University with a joint appointment in the Music and African American Studies Departments. As a professional musician (saxophonist, composer, and arranger), he has appeared with many outstanding artists including Alice Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, George Russell, Bill Barron, Yusef Lateef, Alan Dawson, and Ed Blackwell. Brown is also the producer of Boston’s annual John Coltrane Memorial Concert (www.jcmc.neu.edu), and the co-director of the Afro-Caribbean Music Research Project. Brown’s latest book is John Coltrane and Black America’s Quest for Freedom: Spirituality and the Music (Oxford University Press, 2010).
REBECCA CLINE
BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC


VIRGINIA DANIELSON
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Virginia Danielson is the Richard F. French Librarian of the Loeb Music Library at Harvard University and the Curator of the University’s Archive of World Music. An ethnomusicologist by training, Danielson is the author of the award-winning monograph ‘*The Voice of Egypt:* Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song and Egyptian Society in the 20th Century’ (University of Chicago Press, 1997) and co-editor of *The Middle East*, volume 6 of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (Routledge, 2002). She has authored numerous articles on musics of the Middle East, women in Middle Eastern music, and Muslim devotional music and served as principal advisor to the film “A Voice Like Egypt.”
BRITA HEIMARCK
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Brita Heimarck is Associate Professor in the School of Music at Boston University. As an ethnomusicologist Heimarck specializes in the shadow play music of Bali, Indonesia. Her recent publications include *Balinese Discourses on Music and Modernization: Village Voices and Urban Views* (Routledge, 2003), and an article in Mrazek, *Puppet Theater in Contemporary Indonesia: New Approaches to Performance Events*. Heimarck’s second area of research is Indian classical music.

RICHARD JANKOWSKY
TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Richard Jankowsky is Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at Tufts University. He specializes in musics of the Arab world, especially ritual musics of Tunisia. He is the author of *Stambeli: Music, Trance, and Alterity in Tunisia* (University of Chicago Press, 2010) and editor of *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Musics of the World: Genres of the Middle East* (Continuum, forthcoming).
ROBERT LABAREE
NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

Robert Labaree, an ethnomusicologist and performer specializing in Turkish music, is a faculty member of the New England Conservatory of Music and the director of the NEC Intercultural Institute. Labaree is also on the editorial staff of the Analytical Studies in World Music Journal. As a founding member of the EurAsia Ensemble from 1980 to 1995, he performed, taught and recorded Turkish classical music in the U.S. and Turkey. His solo CD, Çenğınağme (Song of the Harp), appeared in Turkey in 2001. He is co-founder and vice president of DÜNYA (“the World”), a Turkish music ensemble and non-profit educational organization in Boston.

MIYA MASAOKA

Miya Masaoka is a musician, composer and sound/installation artist who works with spatialization and sonification of data, and maps the behavior of plant, brain activity and insect movement to sound. Her work has been performed at the Venice Biennale, Merkin Hall (New York), V2 (Rotterdam), Ircam, (Paris), KunstRadio (Vienna), Radio Breman (Germany), Le Centrale (Canada), and at numerous festivals. Masaoka’s work has been commissioned by Bang On a Can, Gerbode Foundation, Wattis Fellowship, British Broadcasting Co., and the Asian Art Foundation. She has also collaborated and worked with leading artists such as Pauline Oliveros, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Cecil Taylor, and Vijay Iyer.
GEORGE RUCKERT
MIT

George Ruckert is Senior Lecturer in Music at MIT. After receiving a masters in western theory and composition, he became a student of the renowned Indian sarodist Ali Akbar Khan. A co-founder and administrator of this master’s important center for North Indian classical music in California, Ruckert has performed and taught this music widely in the US, Canada, India, and Europe, and has composed for orchestra, film, and dance productions. His most recent publications include Music of North India: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture (Oxford University Press, 2003). His book on the fiddle music of Cape Breton’s John Campbell will be published this year.

JULIE STRAND
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Julie Strand is a Postdoctoral Teaching Associate in the Music Department at Northeastern University. She is an Africanist who specializes in West African xylophone music, particularly in Burkina Faso. In 2002-2004, she spent 18 months studying the music of the Sambla people of Burkina Faso, funded by the Fulbright-Hays, for her dissertation titled, The Sambla Xylophone: Tradition and Identity in Burkina Faso. Strand has also spent time in Senegal and the Gambia studying sabar and other local drum traditions, as well as Mali and Ghana. In addition to African musical activities, Julie is a regular member of Gamelan Galak Tika, a Balinese gamelan in residence at MIT.
MUSICIANS

Ozan Aksoy Trio celebrates the music of various cultures that have made their homes in Anatolia and the surrounding regions including Eurasia and the Middle East. The trio aspires to engage with Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, Jewish, Arabic, and Alevi musical heritages. Ozan Aksoy Trio was established in New York City in the fall of 2005 and has given concerts in distinguished venues including Philadelphia Museum of Arts, Makor Steinhardt Center, Miller Theater, and Alwan for the Arts among many others. The concert at Northeastern University marks the debut performance of the trio’s new configuration.

Ozan Aksoy (Vocals, Baglama, Ud, Ney, Kaval and Percussion)
Trained on the bağlama (long-necked lute) by his father, Ozan Aksoy developed an interest in the rich musical tradition of Turkey as he attended the Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. There he joined the University’s Folklore Club and the band Kardeş Türküler as an arranger and a performer. Aksoy has recorded a number of albums and performed in Turkey, Europe, and the US. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Ethnomusicology at the CUNY Graduate Center, where he is the founder and the director of the CUNY Middle Eastern Music Ensemble. Aksoy is the recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon Pre-Dissertation Award, and a Dissertation Year Fellowship at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Ramzi El Edlibi (Percussion)
Ramzi El-Edlibi’s dance career began in Lebanon as he studied with the renowned choreographer Wadia Garrar and served as a principal dancer with the Caracalla Dance Co. Ramzi traveled extensively as a much sought-after performer of the Middle Eastern Folk Dance Art Form, performing in Russia, Japan, Spain, France, the U.K, Egypt, Libya, Iraq and more. Each of these locations have offered not only the opportunity to demonstrate his talents, but to extend them—absorbing influences from the various cultures that would continue to add interesting and varied dimensions to the complex tapestry of his art and his life. Ramzi is also an accomplished percussion player and teacher, mastering the tabla, riq, and frame drum.

Casey Hale (Fretless Guitar, Guitar, Vocals)
Casey Hale is a composer and guitarist who has written for several orchestras and chamber ensembles, including TRANSIT, the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble, the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra and the Da Capo Chamber Players, among others. As an instrumentalist, he has performed repertoire from the 16th century to the present in a broad range of styles, and currently co-directs the CUNY Middle Eastern Music Ensemble with Ozan Aksoy. Hale is pursuing his PhD at the CUNY Graduate Center.
CONCERT PROGRAM

Uzun Ince Bir Yoldayım, Turkish
by Aşık Veysel, Turkey

Bingöli, Armenian
Traditional (lyrics by Avedik Isahakian), Armenia and Turkey

H Foni Tou Argile - Nargile, Greek
by Vangelis Papazoglou, Turkey and Greece

Asfur, Arabic
by Marcel Khalifé, Lebanon

Gül Pembe, Ladino
Traditional, Turkey

Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim, Turkish Alevi Semah
by Hozatlı Ahmet Dede, Turkey

Ayrılık, Azeri
by Ferhadi (lyrics) and Ali Salimi (composition), Iran

Dilê mi Sewda, Zazakî
Traditional, Turkey

Ala Del’una, Arabic
Traditional, Turkey

Golas Empula Yulun, Laz
Traditional, Turkey

Leyla, Sorani-Kurdish
Traditional, Iraq

Kara Üzüm Habbesi, Turkish and Kurmanji-Kurdish
Traditional, Turkey
PARTICIPANTS
Stephen Blum, Keynote Speaker (CUNY Graduate Center)
Leonard Brown (Northeastern University)
Rebecca Cline (Berklee College of Music)
Virginia Danielson (Harvard University)
Brita Heimarck (Boston University)
Richard Jankowsky (Tufts University)
Robert Labaree (New England Conservatory)
Miya Masaoka (Composer, Performer, Sound Artist)
George Ruckert (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
Julie Strand (Northeastern University)

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www.music.neu.edu
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