



The Festival for Creative Pianists

Arthur Houle, Founder & Director

www.pianofestival.org

Kick-off Program

John Salmon, piano soloist, and the John Salmon Trio

Mesa State College

Moss Performing Arts Center Recital Hall

Grand Junction, CO

Thursday, April 7, 2011

7:30 P.M.

Suggested donation:

\$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors & \$5 for students

Part 1: John Salmon, soloist (See Salmon notes and article, pp. 2-5)

Two-Part Invention in C Major (with coda)

Prelude (Salmon) & Fugue (Bach) in F Major, WTC I (Durchgang)

Prelude & Fugue in A Major, WTC I.....Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sonata in G Major, Op. 14, No. 2 (with cadenza)

iii. Scherzo: Allegro assai.....Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Part 2: Sneak peek teaser performance by Jonathan Mann (tomorrow's featured artist)

Like Someone in Love.....Jimmy van Heusen/Johnny Burke (1913-1990)/(1908-1964)

5-minute Intermission

Part 3: The John Salmon Trio



John Salmon, piano
Steve Haines, bass
Thomas Taylor, drums

Low Down.....Thad Jones (1923-1986)
Mari Pino.....John Salmon (b. 1954)
Girl from Ipanema.....Antonio Carlos Jobim (1927-1964)
Life So Far.....John Salmon
Nine Years Later.....Thomas Taylor (b. 1967)
Just One of Those Things.....Cole Porter (1891-1964)

Program Notes



by John Salmon

In J. S. Bach's day, keyboardists routinely improvised and the text often served as more of a springboard to creativity than an "exact game plan" whose every nuance and semiquaver had to be followed scrupulously. It is pretty unthinkable, assuming Bach ever had time to play the same piece twice, that he would have done it the same way each time. Bach himself provided a variant of the C Major Invention, adding triplets to the subject; tonight I'll add a little coda. It was also customary for keyboardists to extemporize preludes (the Germans even make a verb out of it, "preludieren"). My original prelude in F major sounds like something Bach might have played on some occasion to precede a fugue in F major (or during an offertory or before the choir sings or while the pastor looks over his sermon notes...). It's a little less bouncy than Bach's original F

Major Prelude, WTC I, but maybe the contrast between a contemplative prelude and the boisterous F Major Fugues is a good thing....?

The concept of "Durchgang," or passageway, refers to music that connects two distinct pieces or helps the transition from one section of a composition to another. I connect the F Major Fugue to the A Major Prelude with a seamless (so I hope) patch of music that will not only effectively modulate from F major to A major (again, so I hope) but also set up the mood and tempo of the A major prelude (noch mal, hoffentlich...).

Beethoven was another lifelong improviser. My favorite anecdotes about Beethoven as improviser/mischief maker are the time in 1785 when Beethoven was accompanying a singer at church and added so many wild notes in the accompaniment that the singer got lost; and the time in 1803 when he played a piano version of the finale of his Eroica symphony for some friends, and kept going at it in a free fantasia style for two hours. I found a place in the third movement of Beethoven's Op. 14, No. 2 Sonata where he might have added a little cadenza. (I'll try to keep it under two hours tonight.) I also change a few other details, adding a few notes here and there on repetitions of themes.

"Low Down" was originally for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis big band. Bassist Steve Haines came up with this piano trio version. "Swing" is the operative word here. This is Steve's favorite piece...notice how he gets into it!

"Mari Pino" refers to my wife. While a lot of people, such as her college Spanish students and philology colleagues, see her as an imposing intellect and demanding professor, to me she is laid back, informal, and inviting—like a slow, Earl Hines stride number from the 1930s. This piece is on my recently released CD "Salmon Is A Jumpin'," Albany Records, TROY 1224. I think tonight we may segue directly from "Low Down" into "Mari Pino." If it's slow, it's "Mari Pino."

"Girl from Ipanema" is one of the most famous pieces ever and helped usher in the hugely popular bossa nova movement of the early 1960s. We do it a little differently – in 3/4 meter instead of the usual 2/2 and with some polyrhythms laid over it.

"Life So Far" has some twists and turns—just like real life! It starts out as a rather uptempo swing number, with standard jazz harmony and form. But then it goes to new, unexpected places, and includes some free form improvisation. Perhaps there is some underlying organic unity (to this piece)? (to my life?) My life has been good so far (and I trust it will continue to be good), though I can't say that I could have predicted much of it—who knew I'd marry a girl from the Canary Islands? that I'd learn Spanish? that we'd have fraternal twin daughters? that one of my best friends would turn out to be a piano professor at Mesa State? etc. etc.

Thomas Taylor wrote "Nine Years Later" on September 11, 2010, nine years after the most terrifying day the U.S. has had in the 21st century. The piece is appropriately somber and reflective.

"Just One of Those Things" is one of Cole Porter's most popular songs. Though written in 1935, it enjoyed huge popularity in the 1950s from Doris Day's version and has been recorded by hundreds of vocalists, including Frank Sinatra, Mel Tormé, Ella Fitzgerald, and, more recently, Diana Krall.

*We are grateful to **Yamaha Corp.** and **J. B. Hart Music** (downtown Grand Junction) for providing us with the use of a **Yamaha AvantGrand** acoustic/digital piano (shown below) for the duration of the piano festival.*



This festival is part of a growing movement whose battle cry is, in John Salmon's words, "to loosen the strictures of perfectionism and literalism that have gradually eviscerated the interpreter's art in this age of 'note-perfect' recordings and competitions, and to reemphasize the beautiful, the imaginative."

*This editorial is from The College Music Society March 2002 Newsletter
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"URTEXT, QUE ME VEUX-TU?"

John Salmon
University of North Carolina - Greensboro

Scholars of sonata form will pardon my paraphrase of Fontenelle's eighteenth-century query, "Sonata, what do you want of me?," reformulated here for present-day performers as "Urtext, what do you want of me?"

We live in an age that values the Urtext, and that is a good thing. While I cannot speak for other instrumentalists (oboiists, trumpeters, guitarists, and all those that make up the study of performance at the college level), I know that pianists are very concerned with the editions from which they learn or teach masterworks. Gone are the days when piano teachers assign a Beethoven sonata without discussion of the recommended edition(s).

Never mind, for a moment, that the precise function and format of an Urtext edition differ from publisher to publisher. Some editions include extensive annotation and information on sources; others offer virtually no added commentary -- let alone that two Urtext editions of the same piece are likely to differ, sometimes substantially. Reading of texts to determine a composer's intentions, to make interpretative decisions, and to express what is written and connoted, isn't for the faint of heart or for those who fear exploring murky areas.

Yet I perceive, at least among piano teachers, a certain overvaluing of the Urtext, as if "textual fidelity" were an absolute, and tampering with the text were a sacrilege. In my view, the Urtext is nothing more than a fertile bed from which all kinds of textual manipulations and free fantasy can sprout. Imagination and the id must be at the heart of any truly compelling performance (bolstered, to be sure, by

left-brained activity, such as comparing texts and studying style). This includes the possibility of changing notes, if the situation warrants, or actually improvising.

Long before the National Association of Schools of Music decided that our music students needed to have some exposure to the practice of improvising music, most musicians of every culture have improvised. In the Western canon, it is worth recalling that many great composers were also great improvisers, including J. S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt.

Every now and then, a student shows me a critique from some well-meaning judge who noted in the student's performance an omission of a "standard ornament" in a Bach invention. Alas, we live in an age of literalism! Far more perverse, in my estimation, is to perform Bach's inventions (and suites and toccatas) always with the same ornamentation. Assuming Bach had time to perform his works more than once, it is conceivable that he would have changed them at every performance. Evidence thereof exists in the 1723 variant of his C Major Invention, where Bach replaced triplets with sixteenth notes (see Alfred Publishing Co. Edition of the complete Two-Part Inventions).

Or what about Mozart, who sometimes barely had time to write down the notes before a first performance -- particularly of the piano concertos, expecting to fill in at the moment certain Eingang (lead-in) and Durchgang (passing tone) passages, not to mention complete cadenzas?

Even Beethoven, who made his mark in Vienna first as an improviser, was a notable "adder of notes" to his own compositions, as Czerny relates in his "Anecdotes and Notes About Beethoven." This makes Czerny's later admonition highly ironic that "the player must by no means allow himself to alter the composition, nor to make any addition or abbreviation." Perhaps Czerny was still smarting from that 1816 letter he received from Beethoven, chiding the young Czerny for having changed Beethoven's written score. Surely Beethoven wasn't pooh-poohing the whole idea of tampering with the text, only Czerny's unimaginative brutish efforts.

And Chopin's notorious habit of allowing varying versions of his works to be published probably reflects his own improvisational disposition. He was forever changing his mind about fioritura ("flowering") flourishes. I see no reason not to experiment with my own versions of, say, the various repeated episodes of Chopin's B Major Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 3. If Chopin experimented with his own works, why shouldn't I?

"Ah, but that would require erudition, taste, and a knowledge of keyboard harmony," you may retort collectively. Hmm. Fancy that! Imagine seeing that dominant chord in third inversion in bar 34 of Bach's E Major Sinfonia and knowing that you can add, among many other possibilities, a descending and ascending scale in the soprano voice, a little lead-in, connecting to bar 35. What a triumph of stylistic and theoretical awareness: a celebration of imagination!

There are several philosophical subtexts to these suggestions -- for one, that the "work of art," at least in the realm of musical composition, is not the score but the performed piece, perhaps differing at times from the printed page. Notice too that this argument gives hierarchical primacy to the performer over the composer, or at least equal partnership, in making the music come to life. In this regard, I imagine that the relationship of composer to performer is much more akin to the relationship of playwright to director-actor. Every actor who has ever performed a role knows that absolute "textual fidelity" is a myth, that phrases and words can be changed to make a more powerful presentation. To the question "How has Tennessee Williams survived all those permutations of his original script?" must be answered "Only with those vital actors (and their 'permutations'), who take risks and bring the play to life with spontaneity and conviction!"

A work of art isn't some immutable Platonic ideal. The music isn't on the page. It is in the air, filtered through the performer's imagination. Don't tell me not to enter the compositional world of Scarlatti, Ravel, and even present-day composer Lowell Liebermann -- all of whom wrote music of improvisational character. I once asked composer Kenneth Frazelle if he minded if I (or other pianists) were to change his score. He replied, "If it makes the piece better" -- a challenging answer, to be sure. But why shouldn't performers know as much about the pieces they play as the composers who wrote

them? That immersion, including the freedom to change notes, redefines our relation to the Urtext, even as it injects the interpreter's art with a new vitality.

Biographies

John Salmon is an internationally renowned Professor of Piano at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. He holds B.M. and B.A. (philosophy) degrees from Texas Christian University, the "Solistendiplom" from the Freiburg Hochschule für Musik, an M.M. from the Juilliard School, and a D.M.A. from the University of Texas-Austin. His awards include a fellowship from The Beethoven Foundation (now the American Pianists Association), the Premio Jaén, the Loren Eiseley Memorial Award from the University of Maryland Piano Competition, and the Gina Bachauer Memorial Award from Juilliard. Salmon performs internationally and has recorded for Radio Suisse Romande, RAI Italian Radio, Spanish National Radio, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., WFMT Radio in Chicago, C-Span and PBS television.

Jonathan Mann is Assistant Professor of Piano at SUNY Fredonia. He also serves on the faculty of Opera Lytes, a theatre company in Buffalo, NY. Prior to his position at SUNY Fredonia, Mann was a faculty member at the University of Idaho's Lionel Hampton School of Music. He has also served on the faculty of the Brevard Music Center, coaching vocalists and performing scenes from such operas as *The Magic Flute* and *La Bohème*. Dr. Mann will be the featured performer for tomorrow's "Judges and Director" program (4/8/11, 7:30 P.M.).

The **John Salmon Trio** has thrilled audiences in the US and abroad. Its most extensive and exotic tour was in China, April-May 2007, with 10 concerts in 7 cities. They also toured Moldova and Ukraine (2003) and have given concerts throughout the southeastern United States.

Steve Haines, double bass, has played with Wycliffe Gordon, Paul Bollenback, Joel Frahm, Ralph Bowen, Joe Chambers, Dick Oatts, Fred Wesley, Adam Nussbaum, Bob Berg, and Joe Williams. His first album as a leader *The Steve Haines Quintet: Beginner's Mind* (Artist's House Records) received international critical acclaim and was hailed as "one of the best inside/outside records of the year." His newest album as a leader, *The Steve Haines Quintet with Jimmy Cobb: Stickadiboom* (Zoho records) is available at www.amazon.com, or iTunes. His most recent recording as a sideman is Chad Eby's *Broken Shadows* (Cellar Live records), with Doug Wamble, and Jason and Branford Marsalis. He is an associate professor and directs the Miles Davis Program in Jazz Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Haines holds a B.M. in Jazz Performance from St. Francis Xavier University in Canada and a M.M. in Music (Jazz Studies) from the University of North Texas. Haines' music is published at the University of Northern Colorado Press. Steve orchestrated and arranged the musical *Ella: The Life and Music of Ella Fitzgerald*. Most recently, he orchestrated Chopin's piano *Mazurka in A minor* for full orchestra and jazz quartet. He is a recipient of the North Carolina Jazz Fellowship and is a semifinalist for the 2010 Jazz Knights Commission.

Thomas Taylor has been teaching at the University North Carolina at Greensboro as drum set professor since 2004. He is in great demand all over the Southeast for his performance as well as teaching abilities. Thomas is also one of the drum set instructors for the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz camps. He has performed with Ellis Marsalis, Kenny Garrett, Eric Alexander, Kevin Mahogany, Vanessa Rubin, David Baker, Bill Charlap, Cedar Walton, Mulgrew Miller and many others in concerts and clinics. Thomas has taught and performed at many festivals including The Northeastern State University Jazz Festival in Talequah, Oklahoma, The University of Louisville Jazz Week, The UNC Jazz Festival, IAJE conference in Toronto, The Ethno Jazz Festival in Moldova, The Odessa International Jazz Carnival in Ukraine, and served as an ambassador to the state of North Carolina by performing at the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau, Moldova. He has also been a performer and clinician in Japan, Alaska, Hawaii, and all over the continental United States. Thomas earned the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1991. Since that time he has

taught at several Universities and Colleges, toured nationally and internationally, and recorded with local and national artists.

We are grateful for the contributions by the following individuals, without whom this festival would not be possible:

**Evelyn Billberg
George Callison
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Azam and Arthur Houle**

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Amber & Jay Seaton
Frank & Jayne Steuart
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Drea Wagner**

**We need and appreciate your generous support!
Donations have tax benefits, and are payable to Mesa State College Music Department.**

IMPORTANT: Please write "piano festival" in the memo portion of checks.

**Mailing address for donations:
Dr. Calvin Hofer
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Thanks also to **Albany Records** (www.albanyrecords.com), the **Grand Junction Music Teachers Association** (www.gjmta.org), **J. B. Hart Music, Mesa State College,** & **Sera Schools Music Program** (www.seraschools.com) for their sponsorship.



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Thanks also to our volunteers:

Evelyn Billberg
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Stephanie Haren
Joy Thompson
Marge Zollner

...and anyone else we may have inadvertently forgotten to mention 👍

We also appreciate the day-to-day support and tireless contributions of our music department chair, **Calvin Hofer**, and our *very fine* 😊 fine arts administrative assistant, **Lyn Ross**.

Finally, a hearty "thank you" goes to **Frank & Jayne Stuart** for their hospitality in hosting several people at their beautiful condo.

👉 *Festival participants: Please don't forget to sign in 🙌 before and after this program!*

Upcoming:

• **Judges and Director Program**

Fri., April 8, 7:30 P.M., MPAC Recital Hall (\$10/\$8/\$5)

• **Winners' Recital 🙌 & Awards Ceremony**

Sat., April 9, 7:30 P.M., MPAC Recital Hall (\$10/\$8/\$5)

Festival participants please note: Tomorrow at approx. 🕒 4:00 – 4:30 P.M., the names of the festival First Prize winners will be posted on the MPAC hallway bulletin board. Students should consult this in order to know if they are performing at the Winners Recital. Students generally play one piece (chosen by judges) per prize won. Memory is not required. Honorable Mention Prizes will be announced at the Awards Ceremony (not in advance).

• **Wednesday Music Club Student Winners Recital**

Wed., April 20, 1:00 P.M., MPAC Recital Hall (Free admission)

- The next **Festival for Creative Pianists** will be held on April 12-14, 2012.
Gary Smart will join us as featured artist and adjudicator.

A limited number of John Salmon's latest CD on Albany Records (original jazz compositions) will be available for sale after tonight's program.

