

Gently Down the Third Stream

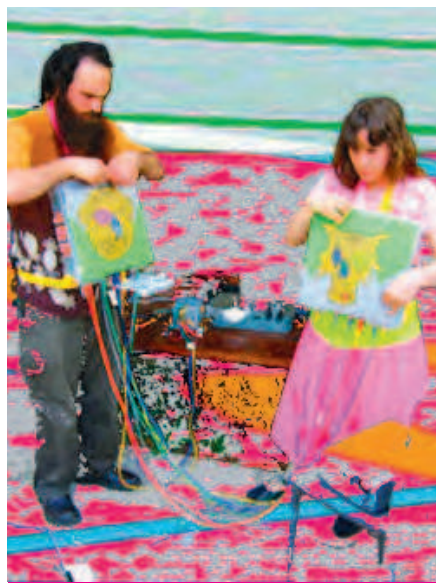
A loving partnership

Jazz and classical music have been flirting with each other since the former shimmied onto the American music scene. European composers from Milhaud to Stravinsky to Shostakovich winked at jazz, craving her populist vivacity, but she wouldn't let them buy her a drink. Americans such as Copland and Bernstein got to first base, but it was George Gershwin who really put the moves on her, creating a fabulous fusion that, despite the sneers of the classical old guard, in turn inspired several generations of jazzers. Later, always looking for expanded palettes, modernists like John Lewis (of the Modern Jazz Quartet), Gil Evans, Charles Mingus, Dave Brubeck, Bill Evans and Miles Davis consciously incorporated harmonies and other techniques from Bach as well as Debussy, Stravinsky and other post-Romantic composers.

In the late 1950s, a musician with cred in both camps, Gunther Schuller (he'd played on Davis' Birth of the Cool recordings and in the Metropolitan Opera orchestra), tried an arranged marriage between what he called First Stream (western classical music) and Second Stream (jazz). Third Stream would combine the improvisation and rhythmic power of jazz with the instruments, structures and techniques of classical music. After Schuller spearheaded a few recordings, the usual purist quibbling over definitions (the possibilities were endless) ensued, with accusations of selling out, dumbing down and, worst of all, failure to swing. Some of the so-called Third Stream experiments worked, some didn't; musicians kept on mixing and matching and miscegenating. A true marriage may never have happened, but the relationship produced some worthy offspring. Today the categories have broken down almost completely, and you hear plenty of musicians finding productive combinations of composition and improvisation, and Third Stream looks, in retrospect, prophetic. Which makes an excellent occasion for a concert that explores it. At the UO's Beall Concert Hall on Friday, May 11, the **Jazz Piano Collective** (UO prof Steve Larson, Keith Waters from Catholic University and University of Colorado's Steve Strunk) joins other musicians in music by Chick Corea, the MJQ, Bill Evans and improvisations on music of Erik Satie, Scott Joplin and more.

And speaking of the UO, music prof **Robert Kyr** is on a roll these days. His eleventh symphony just premiered in Los Angeles (when do we get to see and hear this audiovisual extravaganza here?), and his twelfth debuts in Portland May 19-21 when the **Oregon Symphony** performs his *Armed Man Variations* at Schnitzer Concert Hall along with Schubert's *Symphony No. 8* and Strauss' *A Hero's Life*. A lifelong advocate for peace, Kyr has composed a "a cry against the destructive forces of war and, more important, an affirmation of life," based on the famed medieval tune "The Armed Man."

Boy, it's sure getting noisy at DIVA lately. Hot on the squeals of the touring all-stars



A video by New York's LoVid screens as part of the Eugene Noise Fest

of so-called noise music, the art space at Olive and Broadway hosts the third annual **Eugene Noise Fest** May 17-20. Opening night is a video extravaganza featuring works by **Nate Harrison** (Los Angeles), **Gijs Gieskes** (Netherlands), **LoVid** (New York) and visiting Noise Fest artists. Friday features a baker's dozen of noisemakers from Vancouver to San Diego. Saturday boasts 16 more musicians from as far away as Georgia, Milwaukee, Seattle and San Francisco. Sunday features mostly Oregon artists, along with a Dane and a couple Californians. That's way too many acts to profile here, so check www.divanow.org or www.humanmonster.com for more info. But it's probably better just to wander in and experience various experiments in sound collage, found instruments (including everyday appliances) and all manner of adventures in sound textures. Noise is too vague a category to pigeonhole any of these performers in, but it's certainly a burgeoning international phenomenon, and worth exploring for anyone whose artistic tastes run to the unconventional.

The young Johann Sebastian Bach loved the music of Dietrich Buxtehude so much that he once walked more than 200 miles to hear the great Baroque master play the organ. We only have to make it over to St. Mary's Episcopal Church (13th & Pearl) on Friday, May 11, for a free show that includes solo cantatas, a trio sonata and solo keyboard works performed on harpsichord and portative organ by **Julia Brown**, who records for Naxos records, accompanied by local masters **Alice Blankenship** and **Ali Luthmers** (violin), **Steven Pologe** (cello) and **Jamie Weaver** (soprano).

Fans of world music and early jazz should head over to the WOW Hall on May 14 to see and hear **Le Serpent Rouge**, a show featuring the Bay Area's **Indigo Belly Dance** company accompanied by live gypsy, Middle Eastern, ragtime and vaudevillian music played by **Inkwell Rhythm Makers** and percussionist **Tobias Roberson**. They play the kind of 1920s and '30s jazz and country blues unsullied by them hifalutin classical influences — maybe they should call it upstream. **EW**

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