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## MUSIC BY BRETT CAMPBELL



BROTHERS COLIN AND ERIC JACOBSEN

## EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

*Brooklyn Rider, Taarka, Evynne Hollens and company are keeping music fresh*

Musical institutions too often destroy the very music they prize by refusing to look forward, relying instead on constant rehashing of the greatest hits of earlier decades and centuries. This month brings to town some progressive musicians who are keeping their traditions alive and growing. For example, **Brothers Colin and Eric Jacobsen** are proving that classical music is no musty museum but rather a living tradition. Key members of Yo-Yo Ma's great Silk Road Ensemble, the Jacobsens lead both the Knights, an orchestra of 20- and 30-somethings dedicated especially to contemporary music, and the terrific string quartet **Brooklyn Rider**, who appear in the University of Oregon's ChamberMusic@Beall concert series on Sunday afternoon, April 7.

Brooklyn Rider actually reflects a pre-museum-mentality tradition that mostly ended around a century ago, when composers like Mozart and Haydn actually played their own music and those of their contemporaries as well as occasional classics in ensembles. At Beall Hall, Brooklyn Rider will perform not only their engrossing, semi-improvised group composition "Seven Steps" (also the title track of their 2012 CD, one of the year's best) — but also the work that inspired it, one of the absolute pinnacles of chamber music, Beethoven's epic, seven-movement *Op. 131* quartet. The concert also includes another classic, Bartók's unsurprisingly tragic *String Quartet No. 2*, which he composed during the depths of World War I, and is animated by Hungarian and African folk rhythms, a wild klezmer tune by the terrific youngish Russian American composer-violinist Ljova; and Colin Jacobsen's "Three Miniatures," influenced by Brooklyn Rider's colleague, the Persian musician Kayhan Kalhor (their joint album *Silent City* provided Brooklyn Rider's popular breakthrough). Brooklyn Rider offers a gratifying glimpse into the future of the string quartet, and American post-classical music.

After Brooklyn Rider on April 7, string band fans have time to grab a bite and then head over to Sam Bond's for a very different string quartet when **Taarka**, now based in Colorado, returns to its old stomping grounds. The foursome's engaging new album, *Adventures in Vagabondia*, continues Taarka's tradition of drawing on gypsy jazz and East European rhythms as well as Celtic, bluegrass (courtesy of mandolinist and co-leader David Pelta-Tiller and guitarist Grant Gordy (a member of David Grisman's Quartet), classical (classically trained violinist and co-leader Enion Pelta-Tiller) and jazz (acoustic jazz bassist Troy Robey) influences.

Brooklyn Rider isn't the only UO show during the post-spring-break musical quietude. On April 2, Beall hosts a performance by New York classical sax master **Steve Mauk**, who has issued 20 albums and four books about the instrument and its music. His performance includes music by J.S. Bach, the great 20th-century new tango composer Astor Piazzolla and contemporary composers, including the Netherlands' Jacob ter Veldhuis, aka Jacob TV, who thrillingly combines sampled sounds with instruments, as in his punchy "Grab it!" for tenor sax and sampled dialogue from the film *Scared Straight!* And on April 8, Beall hosts pianist **Barry Hannigan**, who'll also perform contemporary and 20th-century sounds, including works by the great French composer Francis Poulenc and by Hannigan's late Bucknell University colleague, the wonderful American composer William Duckworth, who died last year; his minimalist influenced *Time Curve Preludes* stands as one of the 20th century's finest piano cycles.

All these forward looking musicians refuse to succumb to the museum mentality that too often afflicts timid, conservative classical, old-time bluegrass and jazz institutions. Singer **Evynne Hollens** is doing the same for the Broadway musical. Too many cabaret singers and revues endlessly recycle the admittedly magnificent show tunes of the 1930s through the '50s, effectively freezing that grand tradition in amber and disconnecting it from potential new audience. On April 5 and 7 at The Shedd, Hollens and other veteran Eugene musical theater performers **Bill Hulings**, **Shirley Andress** and newer players celebrate 21st-century musicals — memorable tunes from Tony Award-nominated shows like *Spring Awakening*, *The Book of Mormon*, *The Producers* and more. ■