

## **SLOW/FAST --- ABOUT THE MUSICIANS:**

### **KEN THOMSON**

In demand as a composer and freelancer in many settings, he moves quickly between genres and scenes, bringing a fiery intensity and emotional commitment to every musical situation. Called "the hardest-working saxophonist in new-music show business" by Time Out NY, he plays saxophone and writes for the punk/jazz band Gutbucket, with whom he has toured internationally to 19 countries and 32 states over nine years, and released CDs for Knitting Factory, Enja, NRW and Cantaloupe Records.

He is also a member of the internationally-touring punk/cabaret band World/Inferno Friendship Society, next-generation chamber orchestra Signal (conducted by Brad Lubman), world-jazz group Fire in July, all-improvised No Net Trio, and was a co-founder of punk/chamber composer-performer collective Anti-Social Music. He is a frequent collaborator with new-composed music groups Alarm Will Sound (on forthcoming Nonesuch Records debut), International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), So Percussion, and more. He is a faculty member at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival and Institute. He is a Selmer Artist, and endorses Sibelius software.

As a composer, he has been commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra, Bang on a Can, the True/False Film Festival, and others, and has received awards from ASCAP and Meet the Composer. The New York Times wrote of his work "Wait Your Turn" for the American Composers Orchestra upon its debut at Carnegie Hall in October 2007: "The concert ended on a high note.... the music offered a density worthy of the closing bars of a Led Zeppelin epic;" and of his work "seasonal.disorder" for the Bang on a Can All-Stars, "a virtuoso piece... a texture laced with power chords, screaming clarinet lines and cluster-laden piano writing. In the end it is sheer madness, in a good, thrillingly visceral way." The Philadelphia Inquirer also noted: "Thomson's Wait Your Turn is as visceral as music can be."

His through-composed rescoring of the 22-minute 1936 British film "Night Mail" was called "a masterful re-imagining of an old classic" by Indiewire.com upon its debut in March 2007 at the True/False Film Festival. His recent works include for Gutbucket+Ethel (string quartet), premiered at the Cologne Triennale 2007 and Jazz Saalfelden Festival 2006. His 2006 clarinet quintet "How to Play" has been played in the US and Australia by multiple ensembles.

His arrangement of Aphex Twin's "Gwely Mernans" for Alarm Will Sound was recorded on their acclaimed CD Acoustica (Cantaloupe Music), premiered live at the Lincoln Center Festival 2005, and later choreographed by Chicago's Hubbard Street Dance Company. He has had two works released on CD by Anti-Social Music, including "Song" (ASM Sings the Great American Songbook/Peacock Recordings), and an arrangement of Bob Massey's "The Mountain" (The Nitrate Hymnal/Lujo Records).

In the July/August 2006 issue of the German-Dutch Sonic magazine, Ken was the "Top Interview," garnering a four-page feature in which critic Ulrich Steinmetzger remarked about his "intense performances" which "left behind astounded audiences... [who] witnessed him blow raw energy from the stage like few others can." The Boston Globe has called his improvisation "dazzling;" and Time Out New York has called him a "manic sax dervish."

### **RUSS JOHNSON**

Brooklyn based trumpeter Russ Johnson is an active performer in the jazz, improvised, and contemporary classical music scenes throughout the U.S. and abroad. In addition to leading his own groups, and co-leading The Other Quartet and New Math, Russ is currently touring as a member of Lee Konitz's new nonet and the Steve Swallow/Ohad Talmor "L'Histoire du Clochard" sextet. In addition, Russ has performed with a long list of musical heavyweights including; Kenny Wheeler, Bill Frisell, Joe Lovano, Richie Beirach, Mark Ribot, Charles Earland, David Liebman, Joe Maneri, The Jazz Passengers, Oliver Lake, Myra Melford, Anthony Davis, Mick Rossi, Elvis Costello, Debbie Harry, Michael Bubl, Curtis Fowlkes, Roy Nathanson, Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson, Brian Blade, Dick Oatts, Aretha Franklin, Tony Malaby, Jenny Scheinman, and Mat Maneri.

His new recording, Save Big has recently been released on the OmniTone label to enthusiastic reviews. Russ is also active as an educator/clinician, having taught at colleges and universities across the U.S. and in Europe. He is currently teaching at The Center for Preparatory Studies in Music (CPSM) at Queens College, and is a member of the faculty at the Maine Jazz Camp.

## **NIR FELDER**

Nir Felder is quickly becoming the go-to guitarist for some of the most creative and compelling artists in jazz. Just in the first half of 2008, Nir will be performing with Greg Osby, Josh Roseman, Ben Wendel, Rudy Royston, and others. He is a recent graduate from the Berklee School of Music.

## **ADAM ARMSTRONG**

In 2000, after establishing himself as one of Australia's most sought after bass players, Adam, with the assistance of an Australian Arts Council grant, relocated to New York. Since then he has been featured in the projects of Eric Person (ex- Dave Holland, World Saxophone Quartet), Danish saxophonist, Kim Bock, and German drummer, Christian Finger's Quartet, featuring Rich Perry. Adam, in his career, has played with many other greats including Kenny Wheeler, Kenny Kirkland and drumming legend, Billy Cobham. He has toured through many parts of the world, playing festivals from Montreux to Beijing, and has played on over 70 albums.

## **FRED KENNEDY**

Drummer Frederick Kennedy is originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Since coming to New York City in 2003, he has been busy playing across a wide range of genres, from folk to free; electro-acoustic to chamber music; and indie rock to modern jazz. Aside from freelancing with various artists in New York and elsewhere, regular ongoing projects include Tucksy, the Suite Unraveling, Fire In July, Gray Code, Back East, Out to Lunch, and Girlfight.