Electives in Performance – Fall 2015

Performance ensembles hold auditions in the first week’s class time. Students must be registered for the course to be eligible to attend the audition.

Advanced Rhythmic Concepts Ensemble - Rory Stuart. This ensemble will focus on performance by students of concepts from the Rhythmic Analysis level 2A and 2B classes, in a practical playing context. We will work on playing rhythmic superimpositions, metric modulations, odd meters, changing meters, and cross-rhythms on our instruments, using original music by the instructor and ensemble members, as well as blues, standards, and originals by other jazz composers, where appropriate. Improvisation in solos, accompaniment, and ensemble work will all be used to further mastery. Prerequisite: Completion of Rhythmic Analysis 2B, or permission of instructor. Final enrollment for this class is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra - Bobby Sanabria. In 1940 the Afro-Cuban tradition began here in NYC. Machito and his Afro-Cubans, under the direction of maestro Mario Bauza, fused the harmonic sophistication of Jazz with the rhythmic complexity of Afro-Cuban music. The ensemble explores that rich legacy with a repertoire that encompasses the past, present, and future of the genre. The ensemble performs once a month at the Nuyorican Poets Café and a school concert every semester featuring a renowned guest soloist. High level reading and solo skills are recommended. Final enrollment for this class is at the discretion of the instructor. 1-2 credits

Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers - Charles Tolliver. An in-depth study of the repertory and performance traditions of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. The original recordings will be studied and the students will work toward developing a good playing style in an ensemble devoted to this group’s work. Final enrollment for this class is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Brazilian Choro Ensemble—Richard Boukas. This course will be dedicated to Brazil’s unique and diverse tradition of instrumental/chamber music. Choro is Brazil’s rich and exciting blend of European popular forms (polka, waltz, schottische), Afro-Brazilian rhythms (samba, lundu, maxixe, batuque) with Classical and Jazz melodic and harmonic language. Players will learn the complex inner workings of Choro’s performance practice- the symbiotic relations between melody, bassline and accompaniment; idiomatic melodic phrasing and interpretation and improvisation on more Jazz-oriented pieces. Repertoire will span 150 years: from early nationalist composers (Nazareth, Gonzaga, Medeiros, Villa Lobos) to mid-20th century masters (Gnattali, Mignone, Jacob do Bandolim) and modern jazz-leaning innovators (Hermeto Pascoal, Jovino Santos Neto, Guinga). Featuring a variety of instrumentations and forms ranging from classic (AABBACCA) to more extended works, ensemble requires strong readers dedicated to a team work ethic. Musicians with a Jazz and/or Classical background, and past members of ensemble are encouraged to audition. Instrumentation is as follows: flute, soprano sax (clarinet double welcome), alto sax (light flute double), 3 guitarist: two 6-string, and one dedicated 7-string nylon*, some cavaquinho* (*instrument provided), 5-string electric bass, and drums with strong pandeiro double (and other percussion). Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits
Brazilian Percussion Workshop - Scott Kettner. For years, most Americans have associated Brazil with samba and bossa nova, overlooking the numerous regional rhythms and music styles which are tremendously popular throughout Brazil. A perfect example is Maracatu- a dynamic rhythm from the northeast, propulsive and dramatic, steeped in African traditions with heavy religious overtones. This class will explore the traditional Maracatu rhythms, instruments and songs from the northeast of Brazil. Students will learn to sing in Portuguese as well as perform complex rhythmic breaks and percussion arrangements. Drummers and non drummers alike are encouraged to participate in this class. Participants will experience NYC's biggest carnival party - The NYC Village Halloween Parade. Come join us as we parade up 6th Ave with up to 75 Maracatu drummers and millions of revelers. No prior drumming experience is required. For drummers we will also apply some of the percussion patterns to the drum set. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. **2 credits**

John Coltrane Ensemble - Reggie Workman. The Coltrane Repertory Ensemble is a repertory ensemble consisting of more advanced students at the school. Participants are selected by audition. In this ensemble, significant Coltrane compositions are chosen as vehicles towards understanding why and how the music of John Coltrane, an icon of Jazz whose breath of creation spans modern music from traditional to futuristic and beyond, pioneered concepts of harmonization. His innovative system was predicated on novel uses of the minor third fourth progression, which attributed to the expanded use of whole tone scales and the twelve-tone system, giving more flexibility to the improviser. Coltrane’s logical resolutions of extended chromatic passages, articulating densely notated compositions and tasteful note placement in slower compositions have become defining factors in Jazz and improvised. All of the above represent challenges unique to Coltrane compositions and an understanding of this great artist. **2 credits**

The “Live” Electronica Orchestra – Amir Ziv. LEO is a performing laboratory for all things now and current in electronically influenced music, drawing inspiration from a history rich in electronic audio experimentation and pushing the stylistic thresholds of music. We will build on a hundred-year marriage between electronics and sound that began with the first cross-continental transmission of speech in 1915. Our sources of inspiration will start with pioneers of electronic music such as John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Morton Feldman, and Pierre Schaeffer’s Musique concrète. We will explore the next wave of innovation: the disco revolution and the club DJ, Kraftwerk, rap, the BBC’s Radiophonic Workshop, house, hip hop and the techno explosion. And we will build on the most recent developments in the rapidly accelerating history of electronic music, including the birth of “the remix artist” and the hybrid styles that followed: drum ‘n’ bass, ambient, downtempo, acid jazz, “reverse engineered” live d’n’b, nu jazz, jungle, dubstep, etc. The “Live” Electronica Orchestra is open to all instrumentalists. The ensemble will utilize various sound manipulation effects such as ring-modulators, octavers, low-pass filters, delays, etc. We will place a strong emphasis on performing with a “sound-design” mentality; establishing cuing systems; developing clear A/B/C sections for live-ensemble, “through-composed” improvisation; and using electronic effects and amps as instruments. Extreme tempos, unorthodox techniques, and advanced forms and rhythms will further enrich our compositional toolkit as we lead the next wave of electronically influenced music and create the soundtrack of tomorrow. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. **2 credits**
Electric Miles Ensemble – Jason Miles. Miles Davis is arguably the father of modern jazz, and his switch from acoustic to electric is still controversial. From the late 60’s until the end of his career Miles Davis led the way in electric jazz, spearheading movements such as jazz-rock and jazz-funk. This ensemble will play music from all phases of Miles’s electric period. Repertoire will include material from "In A Silent Way," "Bitches Brew" and "Jack Johnson" all the way to the late career highlights such as "Decoy" and "TuTu." Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Futuristic Concepts of Music Ensemble - Reggie Workman. In this course you’ll explore and develop a proficiency in the underlying concepts of futuristic music. From exercises in structuring specific tone rows, modes or scales to exploring time but without key signatures, student are encouraged to build from the limited elements available forming another mode of creativity, heightening their technical skills while allowing the students to form a new level of creativity. Note this course will be offered only to those students who have achieved a strong proficiency where conventional concepts are concerned. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Gospel Chorus - Charlotte Small. This class is open to all students who desire to experience singing gospel music. This course will involve singing various styles of gospel music ranging from traditional to urban contemporary. The focus of this class will be on phrasing, stamina and three-part singing to achieve the authentic sound of gospel music. 1-2 credits

Herbie Hancock Ensemble - George Cables. This class will focus on the music of Herbie Hancock, including songs from the acoustic albums of the 1960’s, the funky electric albums of the 70’s and 80’s, and the eclectic recordings of more recent years. Final enrollment for this class is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Jazz Orchestra - Charles Tolliver. The big band of the swing and bop eras has provided the foundation for today’s larger Jazz ensembles and studio recording groups. Experience playing in a big band is useful for all Jazz musicians. It develops sight-reading skills and teaches the student to play in a section. The New School Jazz Orchestra is a top-level ensemble that often performs at Jazz clubs in New York City. The ensemble also performs student arrangements and compositions. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 1-2 credits

Linear Composition for Improvisers – Jane Ira Bloom. A performance/composition course exploring how to structure compositions and improvisations using melodic lines or horizontal motion. Participants in the class both compose and perform. Students learn to compose using their improvisational ability as their point of departure and are required to write and perform several compositional/improv assignments throughout the course. A live concert recording of students’ original compositions is the final class project. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

M-BASE Ensemble - Andy Milne. In this course, students learn all the music by ear. The repertoire consists of the music of Andy Milne, Steve Coleman, and other composers associated with M-BASE. The course offers the unique opportunity to learn and perform music using very specific rhythmic challenges not normally found in standard jazz repertoire. The music is challenging, melodic and funky. Students
improve their melodic and rhythmic ear training, and develop skills for distinguishing, internalizing and soloing with new and unfamiliar rhythms and melodic passages. The course is not a superficial survey on "how to solo over odd time signatures" but rather a study in rhythm and form, helping to develop a rhythmic concept which will open doors for playing in any meter. Students are taught to hear musical phrases, rather than time signatures. The process of eliminating the conceptual bar line will help foster a greater sense of freedom, based on understanding the music from the ground up. The goal of the course is to give students a first-hand look at the anatomy of the music associated with “M-BASE" and help them to develop the musical muscles necessary to understand and improvise with this music. The approach used strives to encourage students to hear musical phrases rather than time signatures. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Charles Mingus Ensemble - Andy McKee. Charles Mingus was one of the most original, iconoclastic and influential composers of the Twentieth Century. The vast scope of his work includes everything from orchestral tone poems like “Adagio ma Non Troppo," to the Gospel-tinged “Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting” and the hard-swinging jazz classic “Moanin". He was passionate, political, controversial and an ever imposing force on the global jazz scene until his untimely death in 1979. His rich legacy remains an indispensable part of the jazz canon and continues to invite deeper inspection and modern interpretation. With a respectful nod to the forward-looking spirit of Charles Mingus, contemporary rhythmic elements (hip-hop, drum & bass, etc.) will be introduced in the reshaping, deconstruction and at time, total renovation of the original material. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Ornette Coleman Ensemble - Jane Ira Bloom. This class focuses on performing the early compositions of Ornette Coleman. An intuitive approach to learning his compositions as well as improvising will be emphasized. The course will explore music from his early albums including Something Else, This is Our Music, Tomorrow is the Question, and The Shape of Jazz to Come. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Rhythm Section Workshop (“The Art of the Rhythm Section”) - Hal Galper. A “hands-on” class focusing on the various aspects of rhythm section playing: the logistics of listening, clarifying instrument roles, the decision-making process, developing performance awareness, concentration and instrumental control. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Sonny Rollins Ensemble - Armen Donelian. This ensemble is dedicated to the music of one of Jazz’s most pivotal saxophonist/composers. Particular attention will be paid to Rollins’ early work as a leader, including compositions such as Oleo, St. Thomas, Valtz Hot, Airegin, Strode Road, Newk’s Fadeaway, Tenor Madness, Blue Seven, Pent-up House and others. Standards known for Rollins’ interpretation will also be played, including The Way You Look Tonight, Easy Living, Star Eyes, I’ve Got You Under my Skin, I’ll Remember April, Softly As In A Morning Sunrise, Four, and Woody ‘n’ You. Instrumentalists and vocalists are encouraged to audition. One Rollins solo transcription is required during the semester. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits
Sound in Time - Diane Moser. This a hybrid course, exploring the components of sound and the diverse parameters of timbre as an organizing musical principle, to create, combine, and transform sound in composition and performance. Our investigations focus on: the numeric implications of the harmonic series as an organized approach towards tuning systems, intervals, harmony, and temporal organization including polyrhythm and groove, how dynamic envelopes affect timbre textures, differentiating between discrete/diffuse timbres, and examining attack/sustain/decay for all instruments and voice. Each student will create a personal lexicon that includes extended techniques, metaphors, and extra-musical inspiration and will create “tailor-made” improvisational scores for members of the class. There will be a final performance of these compositions at the end of the semester. This class is for the student who is interested in exploring new pathways of composing, performing and improvising. The class is open to both Jazz and Mannes students. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Super Trios – Allison Miller. This ensemble will cover the musical contributions of piano trios from Nat King Cole, Bill Evans, Paul Bley, Hampton Hawes, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, as well as others. Enrollment is limited to pianists, acoustic bassists, and drummers. Particular emphasis will be placed on the communication and support among the various members of the ensemble and the individual roles of each player. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

Wayne Shorter Ensemble - Doug Weiss. Wayne Shorter is one of the giants of improvised music as well as a notable leader and composer. This ensemble will be an in-depth study of Shorter’s work, both compositionally and as an improviser. Classroom activities will include learning early compositions directly from the recordings as well as reading transcriptions made by the instructor. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits

West African Heritage Ensemble - Yosvany Terry. Through listening, reading and performing, this ensemble explores the rich musical heritage of West Africa and the West African diaspora in the Americas. Special attention is paid to internalizing rhythmic patterns and phrases by way of clapping, singing, and call-and-response techniques. Students will apply West African concepts to their understanding of jazz and improvisation, including historical connections and contemporary interpretations. The repertoire to be used in this course will include traditional music from the diaspora as well as original compositions by contemporary composers. In addition to participation from vocalists, brass, woodwind, and rhythm section players on their main instruments, the ensemble welcomes those interested in learning and developing skills on West African percussion instruments. Final enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor. 2 credits