

## Karlton Hester and Hesterian Musicism

Karlton E. Hester, Ph.D. (composer/flutist/saxophonist), began his career as a composer and recording artist in Los Angeles where he worked as a studio musician and music educator. He received his Ph.D. in composition from the City University of New York Graduate Center and is currently Director of "Jazz" Studies at the University of California in Santa Cruz. As performer on both flute and saxophone, he is music director of the Fillmore Jazz Preservation Big Band and Hesterian Musicism. Hester is currently music director of Hesterian Musicism, founding director of the Fillmore Jazz Preservation Big Band in San Francisco and served as the Herbert Gussman Director of Jazz Studies at Cornell University from 1991-2001. His formal study included Harry Nelsova and Paul Renzi on flute, Joe Henderson and John Handy in "jazz" improvisation, composition with Bruce Saylor and Robert Starrer, as well as lessons with Frank Chase and Bill Tremble on saxophone.



Hester specializes in premeditated, spontaneous and electro-acoustic composition. His compositions span a wide range; from numerous solo cycles for various woodwinds to chamber configurations, music videos and electro-acoustic symphonic works written in an eclectic array of styles. He has been the recipient of fellowships, grants and commissions from the National Endowment of the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, New England Council of the Arts, Arts International, and ASCAP, amongst others. His albums include 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Musicism (2005), Harmonious Soul Scenes 2000; Musicism for the Sake of Love; Hesterian Liberation; Reconstructive Musicism; Karlton Hester and the Contemporary Jazz Art Movement; Hesterian Musicism; Dances Purely for the Sake of Love; Musicism for Your Imagination and Sacred Musicism, Harmonious Soul Scenes 2000 and others.

*"Hesterian Musicism reveals him to be a composer with a breathtaking range of materials that are skillfully wrought in both refreshing chamber configurations and his impressive 12-piece Contemporary Jazz Art Movement." --- Downbeat*

**Hesterian Musicism:** As a composer Hester has continued to evolve the trans-harmonic style he calls Hesterian Musicism since the early nineteen seventies. His music involves a fission of Afrocentric and Western tonal, modal, quartal, serial, and electronic elements into an expressive voice that defies simple categorization as either premeditated or spontaneous composition. The range of his works spans from numerous solo cycles for

various woodwinds to chamber configurations and electro-acoustic symphonic works written in an eclectic array of style. Originally nurtured in New York, Hesterian Musicism is a continuation of his former Bay Area based ensemble, The Contemporary Jazz Art Movement (1970s & 80s). He has recorded his own compositions, since the

early 1970s, featuring the Contemporary Jazz Art Movement on earlier albums and Hesterian Musicism on more recent recordings. Hester continues to perform with both East and West Coast members of Hesterian Musicism.

Hesterian Musicism is not only the name he coined for his performance ensemble, but it also designates Hester's compositional and improvisational process. Hesterian Musicism



is the creative process through which Karlton Hester's compositional and performance style merge to give rise to aesthetic environments where other musicians, kinetic and visual artists, and poets can meet to produce new art forms through imaginative effort. Its philosophical basis involves an intrinsic freedom of expression, focused and disciplined spontaneity, and a structural basis that explores the creative components of diverse sources from the whole earth.

Intrinsically interdisciplinary, Hesterian Musicism has presented numerous concerts in collaboration with other artists, such as painters, dancers and choreographers, poets, as well as a number of performances featuring African musicians on traditional instruments.

### **Members of Hesterian Musicism:**

Karlton Hester (composer, musical director, flutes, saxophones & synthesizers), Bill Johnson (trumpet, flugelhorn), Phil Bowler (bass), Cecilia Smith (vibraphone), Larry Douglas (trumpet), Kamau Seitu (percussion), Renata Bratt (cello), Lewis Jordan (saxophone), and Erich Hunt (bass).



#### MEMBER BIOS

##### **Bill Johnson**

A trumpet player for over twenty-five years, Bill Johnson is a lifelong student of the instrument. Some of his major influences include Miles Davis, Charles Tolliver, Freddie Hubbard, Booker Little, Lee Morgan, and Donald Byrd. He also had a large interest in electronic interactive music. As a performer he has been engaged in a wide variety of music from classical to jazz. Bill is an active participant of Temple University Public Radio, a classical and jazz radio station that is one of the premiere stations of its kind in the country. As a

member of Hesterian Musicism he performs regularly with Karlton Hester. And as a professional fundraiser he shares his knowledge and skills with many non-profit organizations and artists.

## Larry Douglas

With a tone that the dean of American jazz critics, Leonard Feather, described as “velvety and silky,” Larry Douglas has ruled as one of San Francisco's top trumpet/flugelhorn players for more than three decades. In addition to leading his own electro-acoustic group, the Larry Douglas Alltet, Douglas has worked with such stellar musicians as Freddie Hubbard, Chuck Berry, Albert Collins, Sun Ra and Rufus and Carla Thomas. As a member of Johnny



Otis and His Orchestra, his playing was featured on four albums including the Grammy-nominated Spirit Of The Black Territory Bands. His debut solo album Dedications, released in 1985, received a great response from fans in Europe and the Eastern Bloc. Douglas has collaborated with flute/saxophone player, and director of the jazz program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Dr. Karlton Hester since the late-1970s, playing with Hester's groups, the Contemporary Jazz Art Movement and the Hesterian Musicism.

The recipient of a Bachelors degree in instrumental music education from Florida A&M, and a Masters of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory, Douglas has shared his knowledge with students at Aptos Middle School, from 1981 until 1990, and Galileo High School of San Francisco, since 1991. He also teaches a jazz history course at Vista Community College. A native of Statesboro, Georgia, Douglas found early inspiration in the music of an older brother, Gary, who played trumpet, and a high school teacher and alto saxophone player, James Blakely. While in college, he and his band, Funk, Incorporated, took first place in the national and international levels of the Budweiser Music Festival competition. He moved to San Francisco, as a member of the United States Army's Sixth Division Band, in 1975 and continues to make his home in California.



## Lewis Jordan

*Born in San Francisco, grew up in Chicago...with the blues...with learning to associate creative musicians with the advancement of society as we know it.* Lewis Jordan is an international touring and recording musician; poet; actor and playwright. He was a founding member of United Front, the seminal San Francisco Bay Area ensemble known for its originality, aggressive imagination and cultural synthesis. As a performer Jordan has bridged the worlds of music and the written word —through composition, saxophone and poetry. In his career, he has focused on creative structures for improvisation, which has led to his

work with artists from a range of disciplines. He has performed with dancers, poets, actors and musicians, many presented in his Music At-Large series. His interest continues to be meeting and working with performers delving into their deeper resources

for modes of expression that honor their traditions while speaking to the urgency of the present. If that's in B-flat, fine. If it's in time, that could work too. If it's outside, it must be honest.



### **Cecilia Smith**

Cecilia Smith is currently one of the leading vibraphonists of Four Mallet Technique. She has toured nationally and internationally. She has recorded and performed with several renown artists including: Gary Bartz, Greg Osby, Milt Hinton, Alan Dawson, Randy Weston, Donald Harrison, Hubert Laws, Mulgrew Miller, Donald Byrd (trumpet), Cassandra Wilson, and Digable Planets. She has released 4 independent c.d.'s on the national and international level and one Japanese release. Her current c.d. is called LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED. She has composed for special projects including music for film and has won numerous awards and grants for her composing talent. She also teaches for a variety of performing arts programs including: Hospital Audiences Inc., The Jamaica Arts Center, The Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn

YWCA. She is also a Visiting Artist/Lecturer for the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University. She is a graduate and former faculty member of Berklee College of Music (Boston, MA).

### **Renata Bratt**

Cellist and clinician Renata Bratt performs and teaches jazz and classical techniques to string players all over the country. Renata teaches cello, beginning orchestral playing, jazz, and chamber music to students in K-12th grades in her home studio, at the Pacific



Elementary School in Davenport, CA, and through the Cabrillo College Suzuki Strings program. She represents string players for the International Association of Jazz Educators Resource Team and writes a column for the American Suzuki Journal titled "Improvisation for All". She has been an invited clinician at string workshops and national conferences for children, adults, and teachers. In addition to frequent jazz concerts in the California region with the Gail Dobson Group, Renata has also played back-up with many pop groups, including Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, David Sanborn, Lyle Lovett, Mannheim Steamroller, and Dionne Warwick. Rolling Stone dubbed

her an "ace performer" for her work recording and touring with alternative rocker Cindy Lee Berryhill's Garage Orchestra. Renata Bratt received her Ph.D. in Music from the University of California, San Diego.



### **Phil Bowler**

Phil Bowler's unique approach to the double bass is firmly rooted in the history and tradition of both African American and European art musics. His recording credits include releases with Wynton Marsalis, Karlton Hester, Ralph Peterson, Terence Blanchard, and Donald Harrison. He has toured with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Wynton Marsalis, Max Roach, Slide Hampton, Horace Silver, Roy Haynes, and various others. He is currently leading his own quartet Pocket Jungle and working with reknowned saxophonist Jackie McLean. Phil also hosts "Jazz Adventures", a music and interview radio show on WPKN-FM in Bridgeport, which was selected by VARIETY magazine as 1989's best jazz program and Phil as the best radio personality.



### **Erich Hunt**



Oakland bassist/composer Ollen Erich Hunt was born in Munich, Germany and grew up under the sublime northern lights in Anchorage, Alaska. Mr. Hunt studied English Composition and Music at the University of Alaska and the University of Southern California, while performing with and leading groups in Anchorage, Los Angeles and, later, Honolulu, Hawaii. He composed original music for the U of A multimedia production "Dreamer and the Dreamed," penned compositions for and contributed arrangements to a variety of jazz and world music recordings, and is currently at work on his own forthcoming CD "Theme Park," with his group, endofnow project.

Mr. Hunt has performed with many important Bay Area and national artists including: James Newton, Billy Childs, James Williams, Sonny Simmons, Dave Liebman, Emil Richards, Julian Priester, Jon Jang, Anthony Brown, Denise Perrier, Kim Nalley, Babatunde Olatunji, Johnny Coles, Warren Gale, Flip Nunez, Mark Little, Raul De Souza, percussionist Carlhinos de Oliveira, Michael Paulo, E. W. Wainwright, Gunter Wehinger, Eddie Marshall, Bobby Enriques, Babatunde Lea, Bruce Foreman, and fellow Alaskan John Firman.

### **Kamau Seitu**

Drummer and percussionist, Kamau Seitu is prolific as composer and poet as well. At San Francisco State University he studied composition and improvisational music with

John Handy and Andrew Hill. Over the past thirty years or more, he has performed with more than a few well known Jazz, Blues and R&B and African musicians, among them The Sun Ra Arkestra, South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, Gil Scott Heron, West African Highlife composer and guitarist, Souliman Rogie, Herbie Lewis, Pony Poindexter, Faye Carol, John Gilmore, Marshall Allen, Tyrone Hill and The Deep Space



Posse, Eddie Gale, E.W. Wainwright, Michael White (violinist), David Hardiman and The San Francisco All-Star Big Band, Ed Kelly, Wajumbe Cultural Ensemble, Quincy Troupe, Michael Howell and Karlton Hester and The Contemporary Jazz Art Movement.

He can be heard on Saturday and Sunday nights performing with the Dr. William Webster's Jazz Nostalgia at Les Joulins in San Francisco. On the "Blessings" CD, Seitu is the composer of the highly energetic "No More Exploitation" and the romantic ballad "Song For My Lady." More of his creative works can be heard on his next soon to be released CD.

### **Nelson E. Harrison**

Dr. Harrison is a trombonist and veteran of the Count Basie Orchestra, in addition to being a "jazz" scholar, clinical psychologist and inventor of the trombetto. Nelson Harrison is a veteran trombonist, arranger and composer and Inventor of his own instrument, the trombetto. His most recent project has been the compilation of lyrics to 88 jazz standards into a book entitled The World According to Bop. It has received high praise from performers and composers alike.

