

DC Improvisers Collective: Bio

Ben Azzara – drums/percussion:



As a child Ben saw Kenny Clark play with Dizzy Gillespie and ever since he has been seduced by all things drums. Jazz trained but seasoned in rock clubs across the North America and Europe, he has been the progenitor of numerous groups including the Emo-punk innovators Junction, the infamous Delta 72, and Dischord's Capitol City Dusters of whom the UK's Q Magazine said, "...Dischord has struck another vein of precious musical ore". Ben also performs with his wife Sarah Azzara and has produced her three full-length releases. Most recently he has been performing and recording with Pup

Tent, a stream-of-consciousness punk group, also with folk-rockers Sean McArdle, Stella Schindler and avant garde performers, The Caution Curves.

Jonathan Matis – guitar/electronics:



Jonathan Matis has been composing and performing many types of music professionally since 1993. His interest in combining improvisation and composition led him to graduate studies in composition at the Hartt School of Music where he studied with Robert Carl and David Macbride. In March of 2006, he was invited to Philadelphia to compose and perform as part of a residency with Pauline Oliveros and her Deep Listening Band. In the summer of 2005, he was selected for participation in the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium. He has been leading his own genre-bending

ensembles for over fifteen years, and has performed in venues across the country; as diverse as the Kennedy Center and CBGB's. Jonathan has been collaborating with a variety of choreographers for the past several years, and has generated many pieces for dance. He has been a finalist for the Metro DC Dance Award in music composition for two consecutive years. Jonathan leads the DC Improvisers Collective, a free jazz ensemble; the Low End String Quartet, a re-imagining of the classical standard; and Eigenvalues, a duo project exploring the possibilities of spoken-word and electronic processing.

Mike Sebastian - tenor & soprano sax / bass clarinet:



Mike has been playing reed instruments for over 14 years. His passion to play grew when he first heard the spirituality of John Coltrane's music. Mike plays improvised experimental, jazz, rock, gospel, and any other type of music that encourages creativity. His experience includes playing in a gospel orchestra, as well as with various local improvisers. Recently Mike played improvised music for dance with Jon Matis and Mark Merella at the DC Improv Festival. A particular thrill was playing with Peter Kowald and local Baltimore musicians at the Red Room in 2000.