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Marshall University Music Department Presents a Solo Improvised Piano Recital: Sean Parsons

Sean Parsons
Marshall University

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DEPARTMENT of MUSIC

presents a

Solo Improvised Piano Recital: Sean Parsons

Thursday, August 26, 2010
Jomie Jazz Forum
8:00 p.m.

This program is presented by the College of Fine Arts through the Department of Music, with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

In 1975, jazz pianist Keith Jarrett performed a three part solo piano concert in Koln, Germany that became the best-selling *solo* album in the history of jazz. Jarrett's performance was blend of jazz, rock, and what later become associated as "new-age" piano music. Since, Jarrett has given a number of solo, improvised piano concerts that have their own individual flavors, side stepping much of the new-age style for a more 20th century pianistic approach.

Tonight's concert is not preconceived in any manner in an honest attempt to share a "stream of conscious" improvisational experience with the audience. One should keep in mind however, that despite the flowing nature of improvisation, it is indeed a practiced art. Jazz musicians specifically spend many of their efforts in attaining mastery of melodic and harmonic pairings, and this evening's concert is no different in that regard. The traditional performance practice of jazz utilizes those aspects, but most commonly following a set melody and subsequent harmonic sequence, both of which could be created and developed this evening.

I have been influenced (or have studied) many different types of music, all of which manifest themselves in my compositions and performances. I make no apologies for them as some develop out of the dreaded pop genre. Many of my earliest musical influences emerged from my father's album collection. Aerosmith, AC/DC, progressive rock from Emerson Lake and Palmer, James Taylor, The Who, The Beach Boys, Eric Clapton and Neil Young. My impressionable teenage years added music the likes of Metallica, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Weezer, Silverchair, Alice in Chains, Green Day, a variety of early techno music, Fat Boy slim, and even Snoop Dog, MC Hammer, and DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, of which were nearly impossible to escape from while growing up in the 1990s.

After I left the sensible music of my youth, I found a passion for "classical" music and jazz. As a composer, I found a great love for Bartok, Stravinsky, Glass, Andriessen, Cage and others, all the while digging deeply into the jazz idiom that not only includes swing, but also incorporates musical styles from Cuba and Brazil.

These musical influences are listed only to provide the listening audience a frame of reference for tonight's concert. Undoubtedly the aforementioned musical influences will manifest themselves in my performance, yet I am unable to know which, when, and how.

I hope that you are able to find moments of a shared musical experience in tonight's performance. They may be moments of joy, love, passion, anger, frustration, introspection, humor, optimism, hope, or others that you may experience. If you can find a moment of tonight's performance that proves to be influential in your music, writing, or other artistic endeavors (positive or negative!), I will feel honored to have shared this with you.