



DEWBERRY FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Composition Faculty

Featuring:
Robert Gillam
Jesse Guessford
John Jansen
Michael Nickens
Glenn Smith

Sunday, February 19, 2023
3:00 PM
Harris Theatre

PROGRAM

Excerpts from "Nostradamus, Visionary Healer"

Glenn Smith

Glenn Smith, audio

Sequenza I for Harmonics Guitar

John Jansen

John Jansen, amplified guitar and live electronics

Debatable

Jesse Guessford

Jesse Guessford, audio-visual

Tuba Improvisation

Michael Nickens

Michael Nickens, tuba

As Yet Untitled Electronic Piece

Jesse Guessford

Jesse Guessford, audio

Generative Patch I

Robert Gillam

Robert Gillam, live electronics

Group Improvisation

Robert Gillam, live electronics
Jesse Guessford, live electronics
John Jansen, daxophone
Michael Nickens, tuba
Glenn Smith, singing bowls

MEET THE FACULTY ARTISTS



Robert W. Gillam holds a bachelor's degree in Music Theory and Composition from Azusa Pacific University, a master's degree in Commercial Music from California State University Los Angeles, and a doctoral degree from the University of Arizona in Music Composition with a minor in Music Theory. He also holds a certificate in film scoring from the highly acclaimed UCLA extension program in Los Angeles. Dr. Gillam is an active educator, having taught at several higher-education institutions across the United States. His primary areas of interest are in music technology, composition, sound design, commercial music and music for media. While teaching at Lamar State College-Port Arthur, Robert helped develop and implement an innovative sound design curriculum. As a composer, Robert has written music for several independent films and his concert music has been performed in the U.S. and in Europe. He has received commissions from the Azusa Pacific University Wind Ensemble and his piece "American Fanfare" was chosen as a finalist in the 2013 Dallas Winds Call for Fanfares competition. His music's wide range of influences includes 20/21st century concert music, jazz, film scores, folk music, popular song, and electronic dance music. Dr. Gillam is also active as a performer. He has played in groups across Southern California, Arizona, and Texas. Robert plays several different keyboard instruments including piano, Hammond organ, and his personal favorite: keytar. He is also a highly skilled synthesizer and drum machine programmer.



Jesse Guessford received a BS in music education from West Chester University, a Master of Music in music composition from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, and a DMA in music composition from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Guessford has studied composition with Andrew Simpson, Zack Browning, Sever Tipei, Warren Burt, Vinko Globokar, and Lucas Foss. His music has been heard throughout North America, including performances during the SEAMUS Nation Conference, in Europe at the Etchings Festival in Auvilar, France, and in Africa on South African Radio. Guessford has received numerous awards, including the Subito Grant for Emerging Composers, awarded by the American Composer's Forum. As an associate professor in the School of Music at Mason, Guessford has focused on the scholarship of teaching with and about technology

and the music of John Cage. Guessford is also co-founding director of Music, Motion, Technology, a dance and music collective based in Northern Virginia, creating evening-length works involving dancers, musicians, and interactive audio and visual technologies.



John C.L. Jansen is an active composer, multi-instrumentalist, luthier, author, recording engineer, and teacher of music technology and music theory, based in Takoma Park, Maryland. John's compositions are influenced by a reverence of nature, a love of patterns, and the energy of minimalism. He currently divides his time between writing chamber works for ensembles of existing instruments and writing for original instruments and tuning systems he designs himself. His music has been performed across the United States by the *Partch Quartet*, the *Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble*, *Duo Atmos*, chamber band *Drive (J:)*, *Decho Ensemble*, the violinist Todd Reynolds, and saxophonist Jacob Swanson. A strong advocate for new music, John has appeared at *Strange Beautiful Music VI* and *VII* in Detroit, Michigan with the *GVSU New Music Ensemble*, as well as accompanied the same group on four tours of the national parks—reaching twenty parks spanning the West Coast to the East Coast. In 2016 John co-founded *Drive (J:)*, a chamber band from Fredonia, New York. With *Drive (J:)*, John has appeared at the New Music Gathering in Boston, MA, and released two studio albums: *places/spaces*, and *Phenomenology*. As a solo performer, he has appeared at the New York City Electro Acoustic Music Festival and the Hot Air New Music Festival in San Francisco, California. John has also collaborated with *Bang On A Can* to restore Glenn Branca's *Movement Within*, a piece for an ensemble of original instruments designed for a seven-octave overtone tuning. He worked directly with the original instruments, and the final product was performed live on WNYC's New Sounds program. As an instrument builder, John invented a 3rd bridge instrument called the duochord, a 9-foot-long amplified zither which allows the user to isolate string partials, and to generate clouds of reverberant harmonics. He is also one of the only builders of daxophones, and pick-behind-the-bridge guitars, little-known inventions by Hans Reichel. In 2020, John founded JLJ Instruments, a company that produces experimental musical instruments. The company has shipped globally, with orders ranging from daxophones to microtonal guitars.



Serving as Director of Campus Life Ensembles and Collaborative Arts, and as an Associate Professor of Music, Michael W. Nickens (a.k.a. Doc Nix) is most recognized as the leader of the "Green Machine", which in 2015 was named the #1 pep band in college basketball by the NCAA and commended by the Senate and House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, Dr. Nickens launched Mason's fife and drum corps and WGI world-champion

drumline, and oversees Mason's winterguard. This collection of performing units, known as the "Green Machine Ensembles", are internationally known for their thrilling, high-energy performances at Mason ceremonies and basketball games, professional sports games and events (Capitals, Nationals, Wizards, and Redskins), community events (Celebrate Fairfax, and the Nike Womens' Half Marathon), and marching competitions, as well as their popular internet videos that have over 100 million views collectively. Dr. Nickens was named the 2016 Faculty Member of the Year by the George Mason University Alumni Association. He served as a Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors, Chair of the Faculty of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Chair of the CVPA Diversity Committee, and as a member of the School of Music's Graduate Committee. Having joined the faculty of Mason's School of Music in fall 2006, he has taught courses in sight-singing/ear training, popular music in America, improvisatory music, brass methods, applied tuba, composition, chamber music, and jazz improvisation, as well as collaborations with Mason's School of Dance. In addition, he was a co-founder and co-conductor of the Colonial Athletic Association's "Breakfast with the Bands" intercollegiate pep band showcase. During summers, he has taught tuba and euphonium, conducting, jazz performance, composition, improvisation, chamber music, large ensemble performance, and theory at the Performing Arts Institute at Wyoming Seminary in Kingston, Pennsylvania, the Music, Art, and Theatre (MAT) Camp in Evanston, Wyoming, and the Northern Arizona University Music Camp in Flagstaff, Arizona, and at Mason's Potomac Arts Academy. He has also coached a professional marching ensemble, "Mix It Up", at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia. Dr. Nickens was born in Washington DC and grew up in the Fairfax County Public Schools in Alexandria, Virginia. He completed his academic degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, and the University of Michigan.



Glenn Smith is a composer, teacher, performance-artist, and sound healer. He has written more than 500 pieces, including choral, chamber and orchestral works, as well as jazz and electronic music for concert, dance, video, film and television. He has taught at the college level for the past 40 years and has given numerous recitals and public performances as a composer and multi-instrumentalist. His music has been performed in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia and includes commissions from ensembles, institutions, and individual artists. Major performances include Carnegie Recital Hall, Wolf Trap Farm Park, National Gallery of Art, Library of Congress, CBC Television, local public and cable television and National Public Radio. He was the first composer-in-residence of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and several of his works are available on compact disc. His composition teachers were Fred Fox and Bernhard Heiden. He earned his BA in bassoon performance and an MA in Theory and Composition at California State University, Hayward, and received his doctoral degree in composition with distinction from Indiana University. He is a recipient of numerous composition awards from ASCAP, and has more than 40 chamber works published by Seesaw Music Corporation, NY, and MMB Music, St. Louis, MO. In recent years, Dr. Smith has been composing music for healing and therapeutic applications. He is a certified Reiki Master Practitioner and has a limited therapeutic healing practice employing healing modalities that include Reiki, crystals, tuning forks, and overtone singing as well as theta-state meditational therapies using crystal singing bowls. His music has been used therapeutically in hospital intensive care units, with challenged children, and in a published music education study involving mood problems in elementary school children. He frequently gives lectures, seminars, and workshops on music and healing, and has performed regularly for the elderly at several assisted living centers in the area. He directs a new University Minor in Music and Well-Being, teaches its core courses, Music as a Healing Art, Music and Consciousness, and directs GMU's Healing Arts Ensemble where students learn to apply music healing principles in performance. A more extensive Graduate Certificate in Music and Well-Being was put in place starting Fall 2016. Dr. Smith has been a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia since 1976. As Director of Composition, he currently teaches graduate and doctoral level theory courses and maintains a private composition studio. Several of his private students have won prestigious composition awards and have had their works performed throughout the metropolitan DC area. He holds active memberships in ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), CMS (College Music Society), and ACEP (Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology). He is affiliated with the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being – originally called the Center for Consciousness and Transformation.

DEWBERRY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

SPRING 2023 FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Sunday, January 29
3:00 PM

Kathleen Mulcahy, clarinet
Jonathan Bisesi, percussion
John Spirtas, percussion
Kanako Chikami, percussion
Shane Nickels, percussion

Sunday, February 19
3:00 PM

Original Works by
Composition Faculty
Robert Gillam, Jesse Guessford,
John Jansen, Michael Nickens,
Glenn Smith

Sunday, February 5
7:00 PM

Kerry Wilkerson, bass-baritone

Sunday, February 19
7:00 PM

Eunae Ko Han, pianist
and Friends

Sunday, February 26
7:00 PM

Julianna Nickel, flute
Dennis Edelbrock, trumpet
David Porter, tuba

Free and open to the public

See the full listing of the Dewberry School of Music's wonderful faculty at
music.gmu.edu/faculty-staff/

George Mason University School of Music

For more information and a complete listing of concerts and recitals, visit the
web site at music.gmu.edu

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