

A Faculty Recital by

Anthony Coleman
piano

Tuesday, October 29, 2024
8:00 p.m.
Brown Hall

Recital

I haven't given a recital for five years. I had one planned, prepared for the second week of the pandemic. I had rehearsed and everything. That was in March 2020. Oh well. And now here I am, having moved on, with a lot less ambition than I had in 2020. This Recital is not a Recital. It's just that I feel like playing the piano for you. Like a Gig. It is indeed a gig. The only difference is that it's at NEC. I've played a lot of solo concerts in the last few years and I'm more comfortable playing solo than ever before. Have I gotten better? I can't say that I have. But one effect of the pandemic is that I'm playing far fewer ensemble concerts and more solo concerts, and that's that.

Standards

I never really felt comfortable with Standards. In my first year at NEC—it was the last year I tried to be a real jazz musician—I realized that I really had no idea what to do with them. When I moved back to New York in 1979, I quickly found myself in a circle of musicians who were trying to improvise in a different way, and since then I have been part of that circle. Sometimes I had to learn a standard for one project or another, which I could do - in my own way. Honestly, I didn't think much about whether I really understood them or not, even when I was playing with Roy Nathanson in duo—and Roy is a real lover of standards and he always wanted to make collages with standards in them and yeah, I understood that, but it always left me a little cold.

And then we flash forward to 2016, which is the year I had a lot of piano students. Usually I only have one, maybe two, but this year I had a whole bunch, and they could all of course play better than me, but one thing is that I'm a student of Stride Piano and I really know Stride Piano. Better than I can play it, but that's another story. But that year I realized I could do two things: either I could keep going like some kind of guru, with my specialties and my skills, and where I didn't have skills, that was not so important, or I could learn something from these students. And I don't know exactly why I chose the latter, but it has something to do with something else that was happening at that time. I was getting frustrated—not with Free Improvisation itself, but with the way it was being practiced. I was often in these situations where the whole thing was one big pedal point, and if I had the temerity to ask, "Hey, maybe we could move the pedal point around a little bit?", I was told "I don't hear it that way" and that was too much for me. I decided to go back and work on harmony, but why jazz harmony and not classical harmony? That's a good question, but one I can't answer. Maybe it was just that jazz was more... but actually, I don't know why. Anyway, I have learned and practiced many standards since then. And I am still not sure whether I really love them or not.

Cecil

My original intention was just to cover the standards that Cecil Taylor recorded early on in his career. I really thought that Cecil came up with a very radical and new

approach to playing standards, and when he stopped doing that, pretty early on, it left the language in the lurch to some extent. Not that other people didn't do some very interesting things. I'm thinking particularly of Paul Bley and of course Ran Blake, but the kind of vocabulary that Cecil was engaging with in his standards playing was something really unique. And when he decided to no longer do it...I don't ever think it got to the point of fulfillment. Anyway, enough of the lecture. The point is: I didn't end up doing that. But it left its traces.

Ellington

I think a lot of people, if they think about me at all, are surprised that I've never engaged more with Ellington's music in a direct way. His music has been essential to me and probably the most influential music for me since I first heard him live on my 14th birthday, August 30, 1969. But again, this links to Cecil Taylor in a sense. Cecil's music is deeply marked by Ellington's influence, but in a cubistic, abstract, extremely personal way. There's no kind of good student/perfect transcription action going on, except, again, in a very early stage of his career. I want to say that this marked me, although I've never been as pure as Cecil. I play pretty often, not regularly but often, in a club in Brooklyn that I love called Barbès. Often, when I play there, I'm trying out some kind of new concept. I really worked out my Jelly Roll Morton project there - played it a whole bunch of times. Anyway, this year seemed like the year for me play a bunch of Ellington. It is the 50th anniversary of his passing, but that's not why - although it may have influenced me subconsciously. I played an Ellington program twice there and tonight is the third time.

A few more program notes

You Stepped out of a Dream is for Ran Blake. The Waller, Monk, and Morton pieces are shout-outs to some great people who shaped me (my concept of piano playing, but not only that..). *Oogenera* was written in memory of Lawrence Douglas "Butch" Morris. *For Phill Niblock* is a version of something I played at the recent Niblock Celebration Concert.

My pieces are on various recordings that you may, if you wish, search for on Bandcamp, etc.

If the first half looks like it's getting to be much longer than 45 minutes, something will be cut.

Thanks to all my present and past colleagues, especially Hankus and Eden.

Thanks to all my present and past students.

Thanks to all the people who keep things rolling here.

Thanks to Jaki Byard for everything he taught me—some of which I didn't really want to learn until now, and some of which I will probably never learn.

Thanks to Hank Jones for giving me a new wall to bang my head against.

Nacio Herb Brown, Gus Kahn	<i>You Stepped Out of a Dream</i>
Thomas “Fats” Waller, Andy Razaf	<i>Honeysuckle Rose</i>
Anthony Coleman	<i>Catenary Oath</i>
Anthony Coleman	<i>Verveine</i>
Thelonious Monk, Denzil Best	<i>Bemsha Swing</i>
Anthony Coleman	<i>For Phill Niblock</i>
Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton	<i>Mr. Jelly Lord</i>
Willard Robinson, Larry Conley	<i>A Cottage for Sale</i>
Anthony Coleman	<i>Oogenera</i>

Two Minute Break for T Shirt Change

The (slightly attenuated) Ellington Set

All music by Duke Ellington with collaborators listed in parentheses

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington

Birmingham Breakdown

Black Beauty

Ring dem Bells

(Paul Francis Webster, lyrics)

Brown Skin Gal with the Calico Gown

(Ben Carruthers, lyrics)

Black Butterfly

Take it Easy

Stompy Jones

(Billy Strayhorn; Johnny Mercer, lyrics)

Satin Doll

(Henry Nemo, lyrics)

Scrunch

(Juan Tizol; Louis Singer, lyrics)

Lost in Meditation/Meditation

Portrait of Bert Williams

(Henry James, Johnny Hodges;
Don George, lyrics)

I'm Beginning to See the Light

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert and ticketing information

NEC Philharmonia, Stefan Asbury, guest conductor

Smetana *Vyšehrad* from *Má Vlast*; Tania León *Pasajes*;

Shostakovich *Symphony No. 11, "The Year 1905"*

Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Jazz Residency Concert: Theo Bleckmann, composer, singer

NEC students, in collaboration with Theo Bleckmann, perform works by Ives,

Sylvester, Bleckmann, and Lennon/McCartney

Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Faculty Recital: Minsoo Sohn, piano

Bach *Prelude and Fughetta in G Major, BWV 902*; *Goldberg Variations*

Thursday, October 31, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

First Monday at Jordan Hall, Laurence Lesser, artistic director - 40th season

Bach *Trio Sonata in G Major, BWV 1039*; *Clarke Piano Trio (1922)*;

Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht*

Monday, November 4, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Philharmonia, Hugh Wolff, conductor

Lee *Sukkot Through Orion's Nebula*; Schumann *Piano Concerto in A Minor, op. 54*,

Song Hyeon Kim, piano; Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 2 "Ukrainian"*

Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Contemporary Musical Arts Dept, Eden MacAdam-Somer, curator

Barn Dance

Sunday, November 10, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Chamber Orchestra, Donald Palma, artistic director

Crawford Seeger *Andante for Strings*; Haydn *Symphony No. 44*; Ives *Symphony No. 3*

Monday, November 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Contemporary Musical Arts Dept, Eden MacAdam-Somer, curator

"I, Too, Sing America: Ruth Crawford Seeger and Other Untold Stories of America"

special guest Raven Chacon - Diné composer, musician and artist

Chacon *American Ledger No. 1*; *Malek I, Too* (commissioned work)

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

–continued

Song and Verse, Brett Hodgdon, curator

Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Symphony, David Loebel, conductor

Dvořák *Symphony No. 9 “From the New World”*; Ives *Symphony No. 2*

Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Sonata Night 53, Pei-Shan Lee, director

Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., Burnes Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Jazz Studies and Song Lab

“Ives in Song”

Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

NEC Opera: Musto “Later the Same Evening”

NEC opera students are joined by members of NEC Philharmonia under the direction of Robert Tweten; Joshua Major is the stage director

Thursday & Friday, November 14 & 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.;

Saturday, November 16, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

Crawford Seeger/Ives Festival

“An Evening of Chamber Music”

Ives *Third Violin Sonata* - Donald Weilerstein, violin; Vivian Hornik Weilerstein, piano; Crawford Seeger *Chant, 1930* - NEC Chamber Singers, Erica J. Washburn, conductor; Agócs *Sun and Shield* (US premiere), Melissa Reardon, viola; Katherine Balch *different gravities*; Ives *Piano Trio*, Trio Eris (NEC Piano Trio in Residence)

Friday, November 15, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall

Tuesday Night New Music

New music by NEC student composers, performed by their peers

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Liederabend LXXIV, JJ Penna, curator

Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall

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Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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