



Arthur Houle, Founder & Artistic Director
Evelyn Billberg, Project Director
Luke Rackers, Wash Park Center coordinator and founder, Abundant Silence
 www.pianofestival.org

Judges & Director Program
Wash Park Center for Music and Arts
400 S Williams St., Denver, CO

Friday, June 10, 2016
7:00 P.M.

Suggested donation: \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors & \$5 for students

Chopin Improvisations

Luke Gillespie

Variations sérieuses, Op. 54 in D Minor (1841).....Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
 Spontaneous Improvisation on a Random Theme from the Audience.....John Salmon (b. 1954)

John Salmon

Impressions on Color (publ. 2013).....Kevin R. Olson (b. 1971)
 i. Impressions on Red
 ii. Impressions on Green
 iii. Impressions on Blue
 iv. Impressions on Indigo
 v. Impressions on Yellow

Kevin Olson

Intermission

Jazz Fantasy (1976, with later revisions).....Arthur Houle (b. 1955)

Arthur Houle

Autumn Leaves (1945).....Joseph Kosma (1905-1969)

Luke Gillespie and John Salmon

Fughetta on 'Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?'.....John Salmon
 Buckaroo Blues (2004; from *Cowboy Jazz II*).....Arthur Houle

Arthur Houle and John Salmon

Salmon Is A Jumpin'!.....John Salmon

John Salmon, Luke Gillespie, Kevin Olson and Arthur Houle

Program Notes

*Adapted from online sources

* For Kevin Olson, colors suggest specific moods and emotions: red is energetic; orange is joyful; blue is peaceful; yellow is happy; green is balanced; indigo is intuitive; and violet is inspirational. **Impressions on Color** is an imaginative collection in a modern improvisational style that includes three titles that were chosen as NFMC 2014-2016 selections.

* Mendelssohn's **Variations sérieuses, Op. 54** consists of a theme in D minor with 17 variations. It was written as part of a campaign to raise funds for the erection of a large bronze statue of Ludwig van Beethoven in his home town of Bonn. The publisher Pietro Mecchetti asked Mendelssohn to contribute to a 'Beethoven Album', published in January 1842, which also included pieces by Liszt, Chopin, Moscheles and others, of which the proceeds would go to the Monument. (Schumann's *Fantasie in C* was the final result of a work originally intended for the same purpose). Mendelssohn is known to have written three sets of piano variations, but only this one was published during his lifetime. Many of the variations require a virtuoso technique. Mendelssohn's good friend Ignaz Moscheles stated "I play the Variations sérieuses again and again, each time I enjoy the beauty again." Ferruccio Busoni also liked the work very much. Many pianists have recorded it, including Vladimir Horowitz, Sviatoslav Richter, Rena Kyriakou, Vladimir Sofronitsky and Murray Perahia.

Houle's **Jazz Fantasy** was written at the age of 21. It was one of two selections that took First Prize in a New England Conservatory Pi Kappa Lambda Scholarship Competition. Like so many so-called "fantasies" in the classical repertory, its taut construction and thematic unity belie the feeling of spontaneity it engenders. Listen for the recurring boogie-woogie and walking bass lines. Don't try to figure out what key it's in – you'll just hurt yourself. It has more keys than a locksmith. It could have been subtitled "Modulations Gone Wild!"

* **Autumn Leaves** is a much-recorded popular song. Originally it was a 1945 French song, "Les feuilles mortes" (literally "The Dead Leaves"), with music by Hungarian-French composer Joseph Kosma and lyrics by poet Jacques Prévert. The Hungarian title is "Hulló levelek" (Falling Leaves). Yves Montand (with Irène Joachim) introduced "Les feuilles mortes" in the film *Les Portes de la nuit* (1946). The American songwriter Johnny Mercer wrote English lyrics in 1947, and Jo Stafford was among the first to perform this version. *Autumn Leaves* became a pop standard and a jazz standard in both languages, both as an instrumental and with singers.

Fughetta on 'Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?' is as much a response to Dave Brubeck's fugal treatment of E. Y. "Yip" Harburg's and Jay Gorney's well-known 1931 Depression-era song, as to the original *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?*. Dr. Salmon's piece does borrow harmonies from the Harburg/Gorney song and the melody appears briefly (about three minutes in), but his rendition is cast in Brubeck's distinctively imitative counterpoint.

Houle scored the original version of **Buckaroo Blues** for piano and fender bass in 1975, with a much different bass line for both instruments. This newer 2004 version is fondly dedicated to a former student, Jason Buckalew, whose last name conjured up the image of a buckaroo, or cowboy, who embraces the cowboy life with a carefree nonchalance borne of experience, contentment and unassuming confidence. The piece is written for solo piano, but Houle cajoled Salmon into improvising on this E-flat blues tune.

Salmon Is A-Jumpin' would have been grammatically incorrect if referring to the fish. But, as an autobiographical statement, it is correct, especially when Salmon gets in a B-flat blues swinging mood! This fun piece is written for two pianists, but Drs. Gillespie and Olson will courageously jump into the fray for this partly-scripted, partly-spontaneous rousing closer. (Any improvisations that smell "fishy" are purely intentional!)

Biographies

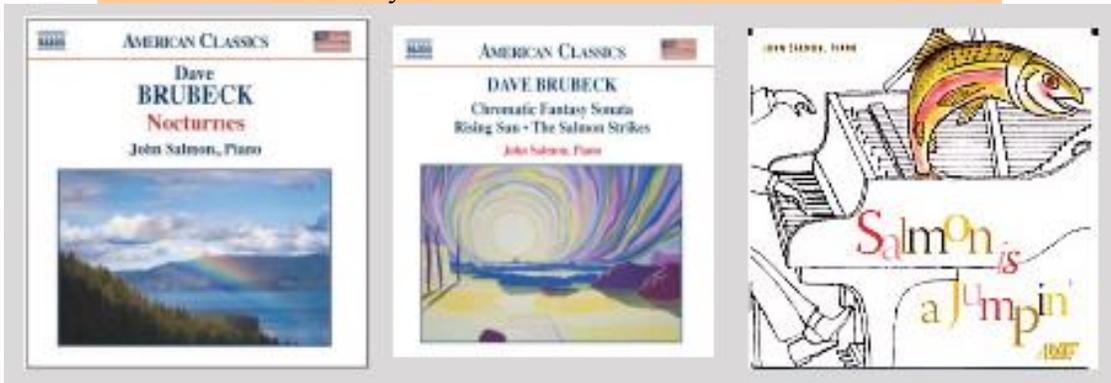
[Kevin R. Olson](#) is an active pianist, composer, and member of the piano faculty at Utah State University, where he teaches piano literature, pedagogy, and accompanying courses. In addition to his collegiate teaching responsibilities, Kevin directs the Utah State University Youth Conservatory, which provides weekly group and private piano instruction to more than 200 pre-college community students. The National Association of Schools of Music has recently recognized the Conservatory as a model for pre-college piano instruction programs. Before teaching at Utah State, he was on the faculty at Elmhurst College near Chicago and Humboldt State University in northern California. A native of Utah, Kevin began composing at age five. When he was twelve, his composition, *An American Trainride*, received the Overall First Prize at the 1983 National PTA Convention at Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since then he has been a Composer in Residence at the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and has written music commissioned and performed by groups such as the American Piano Quartet, Chicago a cappella, the Rich Matteson Jazz Festival, Music Teachers National Association, and several piano teacher associations around the country. Kevin maintains a large piano studio, teaching students of a variety of ages and abilities. Many of the needs of his own piano students have inspired more than 100 books and solos published by the FJH Music Company, which he joined as a writer in 1994.

An active performer of jazz and classical piano music, [Luke Gillespie](#) is the recipient of numerous awards, including best performance from the *Indianapolis Star* in 1993, the 1990 Copland Piano Concerto Competition at Indiana University, and the 1994 Indianapolis Jazz Festival Competition. He has recorded with the Arts Center Jazz Collective, David Baker, Bruce Bransby, Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra, James Campbell, Steve Davis (drums), Everett Greene, Sylvia McNair, Dan Perantoni, Eugene Rousseau, Dominic Spera, Wanda Stafford, and Tom Walsh (with whom he toured Europe in May 2002-03, Japan in May 2004-05, and China in May 2009). He has performed with Jamey Aebersold, Eric Alexander, Ron Blake, Benny Golson, Wycliffe Gordon, Bunky Green, Jimmy Heath, Steve Houghton, Ingrid Jensen, Kelley Johnson, Pat LaBarbera, David Liebman, James Moody, Ed Neumeister, Chris Potter, Rufus Reid, Arturo Sandoval, Jim Snidero, Rodney Whitaker, the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and Pablo Ziegler. Gillespie is included in Jazz Play-Along, Vol. 76, 'How to Learn Tunes,' by David Baker (Aebersold). He has published articles on the aesthetics of jazz and classical music as well as a book, *Stylistic II/V7/I Voicings for Keyboardists* (Aebersold, 2000, second printing, 2006), endorsed by Danilo Perez, Geoff Keezer, David Liebman, David Baker, and Frank Mantooth. His solo jazz piano CD, *Footprints*, was released on RIAX records (2003), and he has released two trio CDs, *Live at the Station* (2010) and the new *Third Base Line* (2011), both on Watercourse records.

[John Salmon](#) has distinguished himself on four continents as both a classical and jazz pianist. He has given recitals for the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago, the Discovery Series in Indianapolis, the Van Cliburn Foundation in Fort Worth, and a Busoni Gala at Symphony Space in New York. His recordings are frequently broadcast on radio stations in the U.S., including WNYC in New York, WFMT in Chicago, and KUSC in Los Angeles, and on the national radio stations of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Ukraine. He is particularly noted for his recordings and editions of the music of Dave Brubeck. His latest publication is *Add On Bach*, called "playful, creative, and unique" (Clavier Companion, March/April 2015). Salmon is Professor of Piano at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is the only person to serve as a judge for every Festival for Creative Pianists event since it was founded in 2001.

[Arthur Houle](#) is Professor of Music & Director of Keyboard Studies at Colorado Mesa University as well as founder & director of the Festival for Creative Pianists. Dr. Houle was the only pianist to be invited to perform twice, to critical acclaim, in the 1995 International Chopin Music Festival. He gives coast-to-coast lecture/recitals and master classes and also presents often for professional conferences. A critically acclaimed performer and recipient of a 2011 MTNA Fellow Award, Houle has written for numerous periodicals. In 2008, Hal Leonard Corp. published Houle's *Cowboy Jazz*. Houle's new publisher, Abundant Silence, is issuing *Cowboy Jazz II* and other original compositions/[arrangements](#) for students and serious concert pianists. A private teacher since 1968, Houle taught previously at New England Conservatory, Boston Conservatory, the College of Idaho, and the Universities of Iowa, North Dakota and Texas-Austin.

CDs by John Salmon* can be found online:
www.albanyrecords.com www.naxos.com



*That's Dr. Salmon at the piano – no, not the fish...that other creature, *sitting* at the piano ☺

We need and appreciate your generous support!
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👉 *Festival participants: Please don't forget to sign in 👈 before and after this program!*

Upcoming:

- **Celebration of Students' Best Recital 🙌 & Awards Ceremony**
Tomorrow evening, Sat., June 11, 5:00 P.M., same location (\$15/\$10/\$5).