



Ken Aldcroft's Convergence Ensemble



Ken Aldcroft- guitar, composition, Wes Neal- double bass, Nicole Rampersaud- trumpet, Evan Shaw- alto saxophone, Scott Thomson- trombone, Joe Sorbara- drums/percussion

This six-piece group, featuring the instrumentation of a fairly conventional modern jazz ensemble, is the primary conduit for Ken Aldcroft's compositional and conceptual work. In performance, a set list serves less as a road map for the execution of Ken's varied and dynamic pieces and more like a menu of possibilities; the group's members can, individually or collectively, spontaneously arrange any of the available material. Employing a system of aural and gestural cues, the group playfully and creatively reshapes each piece in the spirit of free improvisation, the approach that underpins the ensemble's composite musical experience. The current personnel of the **Convergence Ensemble** is the result of the amalgamation of various Aldcroft ensembles of and, with numerous recordings and national tours under their collective belt, the sextet is a thoroughly cohesive musical unit. Each player is as dynamic a soloist on his or her instrument as they come not only in Toronto's lively creative music scene, but Canada-wide as well.

Originally from New Brunswick, bassist **Wes Neal** studied at St. Francis Xavier University and the New England Conservatory prior to settling in Toronto, where he is in demand in musical contexts in multiple genres. He combines sympathetic and rock-solid accompaniment on song-based material with fabulous improvising instincts that put his technical command of the bass to compellingly creative use. Apart from several of Ken Aldcroft's projects, Wes has been part of several key groups in Toronto's creative music scene: Out of Order, Marcel Aucoin, The Rent, Shaw/Rampersaud/Neal/Martin, and the AIMToronto Orchestra.

Nicole Rampersaud is a trumpeter from Toronto who, since returning from Boston, where she completed her Master's Degree at the New England Conservatory, has become heavily involved in Toronto's improvised music scene. Her playing can switch facilely from harmonically rich lyricism to playful aggression on a dime, and her improvising instincts make her an ideal partner (or foil) in the context of polyphonic improvisation that the Convergence Ensemble provides. Nicole is an original member of the AIMToronto Orchestra, and has contributed to the group's collaborations with Anthony Braxton and Malcolm Goldstein, and is currently co-curator of the weekly Leftover Daylight Series.

Alto saxophonist **Evan Shaw** is a part of several vital Toronto ensembles, including Geordie Haley's Everytime Band, Other Foot First, Nilan Perera's Holyblueghost, the AIMToronto Orchestra, and several projects with Ken Aldcroft. He is versatile and hugely creative in both song-based and freely improvised contexts, and is capable of searing solos that place him in the top tier of creative improvisers in Canada. Piano Music, Evan's record of duets with drummer and producer, Jean Martin, on Barnyard Records "packs some serious wallop" according to Exclaim Magazine, where his playing is compared favourably to the great Jimmy Lyons.

Joe Sorbara is a highly inventive drummer and percussionist with a penchant for coaxing music out of practically anything. Joe's drumkit is regularly augmented with found and prepared material that ensures that the sounds at his ready disposal are practically orchestral in scope. He combines these skills with an extraordinary time-feel that makes him one of the most swinging drummers in Canada when the music demands it of him. Joe leads Other Foot First, a septet that is the primary outlet for his inventive compositions. Elsewhere, Joe plays in Nilan Perera's Holyblueghost, Ronda Rindone's Quorum, and the AIMToronto Orchestra. He is also a stalwart creative music organizer, a founding Board member of AIMToronto, and has been the co-curator of the Leftover Daylight Series since 2003.

Scott Thomson is a self-taught trombonist with a broad, colourful tone and an immense vocabulary of technical extensions that he contributes to groups like JOUST with John Oswald, Lori Freedman/Scott Thomson, Quorum, the Friendly Rich Show, and the AIMToronto Orchestra. A current priority is research for and leadership of The Rent, a terrific quintet devoted to repertory by Steve Lacy. He also runs Somewhere There, a nifty performance studio in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood where, in its first year, he presented 200 concerts of creative and experimental music, primarily by Toronto artists.



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