Stuart Saunders Smith: The Family Portraits
November 2 and 3, 2018, 7:30pm, Bliss Auditorium

“The best portraits of the past not only express the physical likeness but also carry the particular inner light of each subject. This series of portraits in sound began in 1991 and continues through the present. Portraits painted in sound are rare. My Family Portraits series has portraits of places and relatives. Each person is rare, individual, particular, so the drawing of personality is key.” – SSS
The premiere of Stuart Saunders Smith’s complete Family Portraits series, in celebration of his 70th birthday

With gratitude for his ongoing, invaluable support of The Hartt School Percussion Program, and for the recent donation of his papers to the University of Hartford Archives and Special Collections in the Harrison Libraries. The collection consists of his compositions, writings, recordings, and correspondence. The Archives preserves the history of the University through its records, and the personal papers of its community members. The archives maintain collections on many notable Hartt alumni and faculty members including Julius Hartt, Moshe Paranov, Ed Diemente, Arnold Franchetti, Gwyneth Walker, Thomas Putsche, and Ed Miller.

Jude Traxler is an experimental and conceptual artist living in New York City. Both as composer and percussionist, Jude constantly creates new works that sift a familiar soundscape of pan-diatomic chord progressions through beats that push one’s rhythmic constitution to the brink. With strict structures and rules, chance operations are controlled and every fleeting melody comes out as if distilled from sonic chaos.

Airi Yoshioka is Professor of Violin at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She performs worldwide, playing classical European music, new music, and music from non-Western countries. Her recording of Stuart Saunders Smith’s violin music was recently released on New World Records.

Janet Arms, a member of NY City Opera has performed and recorded with the NY Philharmonic, SF Ballet, Metropolitan Opera, St. Louis Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, ABT, & New York City Ballet. Solo appearances in the US and Europe with the NY Chamber Soloists, Pandora Duo; Solo performances in China; Active in commercial recording, and Broadway in NYC. Faculty member of The Hartt School, Montclair State University, and PRISMA Summer Academy.

Tucker Barney graduated from The Hartt School with a degree in trumpet performance in 2013. Since then he’s enjoyed his time freelancing in Connecticut and throughout New England. He can frequently be heard with many big bands in the region, at the Goodspeed Opera House and Playhouse on Park, and has performed with the Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, and Wallingford Symphonies.
Benjamin Toth, Professor of Percussion at The Hartt School, has performed, recorded, and taught in many countries, spanning six continents. Highlights of his performance credits include: Percussion Group Cincinnati, Jovan Percussion Projekt, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Goodspeed Opera House, Bushnell Theater, and the Jimmy Dorsey Band. He has collaborated with dozens of composers, including Herbert Brun, John Cage, David Macbride, Steve Reich, and Stuart Saunders Smith.

Kyle Adam Blair is an active pianist, vocal coach, and music director in the San Diego area, specializing in the performance of American contemporary music. As a soloist, Blair is set to release his debut album entitled Palm Sunday. The album consists of five solo piano works by Stuart Saunders Smith; one of which, the title track Palm Sunday, was commissioned by Blair in 2012.

Berndt Thurner is a leading classical vibraphone specialist from Vienna. He is the percussionist with the Face Ensemble, a new music group in Vienna. He is currently preparing the world premiere of Stuart Saunders Smith’s Night Suite, a vibraphone composition to be presented in five nights – Monday through Friday.

Lisa Cella is a champion of contemporary music, performing throughout the United States and abroad. She is Artistic Director of San Diego New Music and a founding member of its resident ensemble NOISE, performing the works of young composers. She is co-artistic director of NOISE’s annual festival of modern music entitled soundON. Lisa co-founded the flute collective inHALE, a group dedicated to developing challenging and experimental repertoire for two and three flutes.

Salvatore Macchia enjoys an active career as both a composer and bassist. He is a professor of both composition and contrabass at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Concert #1 – Friday, November 2, 7:30PM

Family Portraits: Our Home (2016)
Tiffany Du Mouchelle, voice; Steve Solook, vibraphone

Family Portraits: Sylvia (wife) (1991)
Drew Krause, piano

Family Portraits: Ivy (grandmother) (1991)
Drew Krause, piano

Family Portraits: Earle (father) (1991)
Drew Krause, piano

Benjamin Toth, percussion, voice

Family Portraits: Self (1997)
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

– intermission –

Family Portraits: Ligeia (daughter) (2001)
Tiffany Du Mouchelle, voice; Kyle Adam Blair, piano

Berndt Thurner, vibraphone

Lisa Cella, alto flute; Christopher Calderon and Braeden Travers, vibraphone

* world premiere
Concert #2 – Saturday, November 3, 7:30PM

Family Portraits: Mom and Dad Together (1996)
Salvatore Macchia, double bass, voice

Family Portraits: Erika (daughter) (2005)
Jude Traxler, vibraphone; Airi Yoshioka, violin

Family Portraits: Brenda (first-cousin) (1994)
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

Jude Traxler, vibraphone; Airi Yoshioka, violin

– intermission –

Family Portraits: Cubba (grandfather) (1996)
Janet Arms, flute; Tucker Barney, trumpet;
Max Bieryl, Devon Cupo, Anthony Soscia, Hannah Sternberg, and
Benjamin Toth, percussion

*Family Portraits: Sylvia at 70 (2018)
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

*Self at 70 (2018)
Lisa Cella, flute; Salvatore Macchia, double bass; Jude Traxler, drum set

I got to know David Macbride, Ed Diemente, and Al Lepak in the late 1960s to early 70s as a percussion performance major at the Hartt School of Music. My minor was in composition. Al was a musician of immense talent. He loved to have someone drop a coin and tell us what the pitch was. Al never missed. His lessons were comprehensive and inspiring.

My major interest was improvisation – both jazz and free – and making and performing new music. My composition class was just Dave Macbride, me, and our teacher Ed Diemente. We spent most of the time investigating the relationship between Western music notation and the psychology of performance. We worked with guided improvisation, graphic scores, game strategies, mobile form, and other related concerns. Also, Ed, Dave and I directed our own new music ensemble, where we workshops our latest scores. It was our laboratory. We convinced the Hartt School to give us credit for our work in the ensemble, and they did without a problem.

The Hartt School of Music not only provided an excellent foundation of the past, but also gave us a safe and supportive place for creating a future.

- Stuart Saunders Smith

Performer Biographies

Tiffany Du Mouchelle is a soprano with an electric stage presence and exceptional dramatic sensibility. She is fearless in exploring new and challenging repertoire for voice, including a vast array of musical styles in more than one hundred different languages and exploring the genres of classical, world, contemporary, cabaret, and theatrical works.

Stephen Solook is a new music specialist in percussion in the greater Buffalo area. Together with Tiffany Du Mouchelle he founded Aurora Borealis, a soprano and percussion duo, commissioning and performing new pieces for this combination.

Drew Krause is a composer and pianist based in New York City, where he teaches theory and composition at New York University. He has performed much of the modern piano repertoire including Stockhausen, Wolpe, and Finnissy. His compositional interests include algorithmic software development in Lisp and Haskell.