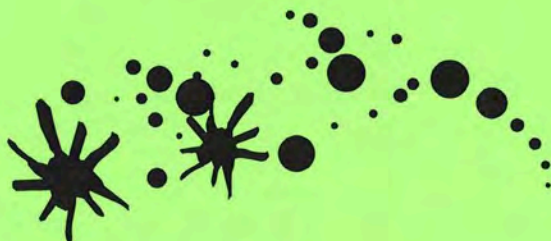


University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Department of Music and Theatre Arts

*presents*

## **JAZZ ENSEMBLE II**

**ROBERT BACA, DIRECTOR**



*AMERICAN PREMIERE*

OF

**“SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA SUITE”**

**WRITTEN BY GEOFFREY KEEZER**

**FOR THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

**Thursday, April 20, 2006**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Gantner Concert Hall**

**Haas Fine Arts Center**



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*Excellence. Our Measure, Our Motto, Our Goal.*

## PROGRAM

Body and Soul ..... Bob Florence  
*Steve Hobert, Piano*  
*Adam Koble, Trombone*  
*Jelena Radovanovic, Alto Saxophone*

Jovian Comets ..... Mark Buselli  
*Featuring Steve Hobert, Piano*

Four ..... Miles Davis  
*Arr. Jamey Simmons*  
*Steve Hobert, Piano*  
*John Dehaven, Trumpet*

There's the Rub ..... Josh Nims, Trumpet  
*Brad March, Trombone*  
*Dan Calderon, Tenor Saxophone*  
*Brian Plank, Bass*

## INTERMISSION

Southeast Alaska Suite ..... Geoffrey Keezer

I. Aboard the Karlynn  
*Ben-Herpel Dobay, Tenor Saxophone*

II. Memory, Frozen Blue  
*David Fischer, Soprano Saxophone*

III. Bowline  
*Keith Karns, Trumpet*

IV. Na Kohola (The Whales)  
*Steve Hobert, Piano*

V. Port Alexander Moon  
*Steve Hobert, Piano*

VI. Captain Jon  
*Adam Koble, Trombone*

VII. Safe Haven

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Southeast Alaska Suite by Geoffrey Keezer

When I was invited to compose an extended work for the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, I knew right away that the thematic material would have to come from something in my own recent life experience. In August of 2004, two dear friends, newly married, invited my partner and I on a week-long boat excursion in Southeast Alaska, from the towns of Petersburg to Sitka. The mobility of our small craft and the navigational expertise of our captain allowed us to visit some wonderfully remote places, untouched by humans. Trying to be mindful of our impact on the pristine environment, we fished for salmon and halibut, hiked, swam in alpine lakes and hot springs, encountered whales, avoided bears, and generally took in some of the most spectacular scenery on Earth. It was a trip I'll never forget - and now, thankfully, I've been given the opportunity to share it with others through music. To be in the presence of such immense natural beauty is very humbling, and I can't begin to attempt to capture it all with my own limited musical language - indeed, I can only portray my personal impressions and feelings. And even these six musical snapshots are a very small part of it. I offer you, then, my "Southeast Alaska Suite."

#### I. "Aboard the Karlynn"

The name of our boat. On the first day out, the weather was rainy but became calm later, and the water was still as glass, unusual for any time of year in this area. This opening movement establishes thematic material that recurs in different forms throughout the Suite. The time signature alternates between 7/4 and 4/4. Repeating, sustained piano octaves represent the still water, in relationship to the shifting harmonies of the horns, the ever-changing scenery. The tenor saxophone is the featured soloist.

#### II. "Memory, Frozen Blue"

One of the most spectacular sights in Alaska is the glaciers. Inconceivably ancient, they flow slowly and steadily towards the ocean, breaking off into icebergs. Sadly, the glaciers are melting faster and faster with the rising global temperatures. Someday soon they may be gone completely, and with them, their memories of countless millennia. The "Blue" in the title has a double meaning: the actual color of the ice, and the sadness I felt thinking of their imminent fate. While not specifically in blues form, the improvised middle section contains stylistic elements of blues and funk. The soprano saxophone is featured throughout.

#### III. "Bowline"

The name of a simple knot used to tie the boat to a dock. The pun is intentional, as the melody line is shared by the arco (bowed) bass and the bass clarinet. The bass line/melody is then restated in halftime under the trumpet solo. The influence of Duke Ellington and Thad Jones on my writing is readily acknowledged in this piece.

#### IV. "Na Kohola (The Whales)"

On our second day out, again with perfectly clear and still water, we encountered a large pod of humpback whales, at least 30 or more. While we did our best to maintain a respectful distance, they literally surrounded our boat, breaching, spy-hopping, diving and inspecting us. Twice we tried to leave, and the whales cut us off, swimming straight at us (to our delight!), before eventually moving on. They are the gentlest and wisest of creatures. I chose the Hawaiian word for the whales, Na Kohola, because many of the whales we met were the Hawaiian humpbacks that migrate thousands of miles every summer to Alaska to feed, returning to Hawaii in the winter to give birth. The opening melody, played by Fender Rhodes piano, is composed in the style of Hawaiian "slack key" guitar, specifically in the manner of Keola Beamer, a great guitarist with whom I have been collaborating recently. This is followed by an ensemble passage in tempo with multiple entrances zigzagging all over, appearing and disappearing. Next comes a group improvisation featuring the piano, flugelhorn, tenor saxophone, and trombone. Another ensemble passage winds down eventually into the opening guitar-like theme. The entire band gets to be the "pod," coming up for air every now and then!

#### V. "Port Alexander Moon"

We spent one night at this tiny, remote port near the southern tip of Baranof Island. The sky was clear with a bright, full moon overhead. We went for a short walk on the rocky beach, the only sound the soft lapping of the waves on the rocks. The overall feeling was contemplative, sublime, and quite romantic. This movement features the piano trio.

#### VI. "Captain Jon"

Our fearless captain, who also happens to be an excellent drummer. This is the only movement of the Suite that was actually composed on the boat, at least the first eight bars of the melody. I had brought a small portable keyboard on board, with the noble intent of practicing - but for the most part, there was too much to see, fish to catch, anchors to pull up... At one point on our journey, the boat had engine trouble and Captain Jon crawled down in the engine room, switched some fuel lines around, rewired some things, and got us back underway in no time, all the while reassuring us that it was "no big deal." I found out much later, after we returned home, just how dangerous our situation actually was. We were only a mile from shore, and had we not been able to start our engine, the tide would have pulled us onto the rocks in a hour's time.

#### VII. "Safe Haven"

Our part of the journey ended in the port town of Sitka, after some rough weather and 15 foot rolling waves on the open ocean. I found out I don't get seasick (the girls weren't so lucky...) When we arrived in our berth, we saw the most beautiful rainbow ever, a perfect unbroken arch spanning half the sky. This short concluding movement is a reworking of the opening theme, with an unabashedly happy ending.

## Geoffrey Keezer, composer

Geoffrey has been immersed in music his entire life. Born into a musical family in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, with both parents teaching music, he began studying piano at the age of three. In 1989, at the age of 18, after completing his first year at the Berklee School of Music, Geoffrey was faced with two job offers. One with Miles Davis, the other with Art Blakey. He chose the latter, and his career was off to a fast start.

Geoffrey has worked with virtually all of the living legends of jazz and has appeared on countless recordings both as a leader and as an accompanist. His professional career has spanned many projects and genres. In 1992, for example, Geoffrey performed Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra under the direction of John Mauceri. In addition to his 11 solo releases and constant touring, Geoffrey has also been commissioned to compose several pieces for public performance, including Palm Reader for the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, Listen Look for the Saint Joseph Ballet, Variables, a set of variations for piano and string quartet written especially for the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego, and Southeast Alaska Suite, commissioned by the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra.

Geoffrey continues to work in partnership with world class musicians from all genres. His 1998 release, Turn Up the Quiet, featured Grammy winning vocalist, Diana Krall along with Joshua Redman and Christian McBride. His partnership with world renowned classical artist, Barbara Hendricks as bandleader/arranger produced It's Wonderful — Tribute to George Gershwin with subsequent touring in Europe and Japan. His two releases in 2003, Falling Up and Sublime: Honoring the Music of Hank Jones, were both collaborative efforts. Sublime is an ambitious set of duets with Kenny Barron, Chick Corea, Benny Green and Mulgrew Miller. Falling Up features several pieces where Geoffrey worked in tandem with master Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist, Keola Beamer.

Geoffrey Keezer continues to be in high demand, as an artist: performing, composing and arranging. He works worldwide doing commissioned works, recording projects, performances and cross cultural collaborations.

Praise for Geoffrey's artistry comes from all sides. Time magazine wrote that Geoffrey possesses "a refreshingly open-eared sensibility in the modern manner, and he has more than enough virtuosity and sheer musical wit and intelligence to weave all of his apparently disparate strands of influence into an original and compelling whole." His peers speak glowingly about his artistry as well. Hawaiian guitarist, Keola Beamer reflects "Geoffrey has a beautiful, spatial style that I immediately fell in love with the first time we played together in San Francisco." His fans also echo their admiration for his artistry. Surf to any online CD shop and read the glowing reviews of his releases submitted by purchasers worldwide.

## Jazz Ensemble II Personnel

### Saxophone

Jelena Radovanovic  
David Fischer  
Dan Calderon  
Luke Dallagrana  
Jennifer Tinberg

### Trombone

Brad March  
Adam Koble  
Corey Van Sickle  
Justin Verhasselt

### Trumpet

John Dehaven  
Keith Karns  
Ryan Cavis  
Josh Nims  
Heather Patton

### Rhythm

Matt Brogden, guitar  
Steve Hobert, piano  
Brian Plank, bass  
Josh Kimball, drums  
Joshua Vaughn, drums  
Ben Lester, drums

## Upcoming Jazz Concerts at UW-Eau Claire

- April 25 Jazz Ensemble III: "The Age of Steam" - A suite in dedication to the music of Gerry Mulligan
- May 3 Jazz Ensemble IV/V: "Swinging Through the Ages" - Authentic Lunceford, Ellington, Basie, Dorsey Brothers and more
- May 4 Jazz Ensemble I: "Heart & Soul" - Tribute to Hoagy Carmichael featuring vocals by Robert Knight and Mitra Sadeghpour and performances by the Concert Dance Company



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