

SHORT BIOGRAPHY (110 Words)

Praised for his “exceptional control and musicality” (Fresno Music Critic) and “innovation” (New University Newspaper), saxophonist Michael Straus has firmly established himself as an important new voice for contemporary and experimental music. He is founder of the multimedia performance and commissioning project *What are you looking at?*, and regularly performs with the chamber ensembles quux, Portals of Distortion and EAR Duo. Michael is the recipient of a 2010 American-Scandinavian Foundation Creative Arts Grant (Oslo) and a 2008 – 2009 J. William Fulbright Fellowship (Amsterdam). He holds M.M. degrees in saxophone performance and computer music from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University and a B.M. from Louisiana State University.

LONG BIOGRAPHY (712 Words)

Praised for his “exceptional control and musicality” (Fresno Music Critic) and “innovation” (New University Newspaper), saxophonist Michael Straus has firmly established himself as an important new voice for contemporary and experimental music. He is responsible for the commissioning and premieres of over seventy compositions and can regularly be seen collaborating with composers, visual artists, robots, turntablists, conductors, dancers and instrumentalists around the world. He has been featured artist at music festivals internationally with recent performances at Ireland's Sonorities Festival of Contemporary Music, Detroit Symphony Orchestra's 8 Days in June Festival, Minneapolis' Spark Festival of Electronic Music & Art, Berlin's Universität der Künste, Italy's Festival Internazionale del Sassofono, Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center, Paris' Eglise Saint-Merri and Amsterdam's World Minimal Music Festival.

In 2006 Michael founded *What are you looking at?*, a multimedia performance and commissioning project aimed at the creation of new works for saxophone, electronic media and film. He has performed solo concerts of this repertoire at Stanford University's CCRMA, Dartmouth College's Vaughan Recital Series, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the University of California at Berkeley's CNMAT, as well as dozens of bars, art galleries, bookstores and warehouses throughout the U.S. and Europe. Aside from live performances of this repertoire, the compositions in this series have been screened internationally at film festivals in New York City, Norway, Toronto, California, Australia and Boston. To date, this project has included collaborations with composers Matthew Burtner, Per Bloland, Ted Coffey, Robert Coburn, J. Anthony Allen and visual artists Scott Draves, Mike Houston and Arie Stavchansky.

Michael is currently saxophonist with the EAR (Electro Acoustic Reed) Duo. Co-founded in 2005 with bassoonist Dana Jessen, the duo focuses on the performance of new, improvised and experimental electroacoustic music. Recently praised by the Boston Music Intelligencer for performing “with conviction and authenticity,” the duo can regularly be seen presenting a variety of works ranging from new commissions to original arrangements of works by Terry Riley, Steve Reich and James Tenney. Highlights from the EAR Duo's recent seasons include performances at the University of Virginia's CCT Forum on Electroacoustic Improvisation, Belgium's Logos Foundation Tetrahedron Concert Series, Chicago's Heaven Gallery of Art, U.K's Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Portugal's Musicbox Club and Amsterdam's Karnatic Lab. The duo is currently engaged in commissioning a series of interactive wind, string and percussion robots from EMMI (Expressive Machines Musical Instruments) for touring next concert season.

An advocate of duo ensembles, Michael has performed alongside Matthew Burtner at New York City's The Stone, Brooklyn's now defunct Monkeytown, Richmond's 3rd Practice Music Festival and Charlottesville's Technosonics Festival. As one half of the *ant's elbow duo project*, he commissioned and toured a set of twenty-five new works for two saxophones and electronics under one hundred seconds in length. Together with saxophonist Griffin Campbell, the duo gave concerts and master classes throughout the state of Louisiana.

Michael's acoustic chamber music efforts lie in the American saxophone quartet, quux. With fellow members Dale Underwood, Sheri Oyan and Ed Fraedrich, quux recently presented a tour of the east coast culminating in their New York City debut at St. Peter's Church. As an improviser, he has performed at San Francisco's Luggage Store, Brooklyn's IBeam, Amsterdam's Pickup Club, Baltimore's High Jinx! at High Zero, Utrecht's U-EX(perimental) Series and Den Haag's Loos Foundation.

Michael has presented guest lectures to students at Yale University, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, University of Miami, Franklin Pierce University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Florida International University on topics ranging from contemporary saxophone techniques to the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations.

He is the recipient of a 2010 American-Scandinavian Foundation Creative Arts Grant (Oslo) and the 2008 – 2009 J. William Fulbright Fellowship (Amsterdam) where he became the first American to study with the Dutch saxophonist Ties Mellema. He has received numerous honors including an American Composers Forum Encore Grant, Enrico Di Giovanni Scholarship, two Peabody Career Development Grants and a Helen Gold and Derryl Haymon Scholarship. His recordings as a performer, composer and improviser can be heard on SEAMUS, New Tertian and The Walter's Art Museum record labels along with forthcoming releases on Innova Records and Portugal's Ivcenti 14-bis. Michael holds M.M. degrees in saxophone performance and computer music from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University and a B.M. from Louisiana State University.