



## The XYLOPHOLKS visit MUSIC BASTI

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

The XYLOPHOLKS are a dynamic group of musicians who mostly play novelty ragtime music from the 1920's (featuring the xylophone!). They do so while wearing furry animal costumes. The XYLOPHOLKS wish to make people happy and perhaps even dance.



Picked as the Village Voice's "Best Buskers dressed as Animals" the Xylopholks have rapidly become a familiar sight and sound to many around the world. The Xylopholks are led by Jonathan Singer (xylophone) with Carmen Staaf (piano), and Bridget Kearney (bass). They play novelty ragtime repertoire of the 1920's dressed in fuzzy animal costumes. Since the group's formation in 2008 they have appeared on the streets of New York, music festivals, universities, birthday parties, and even a memorial! The Xylopholks have been featured on the front pages of [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and [CNN.com](http://CNN.com), as well as [MTV.com](http://MTV.com)'s Daily Detox, and [NY Magazine](http://NY Magazine)'s fashion tips. They are presently gearing up for a month-long tour of the Indian subcontinent. This will be the first tour of its kind to introduce the xylophone to audiences all over India. The Xylopholks are on a mission to bring smiles to faces.

### Workshop Schedule

**11.30am: "Khushi" Home for girls, Aman Biradari** [Tekhand Village, Okhla Industrial Area Phase 1, near the Volkswagen and Honda showrooms]

**330pm: Uma Pandey "Sarai" Home for boys, Aman Biradari** [Shastri Nagar, accessible by metro, red line towards Rithala]

**To attend, contact Ishani:**

**9871521275/volunteer.musicbasti@gmail.com**

*"... nothing could have prepared me for the uncontrollable smile that forced itself onto my face that night. They are an artistic assault on the sensory order of nitrous oxide. I don't care that they'll never win a Grammy or show up on MTV or probably even record a full album. As a random burst of amiable strangeness, so particular to New York City, they are perfection..." - The Morning News*

## **ABOUT the xylopholks**

### **Carmen Staaf – Jazz pianist/educator**

Winner of the 2009 Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Pianist Competition, Carmen Staaf has performed throughout the United States as well as at the Festa do Jazz do Teatro Sao Luiz in Lisbon, Portugal, the Panama Jazz Festival, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland and the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Netherlands, and at the Concurso de Jovenes Jazzistas (Young Jazz Musicians Contest) in Havana, Cuba. As the winner of the 2009 competition, Carmen will be a featured performer at the Kennedy Center during the 2010 Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival, Mary Lou Williams' centennial celebration. As a winner of the 2004 IAJE Sisters in Jazz Competition, she performed at the 2005 IAJE Conference in Long Beach, California and the Mary Lou Williams Festival. In 2004, Carmen was selected to attend the International Music Council's International Music Day celebrations in Paris, France, and performed at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago as a participant in the prestigious Steans Institute for Young Artists.

Ms. Staaf has worked with jazz luminaries including Eddie Gomez, Bob Brookmeyer, Rakalam Bob Moses and George Garzone. As an accordionist, she has performed with Lila Downs at Carnegie Hall and with Klezmatics members Frank London, Lorin Sklamberg and Alicia Svigals, as well as with Susan Watts and Elaine Hoffman Watts. She was the pianist in Malian kora master Balla Tounkara's afro-pop group and the pianist and accordionist in the New York-based New Jewish group Khevre. She can be heard on Khevre's debut album "Oyfn Sheydveg" and with the Staaf Quartet, which she co-leads, on its eponymous first release, as well as on Richie Barshay's album "Homework" (which features Herbie Hancock on piano). Carmen's compositions and arrangements have been performed by pianist Ran Blake and the Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra, as well as being featured on the Staaf Quartet recording. She was awarded a St Botolph Club Foundation Grant-in-Aid to record her 2008 album "Reflection", which was called "profoundly beautiful" and features young stars Austin McMahon, Jorge Roeder and Dan Blake. She performs with a variety of NYC groups including the Xylopholks and the Prana Trio (a creative improvisation ensemble that performs settings of Rumi and Hafiz).

Carmen taught in the piano department at Berklee College of Music in Boston for four years upon graduating from college. She studied at the New England Conservatory with Danilo Perez and Bob Brookmeyer and has immersed herself in many styles, building on a foundation of classical studies. She spent six months studying and performing in Cuba before college. While a student at the New England Conservatory, Carmen simultaneously completed a degree in anthropology at Tufts University, where she was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society, was a University Scholar, received the Anthropology Prize and graduated summa cum laude. Upon graduating from NEC, she received the George Whitefield Chadwick Award and

was nominated to the Pi Kappa Lambda Society. [www.carmenstaaf.com](http://www.carmenstaaf.com)

**Bridget Kearney** is a jazz, folk, bluegrass, rock and heavy metal acoustic bass player and songwriter living in Brooklyn, NY. Bridget plays in a lot of bands in New York and enjoys contributing to them with her bass playing, compositions and good vibes. Bridget is the bassist for Lake Street Dive, Cuddle Magic, bluegrass band Joy Kills Sorrow, jazz/rock piano trio Still Life, hammered-dulcimer pop-folk band Stickerbox, mascot-suit-wearing ragtime band The Xylopholks, psychedelic indie-rock band Manson Family Picnic, wikipedia-inspired educational band Books on Tape and the over-production inspired Shiny Tiny, among other things. She is a graduate of The New England Conservatory of Music and Tufts University and won the John Lennon Songwriting Contest in 2006 for "Sometimes When I'm Drunk and You're Wearing My Favorite Shirt." She enjoys classics of English literature, bodegas and roller blading and speaks Spanish and Arabic but not very well. She has also lived in Shanghai, China and Rabat, Morocco. [www.bridgetkearney.com](http://www.bridgetkearney.com)

**Jonathan Singer** is a multi-percussionist based in New York City. He is a graduate from the Interlochen Arts Academy, Berklee College of Music and Queens College. On a grant from Queens College, Singer spent the summer of 2007 in India doing an intensive study of mrudangam (South Indian drumming) with Erode Nagarajan. An active educator, Singer teaches at Queens College, CUNY, and Newark Public Schools. He has presented lecture-demonstration presentations at the Berklee College of Music, Queens College, University of Pennsylvania, The Boston Conservatory, University of Washington, and Queensborough Community College. As a marimba soloist, Singer has performed with the Blue Lake Festival Orchestra, Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra, and Detroit Symphony. He has premiered works written for him by Thomas Oboe Lee, Yohei Kurihara, and Paul Kerekes. Recent performance credits include an international tour with the Philharmonic of the Americas, performances with the San Francisco Ballet, Adrienne Cooper, Allison Carvalho, Marimolin, Thiago de Mello, Michael Winograd's Infection, Adam Rudolph's Go: Organic Orchestra, and the South Indian percussion group Akshara. Singer leads the Brooklyn-based furry novelty ragtime band, The Xylopholks, dressed up a skunk. He will spend the 2009-10 academic year in Chennai, India, receiving advanced training in Carnatic music.