

Sonified Sustainability Fest

Step-two narrative proposal for Student Sustainability Committee

Education

Global Arts Performance Initiatives is pleased to present a final proposal for a series of sustainability-themed arts programs in the 2015-16 academic year that serve the educational mission of the Student Sustainability Committee. The principal event of the proposal is Sonified Sustainability Fest - a celebration of ecological music and arts, presented in the lobby, Stage 5 and amphitheater of Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. This all ages event, offered admission free to campus and community audiences, will feature live music and interactive art making focused on sustainable practices in the arts, accompanied by an information fair that will provide greater visibility of local projects, programs and organizations working towards a sustainable future. National and local musicians performing on original instruments made from recycled and repurposed materials will be showcased at the fest, as well as in two preceding concerts of the Sudden Sound Concert Series at Krannert Art Museum, all scheduled as part, or promotion of Sustainability Week 2015 and EarthWeek 2016. Another major component of this proposal is an Illini Union Board Art Gallery exhibit of Ken Butler's sculptural "hybrid instruments," scheduled to lead into the fest and be part of EarthWeek 2016 programming. Lastly, Krannert Center will extend the impact of Ken Butler's visit with several outreach engagements for local schools and libraries. The following narrative will illustrate how successful SSC support will bring greater awareness of sustainable practices to new campus and community audiences through a broad range of sustainability-themed arts programming.

The planned featured artist of Sonified Sustainability Fest is Brooklyn, NY-based Ken Butler, who has been performing since 1978 on hybrid musical instruments created primarily from urban detritus such as tennis rackets, hockey sticks, umbrellas, axes, snow shovels, rakes and discarded metal. Doubling as assemblage sculptures, these "anxious objects" are amplified with contact microphones, transforming them into touch-sensitive instruments that are plucked, tapped, stroked, or bowed in various ways to create a variety of percussive sounds as well as those produced by the vibration of the strings. Ken Butler's duo and trio ensembles feature him with leading percussionists and instrumentalists performing original music influenced by Indian Raga, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern music mixed with a "downtown NYC" improvisation aesthetic, held together by African-American jazz, rock, funk, and blues.

In addition to Ken Butler's captivating "hybrid instrument" performances, local artists including percussionist Chad Dunn of Recycled Rhythms, Tony Taylor of Ascendent Instruments, and the instrument builders at Analog Outfitters will be invited to perform, offering a broader sense of how materials are being reclaimed and repurposed as musical instruments in our area. Along with an inspiring program of music, arts programming at the fest will be expanded with interactive art making stations utilizing found materials, which will provide creative activities for younger audiences. We will seek student volunteers from the School of Art and Design to facilitate these art making stations, and request donated materials for creating the art. After the event, we will plan to donate any remaining items to the I.D.E.A. Store. Along with the arts programming, the educational impact of the fest will be enhanced by information tables and displays by local programs and organizations promoting initiatives in sustainability. We will invite participation in the information fair from community programs such as

the I.D.E.A. Store, Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Green, PACA, and ReStore – Habitat for Humanity, as well as campus based programs such as the Sustainable Student Farm, Fresh Press, the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment, the Illinois Climate Action Plan and the Student Sustainability Committee to further educate and promote sustainable futures.

Leading up to the fest, a series of related programs will celebrate sustainability in the arts and assist in promoting Sustainability Week 2015 and EarthWeek 2016. Almost equally ambitious as the fest, we would like to mount an exhibition of Ken Butler's hybrid instrument sculptures at the Illini Union Board Art Gallery that would precede and run through the date of the fest and during EarthWeek 2016. In further discussions with the artist, it was determined that 23-25 hybrid instruments would display well in a gallery of this size. Examples of the proposed work can be found on the following artist webpage. <https://kenbutler.squarespace.com/hybrid-instruments/>

Ken Butler also confirmed that the pieces can be shipped ahead of his arrival and installed without his presence. Krannert Art Museum design and installation specialist Walter Wilson generously offered support in hanging this show. As a recommended best practice by UIUC's Risk Management office, shipping of the art work would be handled by a professional art moving company such as U.S. Art Company, Inc., who offered the attached estimate of shipping costs. While this estimate indicates only one way transportation, correspondence with the company confirmed we could calculate our return cost minus the materials and labor, if we would re-use the packing materials and have the items pre-packed upon pickup for return. If funding for this exhibit is approved, SSC Program Advisor Micah Kenfield expressed he would assist in securing the IUB Gallery for an exhibition period covering the time span we desire. The period to submit requests for shows in the IUB Art Gallery opens in early May 2015. After confirming the availability of the gallery, Global Arts Performance Initiatives would establish loan agreements with the artist and UIUC, and arrange transport and installation of the artwork in communication with IUB Art Gallery.

Established and curated by Jason Finkelman since 2005, the Sudden Sound series at KAM is committed to presenting improvising artists performing on instruments made from found and recycled materials in two out of four regularly scheduled concerts. With SSC co-sponsoring support of artist fees, the additional expenses associated in bringing the sustainability minded artists being considered for this program to East Central Illinois is attainable. Both of the following concerts would be branded as part of Sonified Sustainability Fest, with the first concert featuring Jamaica-born, Minneapolis-based multi-instrumentalist Douglas Ewart, scheduled to precede and promote, or coincide with Sustainability Week in October 2015. The second concert would feature San Francisco, CA-based percussionist Tom Nunn in March 2016 and help promote the upcoming fest and EarthWeek 2016.

Passionate about environmental issues, Ewart performs on flutes, reeds and didjeridu, all handcrafted from found materials, and often incorporates earth conscience poetry with his brand of cross-cultural, avant-jazz. As an active member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians founded in 1965, including Ewart in Fall 2015 programming also celebrates 50 years of one of the most influential organizations to rise out of Chicago's Black Arts Movement. While Ewart would be making a return appearance to the series, Tom Nunn would have a first time appearance. An artist in his late 60's who rarely performs outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, Nunn has been building and performing on

handcrafted instruments utilizing recycled and repurposed materials since 1976. An example of this can be found in his amplified Skatchboxes made of cardboard boxes with objects such as washers, combs, toothpicks, bronze rod, dowel, etc. taped or glued to the exterior that are played with various modified combs. His duet project with San Francisco-based, New Zealand bassist Paul Winstanley is a perfect ensemble for related programming in the series.

In conclusion, Sonified Sustainability Fest and its related events would offer multi-faceted, sustainability-themed arts programming that reaches out and educates new sectors of our student and campus population. This programming would also increase engagement with students in performing arts programs, providing greater impact in an area which appears to be underrepresented in previous SSC funded projects. SSC funding would be essential to create this opportunity for a piloting model that could be applied to ongoing programming that broadens public engagement with sustainability issues through the arts. Thank you for the opportunity to present this proposal in final round consideration by the Student Sustainability Committee.