

## Learning to Fly: A Particular Kind of Balance

In a world that prizes brevity, novelty, and change Stuart Saunders Smith's *Links*, his cycle of eleven vibraphone pieces created over the course of twenty years from 1974 to 1994, seems like a throwback to a pre-digital or maybe even a glacial past. *Links* rose out of a slowly evolving aesthetic and intellectual substrate that flowed continuously through Smith's creative imagination forming not a set of free-standing pieces but a single continuous work in which each "piece" is simply a momentary instance, an archipelago of eleven peaks rising out of the same musical magma. The first piece in the cycle was written at the invitation of the composer's wife, Sylvia, as a commission for a publishable concert-quality work for vibraphone. Calling a single piece *Links No. 1* is itself a sign of optimism that the ideas contained therein might be potent enough to warrant a sequel. But beyond that *Links* lives up to its name by proposing a vocabulary of continuity rather than rupture. Linkage is in the DNA of this music—ideas are joined together in sequence within each piece and the pieces themselves are linked to one another to form the series as a whole. But *Links* goes further still. Stuart Saunders Smith's work is a twenty-year commentary upon (and perpetuation of) important continuities within American experimental music. From its indebtedness to jazz, to its central role in the expansion of percussion music, to its roots in American transcendentalist thought the *Links* series is about lineage. *Links* is the way Stuart Saunders Smith has taken the trailing threads of the American tapestry he inherited and begun to spin his story. It is a story of the search for a particular kind of balance, and of patience. (When a single chapter in a story takes twenty years to tell, you know that you are dealing with a patient man.) But why? Why demand such patience from a culture addicted to the onanism of 140-character "tweets" and instant connectivity? *Links* is a cycle of pieces for a single instrument in which the superficial differences among individual pieces are minimal. Each piece is made of the same sonority (usually vibraphone/s); each consists of multiple polyphonic lines with the composer's trademark overlay of quintuplet and septuplet rhythms; each constructs chains of short melodic cells. And while each "link" demands great technical capacity from the player the music rarely lapses into overt virtuosity. Wouldn't one or two pieces have sufficed as a representation of such a narrow sonic, aesthetic, and interpretative palette? Isn't a project of such sustained continuity over the course of twenty years just a little close to overkill?

*Links* might easily be overkill if the sole goal of the series were the creation of a set of concert pieces. But these pieces are much more than that. They are Stuart Saunders Smith's very personal responses to a set of ontological and musical questions. In particular, *Links* is indebted to the deep roots of twentieth-century American experimentalism in the transcendentalist ideology of the nineteenth century. This philosophy, like Smith himself, was born in New England and prizes the connection humans make between their physical and social environment and the inward gaze of a personal spiritual exploration. Mirroring the transcendental impulse, *Links* is to late twentieth-century music what Thoreau's essay on walking or Emerson's aphorisms were to the literary arts of the nineteenth century—less the case of being self-sufficient works of art and more as journal entries documenting a personal spiritual quest. Taken as journal entries then, the *Links* pieces often do not seem like overkill. In fact in that light the pieces don't even seem that similar: Some are concise, others rambling; some evocative, others musical abstractions. Because the pieces are not statements but rather utterances—in their essence not classical music but language—Smith frees himself from the dictates of musical formalism. Rather than taking the shape of pre-compositional cast, in *Links* the music finds its shape as a result of the nature of the utterance. Similarities among the pieces then reside not in the choice of instrumental sound or rhythmic language—these are not the seminal qualities of this music—but because they are the expressions of a single and singular imagination. They are not forms as much as they are formulations.

If *Links* seems to run counter to the twentieth-century's love affair with formalism, the pieces also shed light on an abiding myth of percussion music: that its growth was fueled almost solely by a search for new sounds. At first glance a set of pieces for solo vibraphone might seem to propose a monochromatic alternative to the highly colorful and evocative timbral landscapes of much mid-century American percussion music—pieces such as John Cage's *Third Construction* or Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin and Percussion Orchestra. However, Smith proposes not a contradiction but a refinement of the ideas presented in the music of Cage, Harrison, and others. Although early percussion music was indeed colorful, its aesthetic allegiance was not to coloristic diversity in and of itself but to a particular kind of balance between the known and unknown; between freedom and formalism. Musical color became an important part of an equation that read something like: An increase in volatility in one domain must be answered by constraint in another. In percussion music for example, the mercurial and unpredictable sound world of ringing metal instruments in John Cage's *First Construction in Metal* was contained by a formal structure of nearly puritanical rigor and parsed in terse, periodic rhythmic language. So, as freedom was tied to constraint, color was always tied directly to structure. In *Links* Stuart Saunders Smith retains the principles of the "Cage Theorem" but reverses its polarity. By choosing the unadorned sound of the vibraphone he controls timbre and thereby opens up worlds of flexibility in the domains of form and rhythm. So instead of spectrally diverse music with highly constrained formal and rhythmic language, *Links* creates the opposite: a temporally expansive music with a highly limited coloristic spectrum.

I was careful above to say that Cage and Harrison—as well as their direct descendant Stuart Saunders Smith—were interested in a particular kind of balance. Stuart once remarked to me in conversation that he was not interested in balanced systems "because they produce no heat." I don't know if he was thinking of the percussion music of Cage when he said this, but in truth Cage's percussion music features just this particular kind of balance. Or put another way, Cage's percussion music is slightly unbalanced. True, coloristic diversity is answered by formal constraint, but the beauty of Cage is that the result is never a flatfooted tie. The final mix is always shaded toward sonic unpredictability, and indeed his percussion music of the late 1930s could well be considered the first of his "indeterminate" compositions. In the case of Stuart Saunders Smith and *Links* there is balance between the constraints of timbre and a flexibility of phrasing and rhythm, but this "balance" is also skewed. In the case of *Links* the bias is toward an incantatory experience, toward a sense of fluidity borrowed from spoken language. A performance of Stuart Saunders Smith's music that fails to find his affinity for language and his poetic voice misses something critical and central.

At the spiritual core of *Links* is jazz, bebop in particular. Smith himself was a jazz vibist and was fascinated by the instrument. Indeed we might hear the chained sequences of short melodic bursts in *Links* as being akin to jazz melodies. But the real kinship with jazz finds its source elsewhere, deeper. *Links* locates its progressive impulse, as jazz does, not as "expansion," but in a more personal, perhaps less apparent way, as "transformation." I find it fascinating that while the evolutionary impetus in European-based composition in the mid-twentieth century was externalized as the hegemonic exploration of new instrumental resources, technologies, aesthetic strategies, the equally progressive music of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane looked inward toward the personal and essential. The great jazz players of the mid-century avant-garde used essentially the same instrumental ensembles, strategies of form, and harmonic language throughout their entire careers. In fact the very stability of format served to heighten the real, internal transformations that each artist underwent. Listen, for example, to the three recordings that Coltrane made of "My Favorite Things." There is relative stability of instrumentation and formal design here, but the musical line is the locus of the soul of this music. The line goes on forever. It has learned to fly. Smith understood this and applied it to *Links*: color and form serve to provide a platform for a fluid and extensible narrative line.

Let's scan the individual pieces and their relationships to the entire series.

The first three pieces were composed between 1974 and 1975 and act as a set of brief, essentially monodic, essays in linkage. Cells of melodic material explore linearity, but these lines rise and fall quickly, stopping every few seconds with a fermata or other culminating figure. It is as though one is hearing the seeds for a much longer piece. The germination took some time. The next installment in the series would wait until 1982 and *Links No. 4 (Monk)*. Here the primary mode is polyphonic. Individual lines have been elaborated—they no longer stop and start as they did in the earlier pieces—and their polyphonic overlap creates a dense musical space. In order to delineate individual lines and melodic trajectories slight variations of dynamic and textural shading are added to form a nearly constant and dynamic exchange of fore- and background materials. Hidden among the lines are quotations from Thelonious Monk, sometimes plainly audible, often submerged within the texture.

Whereas the density of *Links No. 4 (Monk)* is played out in linear space, *Links No. 5 (Sitting on the Edge of Nothing)* starts to fill the three-dimensional space of the concert hall. Here off-stage glockenspiel and chimes sounds comprise a kind of “secret music,” played super-soft by musicians hidden from view and who are not to be identified in the program. This is not real musical material but a real-time enhancement of the acoustical and emotional environment. (The great percussionist Al Otte, to whom the piece is dedicated, remarked that the glockenspiel and chime music is like a “written-out wind chimes part.”)

*Links No. 6 (Song Interiors)* pivots on the possibilities for plurality presented by the extra glockenspiel and chimes performers in *Links No. 5* and takes the series in a new direction by adding piano. Not only is this Smith's first departure from ringing metal percussion sonorities, this work is a real duo, one with substantial chamber music engagements. Now the vibraphone soloist is no longer a solitary figure on stage—the singular emotive presence that the composer John Luther Adams has often likened to the “zip” in a Barnett Newman painting. Dialogue like this is by its nature an active departure from the model of “musical journal” that Smith has adopted from the beginning of the cycle. Is it possible to “journal” in the plural? Perhaps the conundrum is imaginary since in spite of two performers on stage *Links No. 6 (Song Interiors)* still seems very soloistic. The two players inhabit a single space, the interior of a song. Their music is so intertwined with and dependent upon one another that there is never a moment of juxtaposition where one player achieves an independent identity. This piece is in effect neither a solo nor a duo but a hybridized communal space: plural alone-ness or perhaps a community of solitude. With *Links No. 7 (New England Night Weave)* Smith returns to the format of a solo vibraphonist. One questions here, however, whether solo really means “alone,” given that this is music densely populated with the ghosts of Charles Ives, the Alcotts, and even the standard tune “Good Night Irene.” These specters may keep their faces hidden but the seeds of the first *Links* have begun to bloom, filling the space and moving outward with sounds and the memories of sounds.

The *Links* pieces are coming every couple of years now. 1990 brought the series to its most intimate space in *Links No. 8 (Confessions—Witness to 48 Things)*. Here the lines are more spacious, tempos have relaxed somewhat and, very much in the nature of confession, the vibraphonist seems to look inward. He or she is not alone in *Links No. 8 (Confessions—Witness to 48 Things)*, however. A flutist also sits on stage, quietly facing the vibraphonist in profile to witness the confessions. The flutist eventually responds by playing along, first in concert with the vibraphonist then by moving off-stage in increments until he or she is nearly inaudible. As the piece ends the vibraphonist stops playing and listens intently to the short melodies of the flute. Is there a response there? Absolution? Or is this a reversal of Ives in which now an answer has been given but the question remains unclear?

By the next *Links* installment, *Links No. 9 (Mosque)*, it seems clear that space, both musical and metaphorical, has become the focus of Stuart Saunders Smith's attention. Tempi shift slightly in *Links No. 9*, either relaxing or compressing the temporal space as an architect might manipulate physical space. And, as Rick Kurasz points out in his program note, a mosque is a place of worship and must be receptive to all who come. Therefore it must also, by definition, be focus-less itself. It is this quality of space—a space in which all are welcome—that is the expressive axis of this piece. *Links No. 10 (Who are we? Where are we?)* is a further contraction of rhetoric, a smaller piece which, as Matthew Apanius remarks in his notes, contains an unprecedented amount of repetition. You won't see the repeat signs that were nearly ubiquitous in much new music of the mid-1990s, but the music seems to trace and retrace its steps as though it is looking for something, indeed as the subtitle suggests, examining its whereabouts and wondering aloud where it might go next.

For nearly twenty years in ten installments, the *Links* series of vibraphone pieces have grown: in musical ambitus, in the sophistication of its sound world, in the leverage exerted by its poetic voice. From the beginning there have been two perplexing questions: Why did Smith write a second *Links* piece? And, given the decision to compose a second, a third, a tenth piece, Why stop? The answer to the former question lies in the fecundity of Smith's imagination. One might suppose that the answer to the latter might lie in some kind of final mastery of the materials by the composer, or, at long last, in a completed utterance, or in some other form of saturation that simply allowed no further space for exploration. But for me at least, *Links No. 11 (Regions I-XXI)* is not a perfected object. That is to say, it is not a musical statement so completely wrought that by necessity it puts an exclamation point at the end of the series. Its scoring, this time for three vibraphones, seems as focused around issues of monochromatic space as any of the other pieces. Its polyphony is as dense, and its performance demands are as formidable as any in the set. In short it might be the last statement in the *Links* series, but it does not sound final. Both Stuart and Sylvia Smith wrote beautifully of *Links No. 11 (Regions I-XXI)* that the music at last occupied a new space, and that it was time to stop. It is neither my place nor my intention to contradict them. But I wonder, instead of the stasis of finality, if these pieces might have achieved the ultimate lightness of a particular kind of balance, which allows the composer to come to rest because the music has learned to fly. Like Thoreau, like Cage, like Monk and others, Stuart Saunders Smith found that particular kind of balance in his art that will allow these pieces to continue without him, flying outward toward new spheres and new spaces of emotional resonance.

So here, ultimately, is the paradox of *Links*. By exploring a small space the composer has found a large one. These pieces are not small; they are rich. And the richness to be found in *Links* is further enhanced by the devotion of the fine performers featured in this recording. The performers here are not just interpreters; they are advocates, each having played and championed their pieces over the course of many performances. Each brings a perspective that heightens the variety among the pieces while also reinforcing the commonality of the series—its linked-ness.

So as you sit to listen to these recordings take a deep breath. Then let it out, as Stuart Saunders Smith did, in his long twenty-year exhalation. Let your breath out in a sustained utterance of a word we seemed always to have known though we had never heard it.

—Steven Schick

*Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego, and a Consulting Artist in Percussion at the Manhattan School of Music.*

## Composer's Note

### The Story of *The Links Series of Vibraphone Essays*

In 1974, Sylvia Smith asked me to write a vibraphone solo for her new publishing company, Smith Publications. She saw a need for written literature for vibraphone, which at that time was almost exclusively associated with jazz. I composed *Links* for her in 1974.

I had played jazz vibraphone throughout my teenage years. It was a real joy to compose for it. I began to think of the vibraphone as the premier mallet instrument of the percussion family. The pedal gives it a much more expressive range and the ringing metal allows for more durational complexity. This combination—ringing metal plus a dampening pedal—makes possible much more intricate phrasing than with the marimba or xylophone.

The title *Links* refers to both a link with the tonal past, in terms of triadic pitch material, as well as a link to the complex rhythms of spoken language. *Links* is the first piece in which I asked the performer to move rapidly and accurately from one durational stratum to another.

After *Links* was performed by Tom Siwe later in 1974, I felt there was more to say with the vibraphone, and I quickly composed *Links No. 2* and *Links No. 3* in 1975. With the additional vibraphone solos, “links” took on a new meaning—linking the *Links* into a larger musical statement. I designed the next two *Links* so that the end of each one is an elision to the next. They could be performed as individual pieces, or as a larger three-movement work. For a time, *Links 1-3* seemed complete.

*Links No. 4* is much more contrapuntal than the monodic melodies of *Links 1-3*. Because the vibraphone has a flat timbral nature and a limited pitch range, any attempt at writing counterpoint is easily confounded, so that the two lines can be heard as one complex composite melody. While writing it, I could hear *Links No. 4* as counterpoint and composite at the same time.

In composing *Links No. 4*, I began to see a much larger work taking shape—*The Links Series of Vibraphone Essays* that I would continue to work on over many years. My ambition was to map out a vibraphone topography—a region—analogueous in the literary world to works such as William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* and Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems*.

*Links No. 11*, for three vibraphones, is an intensified coda in which the three parts are linked together by common pitch regions. I knew the *Links* were finished. If you can see far into the distance, there is no reason to travel.

**Stuart Saunders Smith** (born 1948 in Portland, Maine) is a confessional composer in the New England tradition. “My music is about my life. I am after the particular, for the revelations of the particular speak to the universal. Composition, for me, is autobiographical. Composing means making sense of my person and personal history. I keep company with myself, and come to understand myself.”

Smith has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Pittsburgh Film Forum, as well as the Hartt College of Music Distinguished Alumni Award, and a Percussive Arts Society Citation for Distinguished Editorship. His work is published by Sonic Art Editions and is recorded on 11 West Records, Centaur Records, Opus One Records, OOdiscs, Cadenza, and GAC Sweden.

He has been on the faculty of the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Darmstadt Musikinstitut (Germany), Percussion Workshop Poland, and the University of Maryland at Baltimore County. Residencies include University of California–San Diego, Yale University, Documenta 1992 (Kassel, Germany), the University of Gothenberg (Sweden), and New College Florida. In March 2008, the University of Akron hosted AT SIXTY—a celebration of the sixtieth birthday of Stuart Saunders Smith with four concerts of his music, including his first piece, composed in 1970, and several world premieres.

Smith does not compose using any pre-compositional systems or designs. He holds that each sound is intelligent, and when listened to, can direct the course of events in the composition. So Smith listens to each sound to tell him what sound should come next, until the piece is finished.

**Matthew Apanius** graduated from the University of Akron in 1993 with a B.F.A. in percussion performance. He continued studies in percussion with Robert Van Sice in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Returning to the United States, Matthew took an active role in the dance community of northeast Ohio, collaborating with many well-known choreographers including Jennifer Keller, Gina Gibney, and Amie Dowling.

**Justin DeHart** is a contemporary percussionist from Sacramento, California, who has performed concerts throughout the U.S., Canada, and Asia, including Green Umbrella in Los Angeles, June in Buffalo, Taipei International Percussion Convention, Bang On A Can Marathon in New York, and Other Minds Festival in San Francisco. He has explored Indian classical percussion extensively with T. H. Subash Chandran (mrdangam) in South India as a Fulbright scholar in 2001, and Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri (tabla) at AACM and California Institute of the Arts. DeHart has recorded on several record labels such as Innova, Mode, MCA, Cornerstone, and R.A.S.

**Aiyun Huang** was winner of the First Prize as well as the Audience Award at the 2002 Geneva International Music Competition. She is known for her theatrical performances and her commitment to push the boundaries of percussive arts. Ms. Huang grew up in Taiwan and emigrated when she was seventeen to pursue her love for music. She holds a D.M.A. degree from the University of California, San Diego. Currently, she is the chair of the percussion area as well as director of the McGill Percussion Ensemble at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

**Ayano Kataoka** is the first percussionist to be accepted into the Chamber Music Society Two residency program at Lincoln Center in New York. She has appeared with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, given a debut recital at Tokyo Opera City Recital Hall in Japan, and performed with Emanuel Ax at Alice Tully Hall. More recently, she gave the U.S. premiere of . . . *As if Time Would Heal by Its Passing* by Stuart Saunders Smith at the 2005 Percussive Arts Society International Convention. Ms. Kataoka is on the faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

**Masako Kunimoto** was born in Hyogo, Japan in 1981. She was involved with music at an early age, first with piano lessons, then marimba studies in high school. She earned a B.M. degree from Osaka College of Music, studying with Keiko Miyamoto and Toru Kitano. After graduating from Osaka College, Ms. Kunimoto worked as a music teacher in middle school and high school. In 2008, she earned a Certificate in Contemporary Music at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Currently Ms. Kunimoto is a freelance percussionist in the Baltimore area.

**Chris Leonard** holds degrees in percussion performance from the University of Akron and George Mason University where he studied with Dr. Larry Snider and Kenneth Harbison, respectively. He was a founding member of Trio Algetic along with Dale Speicher, with whom he continues to perform under the aegis of the Two Percussion Group. He has premiered works composed for him by Stuart Saunders Smith, Roger Zahab, and Tom Baker, and has recorded for 11 West Records. Mr. Leonard teaches music in public schools in East New York, Brooklyn.

Born in Romania, pianist **Katalin Lukács** received her Diploma at the “Gh. Dima” Music Academy in Cluj. A proponent of new music, she did graduate studies in contemporary piano performance at the University of California at San Diego. Lukács has won fellowships allowing her to attend the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, Germany, and the Ostrava Days New Music Festival in the Czech Republic. She has also performed with several orchestras around the world. Currently, she resides in San Diego, where she is active as a pianist, chamber musician, educator, and accompanist.

**Gisela Mashayekhi-Beer** was born in Passau, Germany. She studied flute at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and participated in master classes with Peter-Lukas Graf. She continued her studies under Wolfgang Schulz at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. During these years she became a solo flautist of the Wiener Kammerorchester, solo flautist of the Niederösterreichische Tonkünstlerorchester (Vienna), and in 1991 became the assistant of Wolfgang Schulz at the University for Music and Performing Arts (Vienna). In 1995, with percussionist Berndt Thurner, she founded the flute and percussion duo Double Image, an ensemble with a keen interest in contemporary music.

**Fabio Oliveira**, a native of Brazil, is a percussion soloist with a wide-range of professional interests, including orchestral and chamber music as well as improvised, popular, and folk music. After studying at the Sao Paulo State University, he came to the United States and earned a M.M. from the University of Massachusetts, then completed a D.M.A. at UC-San Diego, where he studied percussion with Steven Schick, and performed/recorded with redfishbluefish. Mr. Oliveira is currently professor and the director of Percussion and Drum Set studies at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG).

**Bill Sallak** has a rich background in percussion performance, pedagogy and research. He has performed with the Phoenix-based new-music group Crossing 32nd Street, the improvisation collectives Easy Worship Operator and Barely Audible, as well as the Phoenix and Akron (OH) Symphonies. As a performer, conductor, composer, and coach, he has premiered more than thirty works, and has been a featured presenter at four Percussive Arts Society International Conferences. Always interested in interdisciplinary activities, Sallak has collaborated with numerous independent dance companies and university dance programs. Currently he is Assistant Professor/Dance Music Director at Kent State University.

**Steven Schick** was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For the past thirty years he has championed contemporary percussion music as a performer and teacher, and by commissioning and premiering more than one hundred new works for percussion. Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego, and a Consulting Artist in Percussion at the Manhattan School of Music. Schick was the percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars of New York City from 1992-2002. Recently, his book *The Percussionist's Art* was published by the University of Rochester Press.

**Steven Sehman** is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. He is a founding member of the Proper Glue Duo, a percussion duo based in New York City. The duo performs contemporary percussion concerts throughout North America. As a member of various ensembles, Sehman has collaborated with composers Harrison Birtwistle and Bernard Rands, and U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove. He has recorded on the Equilibrium, Summit, and d'Note Classics labels.

**Dale Speicher** is a percussionist based in Seattle, Washington. He has dedicated his career to commissioning and performing new and experimental music for percussion. In the Pacific Northwest, he is a busy freelance percussionist appearing with orchestras, in musical theater, and with dance bands. With Chris Leonard, he was a founding member of Trio Algetic, and continues to give performances with him as the Two Percussion Group. He is also an active participant in the Seattle Percussion Collective and Affinity Chamber Players. Speicher's performances can be heard on Present Sounds and 11 West Records.

**Sylvia Smith** is the founder, owner, and editor of Smith Publications/Sonic Art Editions, publishers of serious American art music. Her publishing house is looked to as a leading source of new American music. The recipient of six Paul Revere Awards for graphic excellence, her publications are thought of as particularly handsome editions. The recipient of numerous honors, Dr. Smith was awarded the American Music Center Letter of Distinction in 1988. As a percussionist, Sylvia Smith is active as a new-music specialist, touring North America with the Sylvia Smith Percussion Duo, specializing in percussion with spoken text and percussion theater.

**Berndt Thurner** was born in Austria and currently lives in Vienna. A percussionist of remarkable breadth, Thurner studied jazz and improvisation in addition to his classical studies, and is equally at home as a soloist and in an ensemble setting. His musicality is influenced by his travels to regions all over the world, from which he returns with new musical impressions and new musical instruments. He performs at important new music festivals all over the world. In 2005, he gave the world premier of *Plenty* by Stuart Saunders Smith, a vibraphone solo in 34 movements.

**Jude Traxler** is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He holds degrees in Percussion Performance and Composition from Louisiana State University. Traxler received the International Yamaha Young Artist Award for Percussion in 2006 and was invited to perform at the 2008 Bang on a Can Summer Festival, and is currently living in New York as a freelance percussionist and composer. His compositions have been performed across the United States by VOX Trio, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Tempus Fugit Percussion Ensemble, the LSU New Music Ensemble, and the Baton Rouge Brass Quintet, among others.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*Crux*. Bert Turetzky, double bass; Paul Hoffmann, Thomas Moore, piano; Thomas Goldstein, percussion. OODiscs 11.

*Wind in the Channel*. John Fonville, flute; Thomas Goldstein, vibraphone; Paul Hoffman, piano, Sylvia Smith, voice; James Ostryniec, oboe; Thomas Moore, piano; Julia Whybron, recorder, voice; Stuart Saunders Smith, voice. OODiscs 31.

*Breath: The Percussion Music of Stuart Saunders Smith*. Various performers. 11 West Records (Smith Publications).

*Double Image*. Gisela Mashayekhi-Beer, flute; Berndt Thurner, percussion. 11 West Records (Smith Publications).

*At Sixty*. Various performers. 11 West Records [2CDs] (Smith Publications).

*The Year Begins to be Ripe*. Sylvia Smith, percussion, voice; Christie Finn, soprano. 11 West Records (Smith Publications).

*Books of Flutes*. Carrie Rose, Lisa Cella, Kathie Trahan, flutes; Sylvia Smith, Ayano Kataoka, vibraphones. 11 West Records (Smith Publications).

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- Sauer, Theresa. "An Interview with Sylvia Smith and Stuart Saunders Smith," *International Alliance for Women in Music*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2008.
- Smith, Stuart Saunders. "Against Definition," *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 1994).
- . "To Suffer Music," *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 1996).
- . "Showing and Saying," *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 1996).
- . "The Geography of Time: The Links Series of Vibraphone Essays (1974-1994)," *Percussive Notes*, No. 58, April 2005.
- . "A Composer's Mosaic: Selected Entries from the Composing Journals of Stuart Saunders Smith," *ex tempore*, Vol. 14/1, Spring-Summer 2009.
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- Welsh, John P. *The Music of Stuart Saunders Smith*. New York: Excelsior Press, 1995.
- . "Music in the Air: Here and There—A Radio Landscape," *Interface*, Vol. 13, 1984.
- . "a flight . . . Flight," *Perspectives of New Music* (Fall-Winter 1984).

## Production Credits

### *Hearing Links*

Author & narrator: Sylvia Smith  
Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, January 2008  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producer: Sylvia Smith

### *Links (1974)*

Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, February 2009  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producers: Sylvia Smith and Stuart Saunders Smith

### *Links No. 2 (1975)*

Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, May 2008  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producer: Sylvia Smith

### *Links No. 3 (1975)*

Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, January 2009  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producer: Sylvia Smith

### *Links No. 4 (Monk) (1982)*

Recorded in Warren Studio A, UCSD, August 2008  
Recording engineer: Josef Kucera  
Producer: Steven Schick

### *Links No. 5 (Sitting on the Edge of Nothing) (1987)*

Recorded in Warren Studio A, UCSD, August 2008  
Recording engineer: Justin DeHart  
Producer: Fabio Oliveira

*Links No. 6 (Song Interiors)* (1989)  
Recorded in Warren Studio A, UCSD, August 2008  
Recording engineer: Tom Erbe  
Producer: Fabio Oliveira

*Links No. 7 (New England Night Weave)* (1989)  
Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, October 2008  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producer: Stuart Saunders Smith

*Links No. 8 (Confessions—Witness to 48 Things)* (1990)  
Recorded in the studio of Stephen Ferguson, Vienna, Austria, July 2008  
Recording engineer: Stephen Ferguson  
Producer: Jorge Sanchez-Chiong

*Links No. 9 (Mosque)* (1992)  
Recorded in Warren Studio A, UCSD, February 2009  
Recording engineer: Daniel Shapira  
Producer: Brian Archinal

*Links No. 10 (Who are we? Where are we?)* (1993)  
Recorded in Studio 508, UMBC, May 2008  
Recording engineer: Alan Wonneberger  
Producers: Stuart Saunders Smith and Sylvia Smith

*Links No. 11 (Regions I-XXI)* (1994)  
Recorded in the UMBC Recital Hall, May 2005  
Recording engineer: Michael Cerri  
Editorial assistant: Alan Wonneberger  
Producer: Stuart Saunders Smith

All works published by Sonic Art Editions (Smith Publications).

Digital mastering: Alan Wonneberger  
Design: Bob Defrin Design, Inc., NYC

**This recording was made possible by a grant from the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trust.**

This recording was conceived by the executive producer, Sylvia Smith, my publisher. It was her dream to record all the *Links*, making it possible for the first time to hear the entire *Links Series of Vibraphone Essays* as one long eleven-movement work. I am grateful to all the vibraphonists who learned this difficult music with grace and confidence. I heartily thank our recording engineer Alan Wonneberger for his tireless work and for his extraordinary capacity to understand the recording needs of the vibraphone and of complex music.

—Stuart Saunders Smith

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STUART SAUNDERS SMITH (b. 1948)  
*THE LINKS SERIES OF VIBRAPHONE ESSAYS*  
80690-2 [2CDs]

DISC 1 [TT: 47:13]

1. *Hearing Links* (1995) 5:37  
Sylvia Smith, narrator
2. *Links* (1974) 3:28  
Masako Kunimoto
3. *Links No. 2* (1975) 4:47  
Steven Sehman
4. *Links No. 3* (1975) 4:06  
Bill Sallak
5. *Links No. 4 (Monk)* (1982) 8:07  
Steven Schick
6. *Links No. 5 (Sitting on the Edge of Nothing)* (1987) 11:38  
Aiyun Huang; off-stage parts by Fabio Oliveira, Aiyun Huang
7. *Links No. 6 (Song Interiors)* (1989) 9:17  
Justin DeHart, vibraphone; Katalin Lukács, piano

DISC 2 [TT: 42:46]

1. *Links No. 7 (New England Night Weave)* (1989) 12:42  
Jude Traxler
2. *Links No. 8 (Confessions—Witness to 48 Things)* (1990) 9:04  
Berndt Thurner, vibraphone; Gisela Mashayekhi-Ber, flute
3. *Links No. 9 (Mosque)* (1992) 6:28  
Justin DeHart
4. *Links No. 10 (Who are we? Where are we?)* (1993) 4:40  
Ayano Kataoka
5. *Links No. 11 (Regions I-XXI)* (1994) 9:44  
Chris Leonard, Dale Speicher, Matthew Apanius, vibraphones

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