

# invert

Invert is a unique New York City based string quartet performing original new music composed by its members, and their own arrangements of other composers' works. Invert's name is taken from their literal inversion of the traditional string quartet format - they feature two cellos instead of the usual two violins. The group's members are cellists Steven Berson and Chris George, violinist Helen Yee, and violist Chris Jenkins.

Since coming together in 1999, the group has created its own brand of chamber music by blending numerous genres into its compositions and performance style. Drawing from diverse, eclectic musical backgrounds, Invert's members defy tradition by being firmly rooted in rock, jazz and world musics rather than the classical upbringing typical of most string players. The group's compositions range from moody pieces evocative of soundtracks from expressionist cinema, to driving melodic works, often leaving open sections for improvisation that add to the excitement of their live performances.

Invert has regularly performed at many renowned New York venues, including The Knitting Factory, Irving Plaza, The Cutting Room, Joe's Pub, The Kitchen, Makor and Trinity Church at Wall Street. They have recorded string accompaniments for two releases by legendary indie rockers Guided By Voices, and have appeared on bills with artists as diverse as Mission of Burma, Erik Friedlander, Alloy Orchestra, Zoe Keating, American Analog Set, Quasi, and Rasputina.

In February, October and November of 2005 they toured the United States in support of Quarterstick recording artists, Rachel's, and sat in with them augmenting their string section on a number of pieces during their performances. Audiences from Texas, to California, to the Northwest and back through the heartland responded enthusiastically to Invert's unique sound.

In early May 2007 Invert released their full length third CD, entitled "The Strange Parade." The CD includes fifteen pieces that showcase Invert's distinctive mix of compositions and improvisations by members of the band, and their own arrangement of Japanese composer Shigeru Umebayashi's "Yumeji's Theme." What sets "The Strange Parade" apart from their previous recordings is the inclusion of two cuts that feature Roberto Juan Rodriguez on drums. Invert's often groove-driven music was given an extra rhythmic boost by Rodriguez on the compositions "Dog Days" and "The Peak."

Invert's second CD, entitled "Between The Seconds," was released by Capstone Records on January 2004 and was hailed by Baltimore Magazine as "a compelling listen for just about anyone with a pulse." This ten track disc contains eight original compositions and arrangements of The Beatle's "Tomorrow Never Knows" and Bernard Herrmann's Prelude from the film "Psycho." Their self titled debut CD, containing six original compositions, was independently released in 2001. Tracks from both CDs have received national radio airplay.

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*"Thank you so much for your glorious music. Nothing in your blurbs or any preconception I had led me to expect what I experienced. The compositions were great as is your skill in presenting them. Add the playfulness, inventiveness and graciousness you embody and you get a unique and memorable evening."* - Tamar Rogoff, Curator - Solar Music Series at Stuyvesant Cove Park, NYC

# invert's members

**Chris George**, Invert's founder and one of its main composers, attended Berklee College of Music in 1982 as an electric bass guitarist. In 1988, he studied Indian classical music for several years while learning to play the sitar. After a decade of playing the bass in a few well known Boston rock bands, Chris began learning the cello in 1992. Over the next two years, while studying privately with Ben Meyers and attending master classes at the New England Conservatory of Music taught by world renowned cellist Colin Carr, Chris began to feel an ever greater pull towards chamber music. In 1994, Chris moved to New York City and decided to focus exclusively on the cello. He attended a chamber music program at Mannes School of Music and performed in various chamber group settings. He then spent several years studying with Maxine Neuman, a renowned cello soloist and orchestral performer, who tutored him in cello technique and the art of composition. Recently, Chris wrote and recorded string arrangements for Guided By Voices founder Robert Pollard's 2007 release, "Silverfish Trivia."

**Steven Berson's** involvement in music started with piano lessons at an early age, and later playing alto saxophone in his school's ensembles. He began performing as an electric bassist at the age of 15, and started playing the cello in 1988. In 1989 he graduated from Boston's Berklee College of Music, where he studied both composition and electric bass. While in Boston he also studied West African rhythm and percussion with master drummer Nurudafina Pili Abena. From 1989 to 1997 Steve lived in Baltimore, Maryland where he taught electric bass and performed with numerous groups including False Face Society, The Michael Raitzyk Jazz Orchestra, Charm City Klezmer, Suck Pretty and 3 Pigs Café, and as an electronically aided one-man band under the name Acoustitronics. With Acoustitronics Steve toured the East Coast in support of Mission of Burma's Roger Miller and performed a number of live soundtracks for the Black Cherry Puppet Theater. Steve has released two solo albums and also appeared on CD's & vinyl records released by FOT, Waerface, Metamusic, Retallack Records, Simple Machines, RiskyDisk and Matador Records. Most recently Steve has composed and recorded the soundtracks for two films by writer/director Michelle Cutler and toured the West coast backing vocalist/violinist/keyboardist Rebecca Moore.

**Helen Yee** began her violin study with classical training while also studying the yangqin (hammered dulcimer) on which she still performs as a member of Music From China. Since returning to New York she has focused on non-classical violin as a member of several rock/pop bands and jazz/improv combos. She has studied jazz with Julie Lyonn Lieberman, Roni Ben-Hur, and Rob Thomas. In Fall 2006 she wrote and performed music for solo violin for the darkly comedic play, Krankenhaus Blues, produced by Visible Theatre. As a session musician she has contributed to soundtracks for a number of major movies, including Cost of Living, Number One, Tug of War, and Martin Scorsese's Kundun. She has been part of residencies at Colgate University, Peabody Conservatory, workshops at Manhattan School of Music, and her experience includes many workshops for children in arts-in-education programs. She was also a presenter on the subjects of alternative chamber music and strings around the world at the American String Teachers Association national conference.

The newest member of Invert, **Chris Jenkins** brings to the group his extensive training in classical music with some of the best musicians in the world. At Harvard, where he earned a BA in Music, he studied viola with Michelle LaCourse, chair of Boston University's string department. In 2003 he earned a Masters degree at New England Conservatory with Martha Katz, founding violist of the internationally recognized Cleveland Quartet. In 2004, he finished a Professional Studies degree at the Manhattan School of Music. He began his studies in jazz violin with Julie Lyonn Lieberman in 1993. In 2003, he traveled to England with George Russell and his Living Time Orchestra, a group composed of some of the best jazz players in Europe and America. A semifinalist of the Sphinx Competition in 2003 and 2004, he was a third-place laureate of the competition in 2005. Chris currently teaches violin and viola at the Bloomingdale School of Music in New York.