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**HARVEY:**

Good evening, everybody. I'd like to welcome you to MIT. My name's Mark Harvey, and I'm teaching here in the music program. And this semester we have a course called Musical Improvisation. And thanks to our music section as well as the alumni class funds program, we were able to bring in some distinguished improvisers. We've had two of these, a series of four. We've had two of these. We have tonight, and then we have one more in early May.

Let me just say a couple words about our visitors this evening. We have Neil Leonard, who's been a long time friend, and Robin Eubanks over here. Neil came to our class on Monday, and we had a great time. And so this is a furthering, an enrichment of what we're studying. And now it's a chance for all of you to engage in this.

So you can see by their bios, they're very distinguished world travelers, master improvisers. So without further ado, Neil Leonard. Robin Eubanks.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**LEONARD:**

Thank you, Mark. It's wonderful to be here at MIT this evening. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to play again with the great Robin Eubanks. I'm going to play three pieces, [INAUDIBLE] pieces, and the first two were created under very peculiar or unique circumstances. One was at the invitation of a conference on sonification in Washington, DC a couple of years ago. And I did a piece with a couple of my students that involved data that was collected from the sun. And so we made a piece of music out of celestial data. And that's the first piece called Nocturnal Remix.

The second piece is a piece which I created at the invitation of an art collector in Italy, Gianni Bolongaro who asked me if I would record the sounds of a sculpture by an artist named Jannis Kounellis And I began a piece, which went through several renditions. And what you'll hear are the sounds recorded in his sculpture park, an Italian vocalist from Mount Vesuvius in Naples, and the third piece is an improvisation on a song that you'll probably recognize. I won't announce that right now. Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**LEONARD:** Thank you very much.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**LEONARD:** Now I would like to welcome the great Robin Eubanks.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**EUBANKS:** First I want to definitely thank Neil for inviting me up here because you probably did not know it, but Neil and I have known each other for-- Don't say. Many, many,

many, many, many years. Both grew up in Philadelphia. Actually I grew up playing in a lot of funk and rock bands. And the first jazz band I ever played in was with Neil in Philadelphia. So it's great to see how he's developed. I found out he was teaching up here at Berklee. And we're both teaching. I teach at Oberlin Conservatory. And I was just really happy that he invited me to come do this because I don't get to do it too often. There's still relatively few horn players that are using all these electronics and things. And I don't get to do too often.

So I just came off of a tour, a month-long tour last night, or the day before maybe. I forget now. And actually played at the Berklee performance center a month ago. And I got in yesterday, and I was up all night trying to read the manuals to find out, remember how to work this stuff. Because basically what I'm saying is I don't know what I'm doing. There's a little bit spun for me because you kind of fly by the seat of your pants with no net, and sometimes you fall. And it's cool. You just get up and try to make it so you don't notice when I fall. But I'm just going to try some stuff and see what happens and hope you enjoy it. Thank you.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**EUBANKS:** The first piece is just going to be complete improv. I don't know what I'm going to do. We'll call it MIT April 4th. MIT April 3rd.

[EUBANKS PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

[EUBANKS PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**EUBANKS:** That was fun. Little bumps along the way, but it's cool. But that's what I enjoy about it is just that it is what it is. Just live with it.

[EUBANKS PLAYING MUSIC]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**LEONARD:** We are going to finish with a piece together. Does anybody know what a pregonero is?

**EUBANKS:** A what?

**LEONARD:** A pregonero.

**ROBIN:** Spanish

**LEONARD:** A pregonero is a street vendor, who lives in Cuba. Actually they're all over the world. But the ones that I know live in Cuba. And for the past maybe 50 years, their practice was not allowed. And as of a couple years ago, if you found yourself in Cuba sitting in your in-laws patio, you would begin to hear these people selling ajo, garlic, soja, onions, exterminators who could kill bed bugs, mice, mothers-in-law-- I didn't try them-- car alarms. The whole deal. This was everything you ever needed sold door-to-door. There was no advertising, no Internet, no billboards, no what advertisers, no handbills. Just people roaming the streets selling their stuff.

And in the last year as they came back instantly, I invited them to do some pieces. And some of them were installations, and some were performances. Probably the most notable performance was I decided that I don't have an interest in going to somebody else's country and telling them what to do. But I thought in Cuba they needed an American Idol for the pregoneros. And so I staged an American Idol for the pregoneros, an Idol of the Americas, and invited the pregoneros and gave prizes for the most musical pregon, the most poetic pregon, the pregonero who was the most gifted and innovative for promoting contemporary art. We made that category. And national television picked it up and had the pregoneros on national

television with a jury that I selected.

This project keeps on going. And the next stop is the Venice biennial, where my wife and I have been invited to participate in the Cuban pavilion of the Venice biennial in May. But when I thought of what I could write for Robin that he and I could play, well I still couldn't get these pregoneros out of my mind. So we're going to perform a short suite of pieces and in this you'll hear the voice of one of these pregoneros and a lot play with the song that this person sings. So this piece is called Pregones that I wrote for Robin and myself. Thank you.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**EUBANKS:**

[INAUDIBLE]

[LEONARD AND EUBANKS PLAYING]

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]