

October 10, 2009

**Five-string violinist Helen Sherrah-Davies
to perform at Ryles on October 28, 2009**

**- Highly original player-composer
celebrates the release of her debut CD, StarStuff -**

On Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at Ryles Jazz Club in Cambridge, MA, British five-string violinist and composer **Helen Sherrah-Davies** will lead a stellar band in a performance of music from her new debut CD **StarStuff**. The show begins at 8pm, cover charge \$10. Geni Skendo's Shakuhachi Funk Sextet will also appear. (For additional information visit www.rylesjazz.com.)

Helen Sherrah-Davies' original works are trans-stylistic, jazz-infected, with a vibrant electric and acoustic mix, full of unexpected tone colors and sonorities. Her musical landscapes focus on storytelling, bathing the listener in prisms of sound. **Darol Anger**, acclaimed fiddler, has described Helen's music as "*so strong, it approaches the status of a new sentient being.... Even in the most thorny, complex episodes, we are moved to care, laugh and rejoice, washed by waves of melodic love.*"

At Ryles, Helen will be joined by some of Boston's finest instrumentalists: Manami Morita on piano/keyboards; Leah Gough-Cooper on soprano/alto sax and EWI; Randy Runyon on electric guitar; Zac Croxall on electric bass; Brian O'Neill on vibes and percussion; and Tom Hartman on drums.

"We are the stuff of stars," writes Helen in her notes to the **StarStuff** CD. Tapping into what she terms "cosmic rhythm," she aims for big-hearted expression and bold narratives, impelling listeners to imagine "standing on top of some great universal mountain observing the newly formed celestial landscape."

Drawing on the improvisational freedom of jazz while incorporating rhythmic and formal devices from Bulgarian, Middle Eastern and other traditions, Helen follows a path of "eclectic inspiration, disparate sonic influences and the realm of the Imagination." On **StarStuff**, her uncommonly rich tenor notes on five-string violin mesh beautifully with Maeve Gilchrist's harp, Bryan Baker's incendiary guitar, the multilayered percussion of Jamey Haddad and Keita Ogawa and more.

Helen's pieces are inspired in turn by the harmonic genius of Wayne Shorter ("Bling") and the plight of indigenous peoples ("Ever-Returning Light"); the eerie, otherworldly cries of wolves ("Pathfinder") and the spiritual legacies of Thomas à Becket and Hildegard of Bingen ("Becket's Bones"). "Music should be about communication," says Helen. "On **StarStuff** there are lots of different voices but hopefully a unified spirit."

Helen Sherrah-Davies began playing piano at age four, violin at age six. At age eight she won a scholarship to the prestigious Chetham's School of Music in

Manchester, England. By 19 she earned performing diplomas on both instruments. She went on to an MA and PGCE at Cambridge University.

Along with her activities as an educator, Helen pursued freelance orchestral work and regular string quartet performances, playing in venues such as Leeds Castle, the National History Museum and the Houses of Parliament (London) – along with occasions such as the wedding of “Posh Spice” Victoria to David Beckham in Ireland, working with the singer Sam Brown and leading a string quartet for Jon Lord (of Deep Purple) while performing his music in Zermatt, Switzerland.

Upon hearing jazz fiddler Mike Piggott in a Sussex pub, Helen became consumed with interest in improvisation, which her years of rigorous classical training did not address. She began performing and recording with artists such as Mike Hatchard, Herbie Flowers (Sky, T Rex) and guitarist Dylan Kay, and ultimately arrived in her current home of Boston, where she won scholarships to study jazz violin and jazz composition at Berklee College of Music. Having graduated from Berklee (Summa Cum Laude) with the “Most Valuable Player” award, she is now pursuing her Masters in Contemporary Improvisation at the New England Conservatory.

StarStuff is the fruit of her remarkable quest.

Helen Sherrah-Davies, StarStuff CD release performance

Ryles Jazz Club, 212 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

8pm, \$10

With Geni Skendo's Shakuhachi Funk Sextet

www.rylesjazz.com/617-876-9330

www.helensherrahdavies.com

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