

cal studies continued at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, on a Marshall scholarship; next he took an urban-development degree at University College London before returning to the States in 2007. The next year he worked full-time as a field organizer for the Obama campaign. Wolf's next graduate degree was a J.D. from Yale Law School (his father is an attorney, his mother a judge); he now clerks for a federal judge in Connecticut.

Something in the author's name may correlate with stylistic originality: novelist Thomas Wolfe, A.M. '22, and journalist/novelist Tom Wolfe both broke new ground in their literary forms. To deepen the confusion, Wolf's publisher, Faber and Faber, is an affiliate of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (FSG), Tom Wolfe's publisher. To avoid confusion, Tom Wolf took the pseudonym T.M. (dropping the *o* from *Tom*) Wolf. Even so, on his first visit to the FSG offices, he confused the receptionist a bit by introducing himself as "Tom Wolf." The spellings are different, so any ambiguity is purely in the ear—appropriate, perhaps, for the author of *Sound*. ~CRAIG LAMBERT

Three for the Mode

Jazz pianist Steve Kuhn proves good things come in trios.

by LARA PELLIGRINELLI

PIANIST AND COMPOSER Steve Kuhn '59 has played in formidable quartets and quintets, inventive big bands, graceful string orchestras. He's also won admiration as a thoughtful and articulate soloist. But despite the range of company he's kept throughout a five-decade career in jazz, Kuhn has always returned to the piano trio, his favorite setting since he became a bandleader in the 1960s.

"The interpretation of the song is in my hands," he explains. "At the same time, it's conversational. Rather than having bass and drums provide an accompaniment, the musicians respond to me. I respond to them. The music passes between us and we all have an equal part in it."

For *Wisteria*, his latest CD, Kuhn (<http://stevekuhnmusic.com>) pursued that kind of intimate dialogue by selecting two

musicians with whom he enjoys an extraordinary level of comfort: bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Joey Baron. "The three of us had never played before as a group," Kuhn says, "but Joey and I go back 20 some-odd years. He has an infectious spirit and it gives the music a certain color. Swallow and I go back over 50 years. He's the brother I never had." Kuhn was 25 when he and the bassist met, working side by side in the rhythm section for venerated trumpeter Art Farmer.

Kuhn always had a clear direction. "From the time I was babbling as a baby," he says, "this was the only thing that I ever wanted to do." That's barely an exaggeration. A child prodigy, he could identify the records of Benny Goodman, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington before he could really talk, by picking out the labels. The

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	Sat.	Dec. 1	Fordham	TBA
	Tue.	Dec. 11	BU	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Dec. 22	Holy Cross	2 p.m.
	Sat.	Jan. 5	Rice	TBA
	Sat.	Jan. 26	Dartmouth	2 p.m.
	Fri.	Feb. 1	Yale	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Feb. 2	Brown	7 p.m.
WOMEN	Fri.	Feb. 15	Pennsylvania	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Feb. 16	Princeton	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Mar. 8	Columbia	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Mar. 9	Cornell	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Nov. 16	BYU	TBA

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	Sat.	Nov. 3	Yale	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Nov. 9	Union	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Nov. 10	Rensselaer	7 p.m.
	Mon.	Dec. 10	UMass Lowell	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Dec. 29	Northeastern	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Jan. 25	Clarkson	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Jan. 26	St. Lawrence	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Feb. 9	Dartmouth	7 p.m.
WOMEN	Fri.	Feb. 15	Colgate	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Feb. 16	Cornell	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Mar. 1	Quinnipiac	7 p.m.
	Sat.	Mar. 2	Princeton	7 p.m.
	Fri.	Nov. 23	Colgate	7 p.m.

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feat was so incredible that humorist H. Allen Smith, who learned of it, Kuhn has reported, from a family friend, concluded his best-selling 1941 collection, *Low Man on a Totem Pole*, with his impressions of the precocious toddler.

As a teenager in Boston, Kuhn studied with distinguished pianist and jazz sympathizer Margaret Chaloff, whom he credits with enabling him to get a broad spectrum of color from the piano. Her son Serge became a well-known jazz baritone saxophonist as well as Kuhn's friend and early collaborator. "People like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie knew her because of Serge," Kuhn says. "Many of the pianists who came to Boston to play at [jazz clubs] Storyville and the Hi-Hat would call her for a lesson."

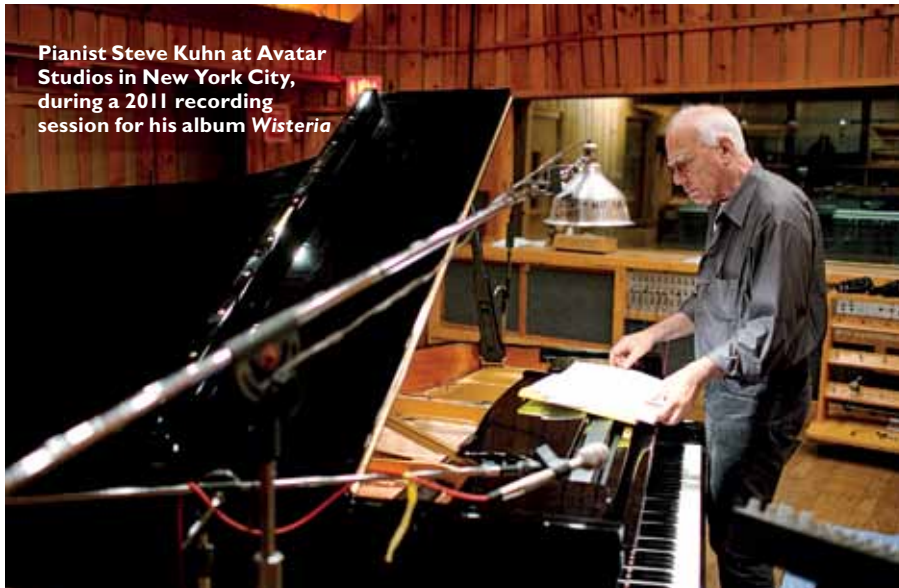
Kuhn had his own gigs at Storyville playing solo piano as a teen. At Harvard, he studied music theory by day with Walter Piston and led the house trio at a club in Harvard Square, the Mount Auburn 47 (better known as the Club 47), five nights a week. After graduation, he won a scholarship to the Lenox School of

Jazz from Schaefer Brewing (which featured jazz artists promoting its beer). The renowned faculty, which, during Kuhn's summer there, included members of the Modern Jazz Quartet, George Russell, and Gunther Schuller, mixed freely with the "students"—emerging talents like soon-to-be avant-garde icon Ornette Coleman. When Kuhn moved to New York weeks later, trumpeter Kenny Dorham, one of his

Lenox teachers, hired him as the pianist for his quintet. In the next few years, Kuhn worked with legends John Coltrane, Stan Getz, and Art Blakey, leading to his job with Art Farmer.

"Wisteria," the title track from Kuhn's new release, is one of Art Farmer's lesser-known compositions. "He never played it when I worked with him in 1964," Kuhn recalls. "I knew it from an old 10-inch

Pianist Steve Kuhn at Avatar Studios in New York City, during a 2011 recording session for his album *Wisteria*



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Prestige LP recorded in the early 1950s. It always stuck with me. I hunted down a lead sheet because I wanted to see exactly how he wrote it, and it was very simple." Kuhn eases through the melancholy ballad warmed by Baron's cymbal work and Swallow's resonant bass tones. Swallow's instrument, a modified electric five-string (rather than the acoustic instruments most jazz musicians prefer), sounds particularly guitar-like as it sweetly climbs into the upper register for his solo.

Two of Swallow's compositions also

appear on *Wisteria*: the moody "Dark Glasses" and stylish "Good Lookin' Rookie," both offering ample playgrounds for the musicians' improvisations. "He's one of my favorite composers," Kuhn volunteers. "I've played more of his songs than those of any other composer—except for myself."

Most of the compositions on the album are indeed Kuhn's own. "Adagio," "Morning Dew," "Pastorale," and "Promises Kept"—all written for a gorgeous string orchestra recorded on *Promises Kept* in

2000—were originally pretty yet sparse, keeping the nonswinging string players tethered to the arrangements.

It was a challenge to recast them for the trio, but one Kuhn eagerly undertook because the smaller number of performers would offer more frequent opportunities to play the pieces. "We could be so much freer," Kuhn states. "Having an orchestra is an amazing gift, but there's nothing we couldn't say with just the three of us."



Visit harvardmag.com/extras to listen to several of Kuhn's songs.

America the *Politically* Unequal

Can the nation really secure the rights of citizenship?

by ANDREA LOUSE CAMPBELL



RECENT EVENTS have focused attention on two of the most consequential phenomena of our time: growing economic and political inequality. Although the Occupy Movement of 2011 seems to be petering out, it did draw attention to the tremendous gains made by the economy's winners, whose incomes have soared during the past four decades, while those of middle-income and poorer Americans have stagnated. The Super PAC (political action committee) phenomenon of the 2012 election cycle, in which individual donors write multimillion-dollar checks to support candidates (just as they did in the pre-Watergate, pre-campaign finance reform era), highlights growing political inequality and the ability of the very rich to speak far more loudly than other citizens.

In *The Unheavenly Chorus*, Kay Lehman Schlozman (Moakley endowed professor of political science at Boston College), Sidney Verba '53, LL.D. '09 (Harvard's Pforzheimer University Professor emeritus), and Henry E. Brady (dean and professor of public policy at Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy) present a timely and wide-ranging analysis that catalogs and describes the nature and magnitude of political inequality in the United States. They show that Americans strongly uphold and desire political equality, recognizing that democracy depends on the ability of all citizens to make their preferences known. At the same time, Americans tolerate high levels of economic