

Meet The Bats



Susan

Missy

Harold

Marianne

Marilyn

Craig

Jim

Melanie

Missy Johnston is the PR director and founding member of The Bats, an actress and theatrical designer, and the host of KET's News Quiz. She holds a BA from Converse College in Spartanburg, SC, and an MFA from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX. After stints at the Dallas Theatre Center and The Oklahoma Theatre Center, she moved to Lexington, KY, in 1983. Since then, Missy has contributed her talents and skills to such Central Kentucky venues as Kentucky Educational Television, Lexington Children's Theatre, Studio Players, Actors' Guild of Lexington, The Lexington Shakespeare Festival, The University of Kentucky Department of Theatre, UK Opera Theatre, EKU's Communications Department, and The Kentucky Center for The Arts. Missy currently lives in downtown Lexington, in a house built in 1842, with her musician husband Jim Gleason and two rowdy poodles.

Melanie Johnson is a singer, guitarist and songwriter who has been playing most of her life. Mostly self-taught on guitar, she did study jazz guitar at the Guitar Workshop in Roslyn, NY, and has played in rock bands since 1975. She writes and records pop-rock songs, receiving local airplay of her original songs. She plays regularly at The Bluebird Cafe in Nashville, TN, and is finishing her second CD. She has played the Master Musicians Festival in Somerset, KY, The MidWest Music Conference in Lexington, KY, and most recently, the Mamapalooza Festival in Nashville.

Marilyn Robie has been singing for audiences since the age of two, when she entertained her parents' friends with the Mighty Mouse theme song. Since that time, she has consistently been involved in a series of choral groups, musical theater, college a cappella, folk duos, and rock and roll bands, with time out to pursue a career in clinical psychology and raise a family. In those carefree early years, she studied voice, sang lead and recorded original arrangements with the Princeton Katzenjammers, and sang lead for 5 years in a Lexington-based band. With The Bats, she gets to indulge her preferences for tight harmonies, rock and roll energy, great camaraderie with super talented musicians, and wonderful interactions with our enthusiastic audiences. (It's great fun.)

Marianne Sherman has played with some all-time great jazz artists including Clark Terry, Stanley Turrentine, Benny Golson, Cecil Bridgewater, and Stanley Cowell as well as Miles Osland and Vince DiMartino. A graduate of Auburn University and Florida State University, she picked up the bass for the first time in 1983, doing formal studies at the University of Kentucky. While there, she played with the university orchestra and the Lexington Community Orchestra. She has toured with rock bands throughout the southeast, from Florida to Ohio and Indiana. Along with the bass, Marianne also plays piano and guitar, which she's found useful in penning some of the Bats original tunes.

Susan Thomas is the only female Bat whose first name doesn't start with the letter "M." However, she has appeared in numerous theatre productions and musical ensembles in Lexington and Central Kentucky; Actors Guild of Lexington, Studio Players, University of Kentucky, Lexington's Shakespeare in the Park, UK's Grand Night for Singing, and Kinkaid Regional Theatre are included in her credits. She holds an MA in Theatre from the University of Kentucky. Susan loves to drive, which is a good thing since she lives in Cincinnati and has for the last seven years. When not driving or performing with The Bats she serves as the Director of Arts Management in the School of Fine Arts at Ohio's Miami University.

Craig Cornwell has been playing drums since he was inspired by Ringo Starr's performance on the Ed Sullivan Show. A native of Washington, DC, he has performed with numerous groups in Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky and loves to bring a male perspective to the Bats. Craig has a B.A. in Fine Arts from The College of William and Mary and an M.S. in Communications from Syracuse University. As a television producer/director, Craig has produced hundreds of programs and commercials and worked with numerous performing arts organizations over the years. Craig lives in Lexington where he is the Programming Director of KET and a soccer dad.

Jim Gleason brings more than 30 years of professional experience to his role as stunt guitarist for The Bats. His playing reflects a wide range of styles and influences, including rock, country, blues, bluegrass and jazz. In addition to The Bats, Jim plays regularly with the Johnson Brothers Band, performing entire shows devoted to the music of The Beatles, Steely Dan and The Allman Brothers as well as The Beatles' White Album and Sgt. Pepper, the Who's Tommy, Hair and Jesus Christ Superstar. He has opened for Melissa Etheridge and NRBQ, and has performed with The Gatlin Brothers, John Michael Montgomery, J.D. Crowe, David Vincent Williams and Johnny Bench.

Harold Sherman played in the University of Kentucky Jazz Ensemble while working toward his MM in Composition at the School of Music, graduating in 1999. He has rehearsed and performed with Lexington Musical Theater, UK Guignol Theater, West T. Hill Community Theater, SCAPA-Bluegrass, SCAPA-Lafayette and Lexington Children's Theater. In 2004, he was Musical Director of WCTAA's production of Guys and Dolls at Falling Springs Arts & Recreation Center Theater in Versailles and orchestra conductor for Suessical the Musical at the Leeds Theater in Winchester. With BAJA (Bluegrass Area Jazz Ambassadors--Lexington's community jazz band) he has accompanied jazz trombonist Bill Watrous and Broadway star Laura Bell Bundy. Besides teaching piano, saxophone and jazz improvisation privately and leading his own musical groups in the Lexington area--several that have played at the Ecton Park Big Band & Jazz Series--he is also a published composer and writer whose interviews of musicians have appeared in international publications.