

It has been 10 years since the release of my first CD “*Blue*.” Since then, my life has been filled with a vast variety of experiences and performances. Fortuitously at one such performance I had the opportunity to meet up with my friend and colleague Carla McElhaney, who is a fabulous pianist and a true artist. It had been a longtime vision to collaborate with her for a project such as this and thanks to her wonderful spirit of giving and making music, she has turned my vision into a reality!

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with many great composers. It is worth noting that several of the pieces on this CD *Nocturnal* have been presented to me by the composers themselves; a true honor and privilege

Nocturnal was composed at my request while Thomas Osborne was still new to the faculty at the University of Hawai‘i. The piece took two years and a completely new revision before it was finalized, but it was well worth the wait!

James Barry has created a new edit of his piece *Short Stories* for this recording. He has been so helpful and gracious throughout this project.

Allen Trubitt's *Sonata* was written for me while I was completing my undergraduate degree at the University of Hawai‘i. Ironically, I did not give its premiere until I joined the faculty at University of Hawai‘i.

There are several people have helped in numerous ways to make this CD possible. It is through a culmination of their talents that this project has come to fruition. I am truly grateful for the help they have given and for all their support. – T. Y.

NOCTURNAL NOTES:

The music of Brooklyn -based composer **JAMES BARRY** (b. 1969) has been described as “immediately engaging and distinctly American,” “an emotional rollercoaster,” “truly moving,” and well, “quirky.” A recipient of the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, his opera, orchestra, ballet, dance, theater, and chamber music scores are heard across the US each season.

For more information, please visit:
www.james-barry.com.

Short Stories (2008) is a collection of miniature, self-contained musical essays for alto saxophone and piano. Each of the four

movements live in their own sound world – an emotion, mood, or character. Early on in the composing process I planned to write a single movement piece. But I found myself fixated on the sound of a few sketches, playing each over and over and over again at the piano. They wanted to be alone, their own little stories. – J. B.

ARTHUR FRACKENPOHL (b. 1924) is an American composer with a diverse background of study and a vast catalogue of compositions for various idioms and groups. Born in Irvington, New Jersey, he studied composition with Bernard Rogers at the Eastman School of music where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees. He pursued further studies with noted figures Darius Milhaud at the Berkshire Music Festival and Nadia Boulanger at the Ecoles d'Art Americaines. In 1949, Frackenpohl joined the faculty of the Crane School of Music at State University of New York at Potsdam and completed his doctorate of musical arts in 1957 at McGill University in Montreal. He has written more than 250 compositions in an array of styles.

Air for Alto (1980) exhibits characteristics of impressionism through its use of soft, open harmonies, parallel 9th chords, and

passages that hint of whole tone scales. The piece has three main sections, not dissimilar to a sonata form. It begins tranquilly with chords rising in the piano before being joined soon after by the saxophone. The melody is established by the saxophone and gradually shared between both voices. The middle section builds in tempo and intensity as the melodic line becomes increasingly intertwined between the saxophone and piano. Finally, the recap winds down with fragments of the original melodic material being shared between the two instruments. The interplay between saxophone and piano incorporates sensuous vocal-like lyricism and harmony while remaining distinctly tonal.

THOMAS OSBORNE's (b. 1978) music draws inspiration from a wide variety of sources, places and eras. As a composer interested in the possibilities of both Western and non-Western music, he has written works inspired by African polyphony, Indonesian gamelan, Japanese court music, ancient Persian music and Kentucky country fiddle playing.

His music has been played by the American Composers Orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony, the T'ang

Quartet, pianist Jason Hardink, and many others, and he has received commissions from the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the New York Youth Symphony, Korean gayageum soloist Ji-Young Yi, among others.

Recently, Osborne has written many works for Asian traditional instruments, and spent a year composing for Korean and Western instruments as a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar in Seoul.

Osborne has lived in Honolulu since 2006, and is associate professor of composition and theory at the University of Hawai'i. He is active as a conductor, and directs the University of Hawai'i Contemporary Music Ensemble.

More information about Thomas Osborne's music can be found at:
www.thomas-osborne.com

Nocturnal (2010) is a series of five night portraits, each taking place at different times throughout the evening. The first scene, "Voices in the Night (with Bells Tolling in the Distance)," begins with the piano ringing the hours while the saxophone sings a synco-pated melody above. The second portrait, "Staring at the Traces of Passing Headlights,"

has the saxophone and piano working together in portraying a busy street scene. After a third-movement bout with "Insomnia" comes "Howling," which gives the saxophone a chance to connect with its primal side. The piece finishes with a scene of "Phosphorescent Fireflies" filling the night sky with points of light before day breaks. – T. O.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

Histoire du Tango (1986) was written at the apex of Piazzolla's career. It was his only work written for flute and guitar, the instrumental combination associated with the advent of the tango at the end of the 1800's. Each movement depicts a scene from the historical evolution of the form, taking us from the bordellos at the turn of the 20th century, to the cafés of the 1930's where audiences came to listen rather than dance, to the sizzling nightclubs of the 1960's where *nuevo tango* began to emerge, and finally to the modern day concert hall of the mid-1980's, where under Piazzolla's influence, elements of jazz, classical music and tango coalesced to create an extraordinary new genre of chamber music.

Looking back over Piazzolla's musical life, we see that he was a revolutionary in the

fullest sense of the word. Not only did he reinvent the tango, but he also liberated the bandoneón from its textural role within the *orquesta típica* and brought it to the center stage. The saxophone has taken a similar path through its history, from its supportive roles in military bands and orchestras to its emergence as a solo instrument with symphony orchestras and concert wind ensembles. It is perhaps fitting that *Histoire* be played by saxophone and piano, a combination that has an important role to play in the evolution of chamber music.

Milonga del Angel (1965) This may be the first “saxophone album” to include a bonus solo piano track. Realizing we had much more music to offer, we decided to take a progressive approach beyond the usual saxophone and piano recording and offer this piano version of Piazzolla’s *Milonga del Angel*. We hope you enjoy it!

ALLEN TRUBITT (1931-2008) was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. He began his musical life as a cellist, gradually moving towards composition. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music education from the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University and his doctorate from Indiana University

in Bloomington. After teaching for 7 years at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, he joined the faculty of the University of Hawai’i in 1964 where he taught until his retirement in 1996.

As a young composer in 1962, his piece was selected by Sir John Barbirolli to be performed for Rice University’s 50th anniversary and was renamed “Rice University Semi-Centennial Overture in D”. Trubitt’s output includes two symphonies, a tone poem for band based on the legends of Maui, and numerous chamber, vocal, and choral works. His *magnum opus* is an oratorio, *Birds of Passage*, which was awarded honorable mention in the 1998 ASCAP-Nissim competition.

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1990) was composed for Todd Yukumoto. Its musical language is reminiscent of Bernard Heiden and Paul Hindemith, early teachers and influences of Trubitt’s compositional style. Frequent use of dotted rhythms and close intervallic harmonies pay homage to the aforementioned composers yet speak in his unique voice. Melodic lines in the saxophone depict a sense of longing and struggle. Meanwhile, the piano supports in exuberant explosive passages with strength and resolve, which upon reflection is a distinctive depiction of Trubitt’s persona and his life.

Amassing critical acclaim, **TODD YUKUMOTO** is establishing himself as one of the preeminent voices on the saxophone. His solo classical release, *Blue: New Music From Hawai'i* has been called, "some of the best classical saxophone playing heard anywhere" (Fanfare Magazine Nov/Dec 2004) and "a first-rate saxophone artist who possesses a rich, clear, and vibrant sound." (Saxophone Journal July/Aug 2011)

Yukumoto maintains a busy schedule as a performer in a variety of genres. For nearly 20 years, he has been first call with the Honolulu Symphony and Chamber Music Hawai'i and has appeared as a featured soloist with groups ranging from The Royal Hawaiian Band, the Anchorage Civic Orchestra, to the University of Hawai'i Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra and educational institutions around state. He also remains active in the commercial music scene recording and touring with many of Hawai'i's top groups including Kalapana, Kapena and Fiji.

In addition to his performance schedule, Yukumoto has taught as lecturer of saxophone at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa since 1995. His commitment towards music education has led him to create the

University of Hawai'i Saxophone Choir and the Hawai'i Saxophone Foundation; a non-profit organization designed to promote saxophone education and awareness through workshops, master classes and performing groups.

One of his most prestigious accomplishments has been touring and performing on tenor saxophone with the Harvey Pittel Saxophone Quartet. Yukumoto is also a saxophonist and staff arranger for the Royal Hawaiian Band.

Pianist **CARLA MCELHANEY** is highly regarded as a passionate and dynamic performing artist and coach. Nominated as "Best Classical Instrumentalist" by the Austin Critics' Table, McElhane's playing has been lauded by the Austin Chronicle as exhibiting "...an exciting mix of focus and passion."

Acting as a catalyst for innovation in the classical music field, McElhane's most recent project, the Zenith Quintet (ZQ), is an electro-acoustic ensemble dedicated to commissioning new works for piano/keyboard and saxophone quartet. In addition, McElhane is the pianist and Executive/Artistic Director for REVEL Classical Band, a unique chamber ensemble dedicated to

bringing the classical music experience back to its radical roots.

McElhane's versatility and command as a performer have made her a favored collaborative artist on several commercial and academic recordings with a variety of ensembles, as well as instrumental and vocal soloists.

In addition to her regular appearances with REVEL and ZQ, McElhane maintains an active performing schedule and has been featured as a soloist and collaborative artist with ensembles such as the Southwest Washington Symphony, Cleveland's RED {an orchestra}, NYC-based F.R.E.D. Chamber Players at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, PKW Productions, The American Repertory Ensemble, the Austin Civic Chorus, and the Austin Chamber Music Center. She currently serves on the piano faculty at Texas Lutheran University.

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Special Mahalo to:

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TODD YUKUMOTO, SAXOPHONES

NOCTURNAL

CARLA MCELHANEY, PIANO

Short Stories (8:42)

1. I. Propulsive (1:36)
2. II. Broadly, quite free (1:43)
3. III. Somewhat free (1:57)
4. IV. Laid back (3:09)

5. Air for Alto (6:27)

Nocturnal for alto saxophone and piano (17:00)

6. 12:00 am Voices in the Dark (With Bell Tolling in the Distance) (2:30)
7. 1:28 am Staring at the Traces of Passing Headlights (4:01)
8. 2:52 am Insomnia (4:02)
9. 3:46 am Howling (4:51)
10. 4:59 am Phosphorescent Fireflies (1:36)

Histoire du Tango for soprano saxophone and piano (21:06)

11. Bordel 1900 (3:45)
12. Café 1930 (8:09)
13. Night-club 1960 (6:30)
14. Concert d'aujourd'hui (3:12)

15. Sonata for alto saxophone and piano (9:30)

16. Milonga del Ángel for solo piano (3:50)

TOTAL TIME: 66:13

James Barry (ASCAP)

Arthur Frackenpohl (ASCAP)

Thomas Osborne (BMI)

Astor Piazzolla (ASCAP)

Allen Trubitt (ASCAP)

Astor Piazzolla (ASCAP)



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