

Clifford Leaman  
*saxophone*

Joseph Rackers  
*piano*

1. *Lessons of the Sky* (1985) RODNEY ROGERS 8:27

*Sonate en ut#* (1943) FERNANDE DECRUCK 14:06

2. Très modéré 4:48

3. Andante 3:04

4. Fileuse 1:57

5. Nocturne et final 4:17

*Breaking* (2011) JOHN FITZ ROGERS 17:11

6. break open 1:48

7. break with 2:04

8. break in 1:06

9. break into 1:56

10. break off 0:41

11. break down 2:49

12. break up 1:17

13. break free 1:45

14. break through 1:43

15. break away 2:02

*Greenwich Village Portraits* (2014) DAVID AMRAM 20:56

16. MacDougal Street (for Arthur Miller) 6:10

17. Bleecker Street (for Odetta) 7:24

18. Christopher Street (for Frank McCourt) 7:22

19. *Klonos* (1993) PIET SWERTS 6:23

TOTAL CD: 67:03





## RODNEY ROGERS:

### *Lessons of the Sky*

Rodney Rogers writes primarily chamber music, along with works for orchestra, wind ensemble, and vocal music. A number of his works are available on iTunes. Rogers' awards include a NEA Consortium Commission, residencies at the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo Artist Colony, "Distinguished Composer of the Year" from the Music Teachers National Association for his composition *Riffing in Tandem*, the ASCAP Foundation Grant for Young Composers (First Prize), three BMI Awards, and a composition fellowship to Tanglewood. His works have received performances with the American Composers Orchestra, Eastman Wind Ensemble, Juilliard Brass Quintet, New York New Music Ensemble, the Omega Quartet (New York City), Richmond Sinfonia, St. Louis Symphony Chamber Players, Gregg Smith Singers, Tucson Symphony, and numerous university ensembles. Performances have taken place throughout the United States and in Europe, South America, China, Japan, and Australia. Five works have been premiered in Carnegie (Weill) Recital Hall. Select compositions of Rogers are published by Associated Music Publishers (G. Schirmer) and Hal Leonard. Rogers teaches composition at Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

*Lessons of the Sky* is a work in three sections following a fast/slow/fast plan. The composition's title suggests that by observing the sky—open, alive, seemingly infinite—we may gain knowledge. The music uses a collection of motives presented in a quick and ever-changing rhythmic background to express the energy and quixotic nature of our atmosphere. These motives are constantly varied (expanded, compressed, altered melodically and harmonically) with their order of appearance continually rearranged. The shortest motive is the single note, the stopped low F# on the piano. The sound

that results from striking this key is percussive in nature. Energy and tension is built through quick shifts between motives and by sudden changes from animated presentations to calmer repetitive versions of motivic material. At the center of the piece is a slow section: nearly motionless, it contains little repetition and emphasizes lyrical lines in the saxophone and sparse textures in the piano. Here the low F# takes on a somber character, in stark contrast to the propulsive quality it conveys in the opening and closing sections. Patterns from the first part reappear in the final portion of the piece in increasingly animated forms. Constant variation and reordering culminates in a dynamic peak that closes the work.



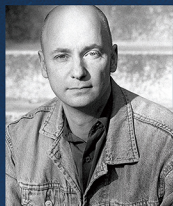
## FERNANDE DECRUCK:

### *Sonate en ut#* *pour saxophone alto et orchestre*

French composer Fernande Decruck (1896-1954) wrote numerous works for the saxophone, most of which have since fallen into obscurity. The *Sonata in C#*, however, has gained extensive popularity in recent years, becoming a staple in the saxophone repertoire. The work was written in 1943 and dedicated to Marcel Mule, although a solo viola version exists as well. Taking into consideration the discrepancies between the saxophone and viola parts, it would appear that the *Sonata* was originally written for viola. With the permission of the publisher and the heirs of the composer, this recording features several passages from the viola part that are inserted in place of the saxophone part. These passages occur in places where the range of the viola part appears to be compressed to avoid excessive altissimo, or where notes were left out to allow time for breathing in the wind instrument part.



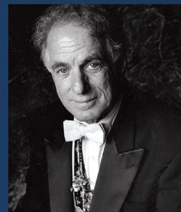
The *Sonata in C#* utilizes a traditional four-movement setting: a sonata-form opening movement, a slow second movement, a “fileuse” (spinning song) substituting for the traditional scherzo, and a two-part fourth movement with a rondo-like final section. The harmonic language throughout this work is Neo-Impressionistic, utilizing nonfunctional harmonic motion such as parallelism, and other compositional techniques that were commonplace in the Impressionistic works of Ravel and Debussy.



## JOHN FITZ ROGERS: *Breaking*

Composer **John Fitz Rogers** is professor of music at the University of South Carolina. He holds degrees in music from Cornell University, the Yale School of Music, and Oberlin College, where he studied composition, piano, and conducting; his composition teachers included Steven Stucky, Roberto Sierra, Martin Bresnick, and Jacob Druckman. Rogers has written several previous works for the saxophone, including *A Savage Calculus* for alto saxophone and piano, *Release* for alto saxophone and marimba, *Prodigal Child* for saxophone quartet, and a concerto for alto saxophone and wind ensemble, *The Rivers*, which was featured at the World Saxophone Congress in Thailand in 2009. His work is published by Base Two Music Publishing.

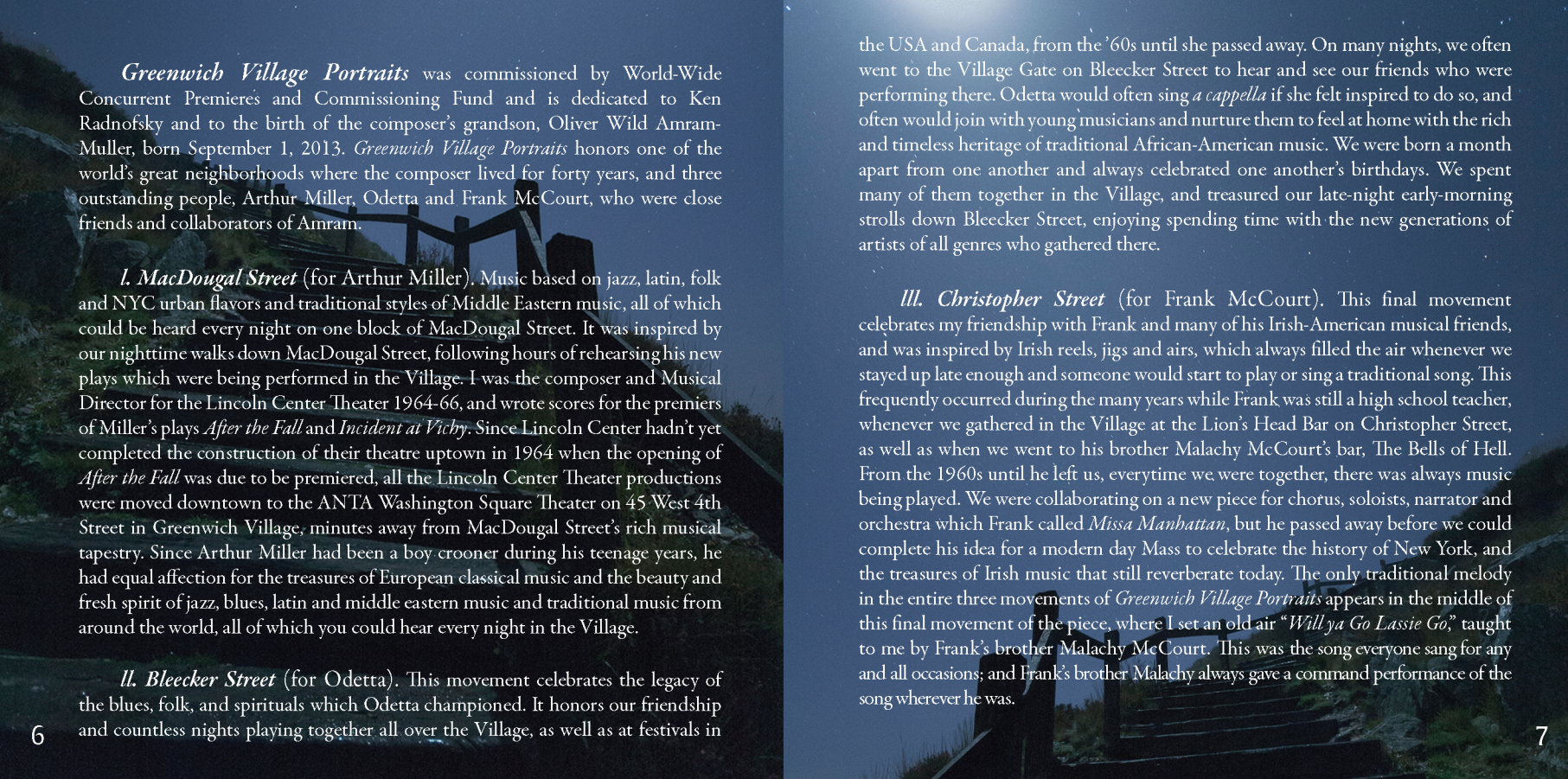
*Breaking* was commissioned by Christopher Creviston, David Stambler, Joe Lulloff and Clifford Leaman. A “suite of ten short character pieces, each of which portrays a different idea of ‘breaking,” it uses a variety of timbres and colors to create a wide variety of moods. Rogers writes: “The movements range from bold and joyous (*break open, break into, break away*); to fragile and fractured (*break with, break off, break up*); to shades of dark and light (*break down, break through*); to lyrical (*break free*); to playful (*break in*—which borrows musical ideas from Anton Webern’s *Symphony, Opus 21*). The work also exploits various kinds of saxophone techniques, including alternate fingerings (*break with*), and jazz idioms (*break into, break down*).



## DAVID AMRAM: *Greenwich Village Portraits*

**David Amram** started his professional life in music in the early 1950s playing French horn in the legendary jazz bands of Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton. Appointed by Leonard Bernstein as the first Composer in Residence for the New York Philharmonic in 1966, he also composed the scores for the films *Pull My Daisy* (1959), *Splendor in the Grass* (1960) and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962). He composed the scores for Joseph Papp’s *Shakespeare in the Park* from 1956-1967 and again worked with Papp on the comic opera *12th Night* in 1968. He also wrote a second opera, *The Final Ingredient: An Opera of the Holocaust*, for ABC Television in 1965. From 1964-66, Amram was the Composer and Music Director for the Lincoln Center Theatre and wrote the score for Arthur Miller’s play *After the Fall* (1964).





*Greenwich Village Portraits* was commissioned by World-Wide Concurrent Premieres and Commissioning Fund and is dedicated to Ken Radnofsky and to the birth of the composer's grandson, Oliver Wild Amram-Muller, born September 1, 2013. *Greenwich Village Portraits* honors one of the world's great neighborhoods where the composer lived for forty years, and three outstanding people, Arthur Miller, Odetta and Frank McCourt, who were close friends and collaborators of Amram.

*I. MacDougal Street* (for Arthur Miller). Music based on jazz, latin, folk and NYC urban flavors and traditional styles of Middle Eastern music, all of which could be heard every night on one block of MacDougal Street. It was inspired by our nighttime walks down MacDougal Street, following hours of rehearsing his new plays which were being performed in the Village. I was the composer and Musical Director for the Lincoln Center Theater 1964-66, and wrote scores for the premiers of Miller's plays *After the Fall* and *Incident at Vichy*. Since Lincoln Center hadn't yet completed the construction of their theatre uptown in 1964 when the opening of *After the Fall* was due to be premiered, all the Lincoln Center Theater productions were moved downtown to the ANTA Washington Square Theater on 45 West 4th Street in Greenwich Village, minutes away from MacDougal Street's rich musical tapestry. Since Arthur Miller had been a boy crooner during his teenage years, he had equal affection for the treasures of European classical music and the beauty and fresh spirit of jazz, blues, latin and middle eastern music and traditional music from around the world, all of which you could hear every night in the Village.

*II. Bleecker Street* (for Odetta). This movement celebrates the legacy of the blues, folk, and spirituals which Odetta championed. It honors our friendship and countless nights playing together all over the Village, as well as at festivals in

the USA and Canada, from the '60s until she passed away. On many nights, we often went to the Village Gate on Bleecker Street to hear and see our friends who were performing there. Odetta would often sing *a cappella* if she felt inspired to do so, and often would join with young musicians and nurture them to feel at home with the rich and timeless heritage of traditional African-American music. We were born a month apart from one another and always celebrated one another's birthdays. We spent many of them together in the Village, and treasured our late-night early-morning strolls down Bleecker Street, enjoying spending time with the new generations of artists of all genres who gathered there.

*III. Christopher Street* (for Frank McCourt). This final movement celebrates my friendship with Frank and many of his Irish-American musical friends, and was inspired by Irish reels, jigs and airs, which always filled the air whenever we stayed up late enough and someone would start to play or sing a traditional song. This frequently occurred during the many years while Frank was still a high school teacher, whenever we gathered in the Village at the Lion's Head Bar on Christopher Street, as well as when we went to his brother Malachy McCourt's bar, The Bells of Hell. From the 1960s until he left us, everytime we were together, there was always music being played. We were collaborating on a new piece for chorus, soloists, narrator and orchestra which Frank called *Missa Manhattan*, but he passed away before we could complete his idea for a modern day Mass to celebrate the history of New York, and the treasures of Irish music that still reverberate today. The only traditional melody in the entire three movements of *Greenwich Village Portraits* appears in the middle of this final movement of the piece, where I set an old air "Will ya Go Lassie Go," taught to me by Frank's brother Malachy McCourt. This was the song everyone sang for any and all occasions; and Frank's brother Malachy always gave a command performance of the song wherever he was.





# PIET SWERTS:

## *Klonos (1993)*

Belgian born composer **Piet Swerts** (b. 1960) is an accomplished pianist, conductor, educator, and composer. He studied at the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven where he was the first to have earned ten first prizes for both composition and piano. He has composed many works including oratorios, operas, chamber, choral, and band music, as well as solos for various instruments such as saxophone and bassoon. He currently serves as Professor of Composition, Analysis, and Piano at the same institute where he studied.

The piece is a one-movement work divided into three sections: ABA'. The composer writes, "Klonos, a Greek word that refers to 'a cramp-like contraction of the muscles,' associated with heavy movements that some saxophonists make during the fire of playing. The work is a bravura-like fantasy with a more subtle, yet intense middle section. *Klonos* finishes with a wild even more virtuosic reprise. For the gifted saxophonist, it is quite a ride."

*David Amram photo:* Courtesy of Chris Felver and the David Amram Archive

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