

FRESH INK

DUO ENTRE-NOUS

JACKIE GLAZIER
CLARINET

DON-PAUL KAHL
SAXOPHONE



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Fresh Ink is a fitting title for this album in many ways. Firstly, the works are relatively new - the earliest piece dates from 2012 and the most recent was completed in March 2021, shortly before this album's release. Furthermore, all but one piece was written specifically for Duo Entre-Nous (D2), and we believe each of these pieces is quite fresh in its own invigorating, imaginative, and renewing way. Lastly, the compositional process of these works was under consideration up until hours before their premiere, imbuing them with this sense of continual renewal. This type of dynamism is in direct contrast to the classical commissioning route where the work is delivered, the performer plays the piece (maybe just once or twice), and then it is forever forgotten to time.

The music on this album is as diverse as the composers' backgrounds, styles, and harmonic languages. The virtuosity and tonal warmth of Haber is set against the playfulness and nervous energetics of Amchin. Kay He's piece explores a gorgeous landscape of color and textures in her reference to Chinese mythology, while Max Grafe's piece utilizes the very technical essence of a wind duo - air - as a musical narrative tool to describe Greek mythological figures. Li has devised a clever and playful repetitive sequence in her work, whereas Luc throws sequence on its head and develops mirrored musical gestures that end up shattering each other until all that is left is a deeply haunting melody. Lemay's work presents a short landscape using the idea of the duo as an engine for articulated and decisive interplay. And finally, Biedenbender writes a quaint and fitting ode, in this duo's namesake: *between us* (entre-nous), commenting on the different ways in which the sentiment 'between us' can be manifested - from the joyous to the most pained expressions of familial opposition.

We release this album in a year of almost infinite uncertainty. As humankind is restrained by a global pandemic, a geo-political climate that is precarious and divisive, and the almost universal change to all facets of life, we must all turn to that which brings meaning and fulfillment in our lives. It is our very hopeful wish that you enjoy this musical offering and that it can bring some fulfillment and be a bright light from the 2021 year.

We are beyond thankful to the eight composers who have brought us these pieces, which have challenged and fulfilled us over the past five years. We will continue to support and advocate for their music and for new music.

PURITY GUARANTEED (2020) - Yotam Haber (b. 1976)

An artistic confirmation of the possibilities of this duo, **Purity Guaranteed** is a work arranged and adapted by composer Yotam Haber from an earlier piece bearing the same name. The original work was written for a duo of flute and violin. The transference of these distinctly and disparately colored instruments to that of saxophone and clarinet proved a worthy challenge for Haber. The outcome of this arrangement of the piece is a testament to the orchestration genius of Yotam Haber and the artistic malleability of the saxophone and clarinet duo itself.

Structurally the piece is partitioned into three separate yet through-composed movements. Each movement is named after Gérard Grisey's ideas of temporality - the skeleton of time, the flesh of time, and the skin of time. This idea projects the conceptual nature of temporality as it progresses from its objective base structures (skeleton time), to a more full-bodied and detailed understanding (flesh time), to the final arrival of a subjective and more individualistic form of temporal treatment (skin time).

This incredibly virtuosic work asks the performers to play into the stratosphere of their tessituras while also allowing a lyrical beauty to preside over the soft intertwined melodies of the first and third movements. The use of both alto and soprano saxophone playing in the same work gives the tonal landscape of the piece a broader breadth, exaggerating the difference in the aforementioned temporal progression.

Purity Guaranteed was adapted specifically for Duo Entre-Nous and was premiered as part of the 2019 Musica Nova Festival.

FOAM AND SUN (2019) - Yuanyuan (Kay) He (b. 1985)

For the setting of **Foam and Sun**, Kay He was inspired by the story of "Jingwei" from Chinese mythology, which she used to tell a deeply personal story. In the myth-

ical tale, the emperor's youngest daughter is drowned in the sea and transforms into a bird called Jingwei. Jingwei is determined to fill up the sea and attempts to do so by dropping pebbles and twigs one at a time into the ocean. The story illustrates the characteristics of courage and determination in the face of all odds. Kay resonates with this story as a Chinese-born woman living in America. She is determined to defy any and all obstacles that are in the path to her goals, while also representing a voice that fights for emancipation and true equality.

Kay He employs both fixed and live electronics to create a colorful sound world. She uses extended techniques such as glissandi and various slap tongues to convey the sound of the bird and pebbles dropping. The outer sections are lyrical with a rhythmic beat box section in the middle, followed by two virtuosic solo cadenzas.

Foam and Sun was written in 2019 for Duo Entre-Nous and was premiered at the University of Arizona.

ANEMOI DANCES (2020) - Max Grafe (b. 1988)

Imagery and its ties to a larger narrative play an integral part in Max Grafe's work **Anemoi Dances**. Each movement represents, in name and character, one of the four main wind gods - playing on their fanciful descriptions.

The *Anemoi* were the gods of the wind in ancient Greek mythology. In addition to the wind, each god held purview over a different season and, so too, a cardinal direction. *Boreas* was the god of the cold, northerly wind and brought with him the chill of winter. *Zephyrus* was the god of the revitalizing and fresh west wind. He was known as the messenger of spring. *Notus* is the god of the southern, hot wind and the harbinger of summer. *Eurus*, with his eastern wind, was the god of autumn.

Reflecting on this idea and character of wind and air, Grafe has carefully and cleverly weaved several extended techniques into the musical fabric of his four dances.

Both members of the duo produce wind sounds in various ways - half air-half sound, full air, and without the mouthpiece attached. These sounds give character to the various wind gods - from a forceful gush of air to a gentle breeze. Through these integrated sonic landscapes, the true nature of the gods comes alive in their short musical dramas.

Anemoi Dances was written in 2020 and was premiered at the North American Saxophone Alliance National Conference in Tempe, AZ.

DOUBLE FAULT (2018) - Robert Lemay (b. 1960) Known for his innovative and captivating sound worlds, Canadian composer Robert Lemay is no stranger to the saxophone. Having worked with many of the most celebrated and legendary saxophonists of our time, Robert Lemay has an incredibly prolific output for the instrument. As part of his larger series of short duos featuring the saxophone and another instrument, it is fitting that he would compose a duo for saxophone and clarinet.

The title, **Double Fault**, evokes a regulatory tennis term when the server of the ball has two unsuccessful serves in a row. The point to which this idea is heard in the music is less overtly stated but rather subtly referenced. The clarinet and saxophone both 'serve' several different lines to one another, sometimes missing the



mark with each other and sometimes involving a played out set. These rhythmically complex lines are skillfully intertwined with articulations either matching, echoing, or purposefully offset from each other. This gives the music a lively yet pointillistic shading.

Double Fault was composed specifically for Duo Entre-Nous after Robert Lemay heard the duo perform live in Zagreb, Croatia. The work is available for purchase through Note en Bulle éditions.

TOONS (2012) - Ron Amchin (b. 1990) Written in 2012, **Toons** is the only piece on the album that was not written for nor commissioned by Duo Entre-Nous. This is, however, the first commercial recording of the piece. Inspired by popular cartoons of the past, **Toons** is written for soprano saxophone and Bb clarinet, with the soprano positioned as the lead voice. This creates a unique and beautiful sound where it is often difficult to distinguish between the clarinet and saxophone, as the timbres in this range are quite similar. The piece is extremely virtuosic and pushes the two instruments to the limit of their range and technique. The first movement, **The Roadrunner's Dash**, depicts the popular Looney Tunes cartoon of roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote dashing through the desert. It sounds as if the Roadrunner might finally be caught at the end of the movement. The second movement,

The Bassinet, is lovely and lyrical in nature and gradually builds to the virtuosic third movement, **Vamoose!** Amchin employs running pseudo-chromatic motives and passes melody between the two instruments so rapidly that it is almost impossible to distinguish the two instruments from each other. This builds to a climatic and intense ending.

AIR MIRRORS (2018) - María Eugenia Luc (b. 1958)

Written in the spring and early summer of 2018, **Air Mirrors** stands in stark contrast to the other works on this album. Here the influence of the European spectral movement is easily heard in the harmonic sweeps, the pulsating beatings of microtonality against non-microtonal tones, and the articulated microtonal passages. Italian-Argentinian composer María Eugenia Luc has employed many techniques that infuse air sounds into the delicate fabric of the work's sonic environment. These include saxophone without mouthpiece air pitch, air sound with fluttertongue, and subtone transforming into normal sound which in turn transforms into air pitch. Expanding on her repertoire of techniques, which she implements beautifully, Luc takes advantage of the saxophone's expansive multiphonic repertoire in the final part of the work.

The members of the duo act as a sort of mirror to each other in the piece. For instance, a statement is made by the clarinet which is then echoed in retrograde inversion by the saxophone, giving the piece this mirrored aspect. This concept, however, gradually deconstructs itself as the echoes of the mirrors can no longer be heard. The concept eventually implodes on itself and the only thing that is left is the lonely melody of the end.

The work is structured into three disparate yet unequivocally linked sections. The first section is almost a warm-up - if you were not aware, you would think that the musicians are only just getting their instruments ready to be played - with many soft air sounds and subtone notes weaving complex yet subtle textures between the two instruments. This leads to a natural crescendo in activity and organically

makes way for the second part which introduces new sounds - slaps, bisbigliandi, scalar harmonic arrays, and quarter tones. The final part of the work features a slow, longing melody in the clarinet accompanied by both robust and fragile multiphonics in the saxophone.

The commission of this work was supported by The Government of the Basque Country. It was premiered in July 2018 at the International Clarinet Association Conference in Ostend, Belgium.

CIRCLING (2019) - Yunfei Li (b. 1992)

Chinese composer Yunfei Li composed **Circling** for Duo Entre-Nous in 2019. In this piece, Li intricately crafts the duo's voices to create energetic and dynamic interplay. The saxophone and clarinet often seem as if they are chasing each other as the melodies weave in and out and back and forth. Li also uses harmonic gestures from the pentatonic scale, inspired by traditional Chinese music. The result is an energetic and frenetic composition delightful for both the performers and audience.

Circling was written as part of a residency with the 2019 Musica Nova festival at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music.

BETWEEN US (2021) - David Biedenbender (b. 1984)

COMPOSER DAVID BIEDENBENDER OFFERS HIS OWN EXPLANATION OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY WORK WHICH IS BOTH POIGNANT AND PERSONAL:

between us was written in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been one of the strangest and more difficult times in my life, as I am sure it has been for many others. Collectively, we have shared many of the same challenges, but I also know that each person's experience of this time has been quite different. Some have struggled with fear, anxiety, loneliness, and loss. Some have had to face the challenges of life and work without access to many important social structures. And

some have confronted the pandemic more directly each day. It has also been a particularly tumultuous time socially and politically. Technology has allowed us to connect with each other in really powerful and positive ways, but it has also siloed us into more homogeneous spaces, allowing us to construct vastly different perceptions of reality. Over time, it has diminished our ability to communicate with empathy and understanding, especially with those who are different from us.

Each movement of **between us** meditates on a different meaning of this phrase. One of my favorite things about chamber music is the vulnerability and trust that lie at the center of it - it is an imperative - and this is especially true with a duo. It is both a challenge and an opportunity. The first movement - **What is?** - poses this question at a time when the fracturing of our social fabric has divided families and severed relationships. In the past year it has felt like there are so many things between us, so many things separating us from each other. The clarinet and saxophone spend much of this movement in an absurd, dissonant hocket, wildly trading back and forth—talking past each other. Movement two is inspired by the French phrase **entre nous**, which articulates a more private, intimate connotative meaning of the phrase *between us*. Much of the music in this movement is soft, close, and melancholy - individual lines weaving in and out of each other with fleeting moments of unison. The final movement is entitled **Metaxy**, which is a Greek word defined as the “in-between” or “middle ground.” **Metaxy** originates from Plato’s **Symposium** and plays a central role in the work of the modern political philosopher Eric Voegelin. As an idea, it is rich in meanings and transcends brief description, but it can be thought of as the polar tension or the connector

between time and eternity, between the origin of being (**Apeiron**) - the material realm - and what lies beyond being (**epekeina**). This music is a dance, bristling with playful, exuberant energy and filled with interplay and echoes - reverberant reflections of time and space.

between us was written for and dedicated to Duo Entre-Nous. The work was commissioned with the partial support of a consortium of saxophonists and clarinetists. The premiere of this work took place at Northern Michigan University as part of their 2021 Virtual Concert Series in April 2021.

DUO ENTRE-NOUS (D2)

Duo Entre-Nous (duo between us) is a clarinet and saxophone ensemble dedicated to the evolution and continued progression of new music. Formed in 2014 by clarinetist Jackie Glazier and saxophonist Don-Paul Kahl, the duo focuses on the performance and commission of new repertoire. The mission of the ensemble is to advocate for the unique sounds and artistic merits of the saxophone/clarinet duo and explore its fascinating possibilities. Since 2014 the duo has commissioned composers from the United States, Australia, Canada, China, France, and Argentina, garnering new pieces in a variety of styles. As they expand their repertoire, the duo supports the commissioning of composers from underrepresented groups, seeking to aid the creation and promotion of their works.

D2 can be heard on their debut album, entitled “Fresh Ink” released in 2021 on Equilibrium Records, as well as

Gregory Wanamaker's composer portrait album, "Light and Shadows, Waves and Time," released on Navona Records in 2018. They premiered Scott McAllister's "Concerto Americana" for clarinet, saxophone, and wind ensemble in 2016 with the University of Florida Wind Symphony, David Waybright conducting. Duo Entre-Nous will appear as an invited guest artist ensemble at the Kuraia Festival in Bilbao, Spain in 2022. Previous festivals and invitations include the Musica Nova Festival in Kansas City, MO (2019) and ensemble in residence for the Maryland Wind Festival (2015). Other notable performances include the North American Saxophone Alliance Conference (2020), the World Saxophone Congress in Croatia (2018), and the International Clarinet Association Conference in Belgium (2018).

Devoted to music education, the duo holds teaching positions in the United States and Europe. They are active in teaching guest masterclasses, performances, and lectures at universities and conservatories throughout the United States and Europe. Recognized both nationally and internationally, the duo's mission is to bring excellence in performance and practice to all avenues of their work. Individually, Jackie and Don-Paul have won major international competitions for clarinet and saxophone, respectively.

Duo Entre-Nous is a Vandoren France endorsed artist ensemble, and performs exclusively on Vandoren mouthpieces and reeds.

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