

THE AMBASSADOR DUO

The Ambassador Duo, formed in 1990, is comprised of saxophonist Clifford L. Leaman and pianist Derek J. Parsons. Both members hold the Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in performance from The University of Michigan where they met as graduate students in the mid - 1980's. Currently they serve on the faculty of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina as well as the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts.

Prior to his appointment at Furman, Leaman served on the faculty at Eastern Michigan University, and was visiting professor of saxophone at The University of Michigan. His teachers include Donald Sinta and David Bilger. Leaman is in great demand as a soloist and clinician and has performed and given clinics extensively throughout the Eastern United States. Previous recordings include Henry Brant's Concerto for Saxophone with Nine Instruments (Redwood Records) and Ernst Pepping's Suite für Trompete, Saxophon, und Posaune (CRS) on compact disc. An avid supporter of contemporary music, he has commissioned and given the world premiere performances of numerous pieces and is the editor of new music reviews for The Saxophone Symposium. Leaman is an artist-clinician for the Selmer Company, Inc.

Parsons, a native of Newfoundland, Canada, began his musical studies at the age of four and gave his first piano concerto performance at age twelve. He has performed extensively throughout the eastern United States and Canada as both soloist and collaborative musician, including performances for SCETV, South Carolina Educational Radio, and CBC Radio and Television in Canada, and has performed with such prominent musicians as saxophonist Donald Sinta, baritone Kevin McMillan, and the Penderecki String Quartet. He is in demand as a pianist, orchestral soloist, clinician, and adjudicator in the Carolinas and abroad.

Since their debut at the 1990 Southwest Contemporary Music Festival and Conference in San Marcos, Texas, The Ambassador Duo has been active throughout the eastern and midwestern United States as performers and clinicians, appearing at numerous colleges, universities, and concert venues from Green Bay, WI to Atlanta, GA. Their repertoire covers a wide range, from baroque transcriptions to the most recent avant-garde works for saxophone and piano. They are regularly invited to perform at the national meetings of the North American Saxophone Alliance, and were invited to give the world premiere of Mark Kilostofe's Sonata at the XI World Saxophone Congress in Valencia, Spain.

Duo Concertante

Duo Concertante was commissioned by New York's Concert Artists Guild for saxophonist Stephen Jordheim, winner of the Guild's 1985 national performer's competition. Mr. Jordheim gave the premiere with pianist Ted Rehl in Carnegie Recital Hall on May 21, 1985, to high acclaim. The five movements - Driving, Lyrical, Unhurried, Ascending, Dramatic - demonstrate the admirable blend of alto saxophone with piano, call for virtuosity and sensitivity, and occasionally display the saxophone's remarkably climactic altissimo register. Motives within the music are often formed from ascending scales or arpeggios, which turn lyrical at the tops of phrases. The performers are usually in dialogue with one another. The score (Edition Peters 67083) is published by C. F. Peters Corporation, 373 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, in attractive facsimile of the composer's manuscript. Mr. Bassett's *Music for Saxophone and Piano* (Edition Peters 66268) is also available from Peters.

Leslie Bassett

Leslie Bassett was born in Hanford, California (1923) and was raised in the San Joaquin Valley. His early training included piano and trombone. During World War II, he served over three years in army bands as a trombonist, arranger and composer, and later he studied composition with such notables as Ross Lee Finney, Arthur Honegger, and Nadia Boulanger. His many honors and awards include the Pulitzer Prize in Music, the Prix de Rome, a Fulbright Fellowship, two Guggenheim Fellowships, as well as commissions from the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, the Koussevitsky Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Mr. Bassett joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1952 and later served as Chair of the Composition Department there. In 1984, he was appointed the Henry Russell Lecturer, the university's highest faculty honor. He is currently Albert A. Stanley Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Music and continues his influence on the rising generation of composers to this day. Bassett's works have been performed by the orchestras of New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Detroit, Syracuse, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, the American Composers Orchestra, as well as the radio orchestras of Rome, Zurich, and the Netherlands. In addition to orchestral pieces, he has written extensively for wind ensemble, choir, voice, and a wide variety of chamber music combinations. His catalogue contains over one hundred works.

Distances Within Me

In *Distances Within Me*, John Anthony Lennon presents an array of emotions or memories which the composer has immersed in a loose, stream-of-consciousness form. Lennon mingles diatonic, modal, and chromatic elements freely throughout the work. His approach to rhythm is similar: he combines sections of strict rhythmic writing with freer, more rhapsodic sections. Though composed freely, the work is not without recurrences; and earlier musical events emerge randomly from the work's protean haze. In the seemingly "unsynchronized blur" of musical events, Lennon employs techniques similar to those of the Impressionists who were so captivated by "blurring the senses" in their poetry, visual arts and music. This synesthetic effect seems to be at the warm central core of the work. Additionally, Lennon's emphasis on contrasting tone color and sonority further allies him with this school of artists. *Distances Within Me* was commissioned by James Forger and was first performed at the Sixth World Saxophone Congress in Chicago in 1979.

John Anthony Lennon

John A. Lennon joined the faculty at Emory University in 1994. He holds a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from the University of San Francisco and a master's degree and doctorate from the University of Michigan. Professor Lennon is the recipient of the Guggenheim, Prix de Rome and Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) scholarships. He has been a fellow at

Tanglewood as well as the Yaddo, MacDowell, and Villa Montaloni Colonies, the Ives Center, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and the Composers Conference. Awards have been received from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Composers Alliance, the Friedheim Awards, and others. Commissions have been composed for the Library of Congress, the Fromm Foundation, the John F. Kennedy Center, and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players among others. Lennon is published by E.C. Schirmer, C.F. Peters, Mel Bay, Woodwind Services, the Columbia University, and Oxford University Presses. He is recorded on CRI, Bridge Records, the Society of Composers/Capstone, and MMC labels.

Lilith

Lilith, the subject of William Bolcom's work of the same name, is the central female demon in Jewish folklore, though references to her appear in the writings of many religions. The diverse accounts of the legend include Lilith as Adam's first wife, a consort of Dracula, or temptation personified in the form of a serpent. In most of these legends, both ancient and modern, Lilith figures prominently into nightmares and erotic dreams. Bolcom's work is comprised of 5 programmatic movements, each of which recounts some aspect of the Lilith legends. Bolcom states: "Lilith is the despair of the orderly, particularly the religious orderly (Succuba is a little vignette of a monk asleep, tormented by sexual fantasies, and the Succuba is nothing but those fantasies). She makes animal sounds like owls, hyenas, and kites and spends her time in her lair. When cornered she spits like a cat. She has a certain kind of rueful tenderness which is never understood by everyone she frightens. Men are frightened by the spectre of the Female unleashed. Lilith doesn't obey any rules of conduct; she laughs at religious laws; she is the door to chaos." With a description like this it is not surprising that Bolcom incorporates the full range of extended techniques into his work. The piece is full of extended altissimo writing, wild dynamic contrasts, flutter tonguing, growls, snarls, multi-phonics, plucked strings for the piano, and a broad spectrum of fiendishly difficult technical passages for both saxophone and piano. *Lilith* was commissioned by the National Endowment of the Arts Consortium in 1983, and since its composition the following year has become a staple in the saxophone repertoire.

William Bolcom, recipient of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for music, has received commissions from the Vienna Philharmonic (Salzburg Mozarteum), Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Domaine Musical, Koussevitsky Foundation, Saarlandischer Rundfunk, American Composers Orchestra, Saint Louis National and Pacific Symphonies, Lyric Opera of Chicago and many others. As piano soloist, accompanist (primarily to mezzo-soprano Joan Morris, his wife and a member of the University of Michigan Musical Theatre faculty) and composer, Mr. Bolcom is represented on recordings for Nonesuch, Deutsche Grammophon, RCA, CBS, Musical Heritage Society, Arabesque, Jazzology, Vox, Advance, CRI, Phillips, Laurel, First Edition, Newport Classics, Omega, Vanguard, Argo, Koch Classics, Crystal, New World, Folkways and others. Mr. Bolcom has been admitted to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, holds honorary doctorates from the San Francisco Conservatory and Albion College and is the recipient of the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished Professorship at the University of Michigan, where he is Chair of the Composition Department. Edward B. Marks Music and Bolcom Music are his principal publishers.

Sonata for saxophone and piano

Mark Kilstoff's *Sonata for saxophone and piano* was commissioned by the Ambassador Duo, and premiered by Cliff Leaman and Derek Parsons at the XI World Saxophone Congress in Valencia, Spain on September 28, 1997. The work's movement titles suggest a Baroque sentiment, served here with an unmistakably [post] modern twist. The tone, however, is frequently

William Bolcom

Mark Kilstoff

one of restraint, and it is this sustained delicate, coupled with an exceedingly eclectic palate, that forms the composition's chief technical and artistic challenge. The piece begins softly with a quasi-homage to J. S. Bach (albeit with considerably more reverb). In the ensuing recitative, G. & S. meet M. C. Hammer (maybe L. L. Cool J.) in a static, but often mesmerizing assemblage of prepared piano, slap-tongue effects, and metronome obligato. The variations that follow, the true focal point of the composition, are at once sublime, introspective, yet often shallow, and constitute the most schizophrenic portion of the work as a whole. The music flits from thought to thought in true stream-of-consciousness fashion, yet, despite this multiple personality disorder, the twenty[-]jodd "rewordings" of the theme combine to presage an elegiac procession and soaring sax line of considerable meaning near the conclusion. Allowing little time for reflection, though, the duo attacks the closing toccata. The attentive listener will easily supply the final note.

Mark Kilstoffe holds degrees from St. Olaf College and the University of Michigan, where he studied with Leslie Bassett, William Bolcom, Eugene Kurtz, William Albright, and George Wilson. His awards include grants and fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, the Knight Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the South Carolina Arts Commission. In addition to winning ASCAP's Rudolf Nissim Award, his music was also selected for inclusion in the National Orchestral Association's New Music Orchestral Project and received the West Virginia Symphony/Museum in the Community's Composer's Award for String Quartet. He currently teaches at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. His music is published by Boelke-Bomart, the Newmatic Press, and Warner/Chappell.

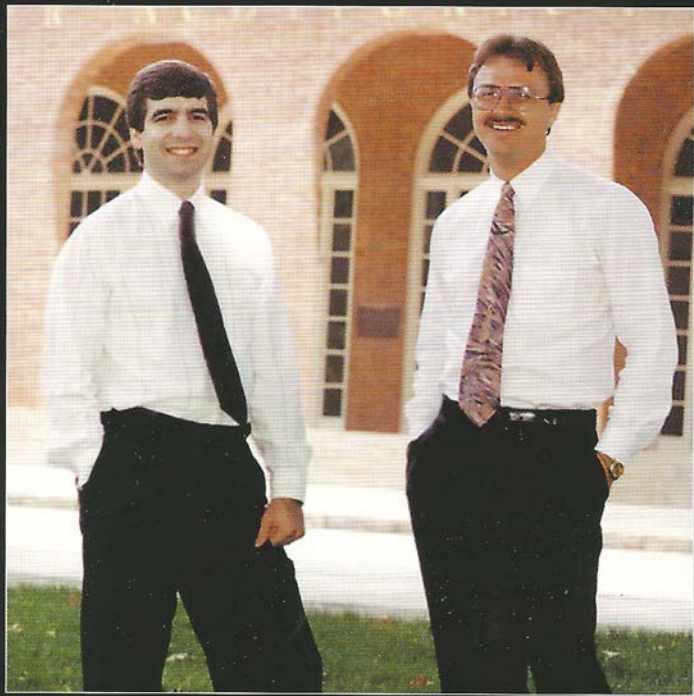
Brilliance

Ida Gotkovsky's (b. 1933) *Brilliance* is a four-movement work dedicated to exploring the sonic capabilities and technical extremes of the saxophone. In movement one, "Declame," Gotkovsky moves from one dynamic extreme to the other, whispering in lyrical pianissimo one moment and raging with a strong fortissimo the next. Throughout the movement the free rhythms and recitative writing gives the listener the strong impression of witnessing an ongoing improvisation. Movement two, "Desinvolte," is essentially a dance-like scherzo and bears the instruction "with humor." Sections of light, rapid tonguing alternate with more sustained passages that suggest the lilt of a eighteenth-century gigue. The rhythmic motives move in and out of the printed meters and implied meters abound. In "Dolcissimo," Gotkovsky returns to the tempo and improvisatory quality of the first movement, but now with genuine tenderness and savor. Most of the movement is steeped in a gentle quiet, and even the arching forte climax in the middle cadences in a hushed and singing pianissimo. The fourth movement, "Final," is formally the clearest of the four movements and is written in four major sections. The movement begins with a highly-kinetic, perpetual motion section which leads to the second section, a dramatic cadenza. A mixed-meter section follows which features quick, light articulations, which recalls the character of the second movement. The movement concludes with a return to the rapid, arpeggiated "moto perpetuo" with which it began. As each of the sections is reminiscent of one of the earlier movements, "Final" seems to summarize *Brilliance* as a whole.

Ida Gotkovsky

Pianist and composer **Ida-Rose Esther Gotkovsky** was born in Calais, France in 1933. She attended the Paris Conservatoire where she studied with Olivier Messiaen and Nadia Boulanger, and where she won numerous prizes in composition. In addition to her studies in Paris, Gotkovsky also studied at the University of Texas, where she began writing more works for American commissions. She is a prolific composer and her works include 8 concertos, 4 symphonies, a ballet, an opera, and numerous solo and chamber works. In 1992, Gotkovsky was commissioned to write a work for the opening of the Winter Olympics, and the resulting work, *Oratorio Olympique* became an international success.

THE AMBASSADOR DUO



Clifford Leaman, saxophone ♦ Derek Parsons, piano

Duo Concertante (BMI) 15:15

Leslie Bassett

1. *Driving* 3:49
2. *Lyrical* 3:14
3. *Unhurried* 3:35
4. *Ascending* 1:32
5. *Dramatic* 3:05

6. Distances Within Me (BMI) 11:13

John Anthony Lennon

Lilith (BMI) 14:42

William Bolcom

7. *The Female Demon* 2:59
8. *Succuba* 3:21
9. *Will-o'-the-wisp* 1:35
10. *Child-Stealer* 2:57
11. *The Night Dance* 3:49

Sonata for alto saxophone and piano (ASCAP) 15:12

Mark Kilstofte

12. *Prelude* 3:09
13. *Recitative* 3:05
14. *Theme and Variations* 5:28
15. *Toccata* 3:30

Brilliance (ASCAP) 8:42

Ida Gotkovsky

16. *Déclamé* 1:48
17. *Desinvolve* 1:40
18. *Dolcissimo* 2:24
19. *Final* 2:50

TOTAL TIME: 65:48

Producer: Michael W. Udow

Engineering and Editing: Dwight Robinett

Recorded May 27-29, 1998 in Daniel Recital Hall, Furman University, Greenville, SC

Cover Art Work by Diane Hopkins-Hughs,
hand-colored photograph of the Atrium from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Program Notes: Dr. Gary Malvern, Mark Kilstofte, Leslie Bassett

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