

## Quartet No. 1 - Russell S. Howland

**Russell S. Howland** was born in 1908 near Kirksville, Missouri. Following high school graduation he located in New York and performed as a woodwind specialist. Later, Howland attended the University of Illinois where he earned the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees. He spent many years in the teaching profession, first in public schools in Wisconsin and Colorado. After 27 years of teaching woodwinds, harp and theory, Howland retired from California State University at Fresno.

Howland composed two saxophone quartets and professed a love for the medium. In his own words: "I feel that the saxophone quartet (SATB) is a very rewarding medium for that instrument and that its potential more nearly approaches the string quartet than any other woodwind ensemble." Possibly no better example of American saxophone quartet literature exists than Howland's first quartet.

## Contrapunctus VII from the Art of Fugue - J.S. Bach

The *Art of Fugue* is the last of Johann Sebastian Bach's great monothematic cycles. For some time it has been speculated that Bach (1685-1750) was composing the *Art of Fugue* at the time of his death; however, recent handwriting analysis and study of watermarks in the autograph suggest that this work was actually composed in the early 1740's.

Each movement utilizes the same d-minor subject; therefore, it was necessary for Bach to avoid monotony by transforming his subject numerous times throughout the cycle. *Contrapunctus VII*, containing seven episodes in stretto, is the last of three stretto fugues present in the *Art of Fugue*. The subject of *Contrapunctus VII* is stated no fewer than twenty-eight times, sixteen times in melodic inversion (upside-down). Bach alters the subject through augmentation and diminution. For example, the subject is stated four times in half notes, four times in whole notes (augmentation), and twenty times in quarter notes (diminution). The subject accompanies itself in rhythmic proportions of double and half of its normal values. Compositional techniques such as inversion, diminution, augmentation, and stretto all help to make *Contrapunctus VII* unique to the *Art of Fugue*.

## Prelude and Wobbly Dance - Michael Titlebaum

*Prelude and Wobbly Dance* was written for the Eastman School of Music's Saxophone Quartet, directed by Ramon Ricker, and was commissioned by THE Commission Project. It was conceived when the composer's twin daughters, Hannah and Zoe, were learning to balance upright on their feet. They would frequently stand up next to the sofa and wobble

their hips for a while before attempting any steps. *The Wobbly Dance* was written to be an accompaniment to these first attempts at walking.

**Michael Titlebaum** (b.1968) is a composer and saxophonist living in New York's Westchester County. His piece Solo for Alto Saxophone and String Quartet was premiered in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 1996. He has been composer-in-residence for several schools in Rochester, New York, where he wrote many new works for young musicians, including pieces for jazz ensemble, concert band and brass quintet. Titlebaum earned Bachelor and Master degrees from the Eastman School of Music. He has held faculty positions at Eastman and at Florida A & M University. He currently teaches at several schools in Westchester County and New York City and is writing a computer program to help teach ear training. Michael Titlebaum can be reached via e-mail at: [milo2-2@idt.net](mailto:milo2-2@idt.net) or on the web at <http://idt.net/~milo2>.

## **Seven Interludes from Paul Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis***

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963) is highly regarded as one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. His compositions reflect his treatment of harmony and tonality through tension (dissonance) versus relaxation (consonance).

Composed in 1943, *Ludus Tonalis* or *Game of Tones*, is a set of fugues in twelve different keys separated by interludes. Each interlude facilitates the modulation from one tonality to the next. The 25 movement set was written for solo piano to develop keyboard skills, demonstrating counterpoint and tonal organization.

Arranger Greg Knapp has adapted seven of the interludes from *Ludus Tonalis* for saxophone quartet. Knapp has also written other arrangements and original compositions for the Nova phone Quartet recorded on "InNOVations" and "Double Image."

## **Sax-O-Doodle - Rudy Wiedoeft, arr. Richard Lawn**

**Rudy Wiedoeft** (1893-1940) started playing clarinet at an early age and by the time he was 11 he was already playing professionally. At age 17 he started playing the saxophone. He quickly developed into an astounding player with flawless technique and a range of articulations that to this day is considered to be remarkable. To help facilitate his remarkable technique he developed a saxophone for the Holton Company that had five extra keys used for alternate fingerings. He first recorded for the Edison label but most of his more memorable work was recorded on the Brunswick label including *Sax-O-Doodle*.



Hugo Frey was a pianist and composer, most notably for The Paul C. Smith Orchestra. He became a music arranger for the Robbins Music Corporation, responsible in 1926 for publishing transcriptions and arrangements of "Famous Negro Spirituals" and "Celebrated American Negro Spirituals." He continued to work for Robbins into the 1940s during which time he contributed numerous arrangements of Rudy Wiedoeft compositions for saxophone and piano including *Sax-O-Doodle*. This particular arrangement of *Sax-O-Doodle* for saxophone quartet by Richard Lawn takes advantage of the facility of each member of the quartet by weaving Wiedoeft's virtuosic lines among the four instrumentalists.

### **Three Sketches for Saxophone Quartet - Richard Lawn**

**Richard Lawn's** (b.1949) *Three Sketches for Saxophone Quartet* is the result of a commission from THE Commission Project. The following comments are provided by the composer:

*"Outside the Box* is a reflection of my ongoing efforts to break away from the stereotypical trappings of the jazz composition tradition well established by the mid-20th Century. The motivation behind this first of three sketches also embodies Nova's tradition of embracing numerous styles rather than being limited to the standard quartet repertoire. From the harmonic and melodic standpoint, this first sketch is based largely on the augmented scale and the melodies and harmonies which can be derived from it. It is largely through composed, however, thematic material is restated to provide an element of continuity. The idea behind several sections was to present the illusion of the kind of improvisation and rhythmic content associated with jazz.

*Old Friends*, the second sketch, was completed shortly before the sudden death of long-time Eastman School of Music saxophone and clarinet instructor William Osseck. This warm, sensitive and introspective piece is a reflection of the nurturing qualities of this great teacher and is dedicated to his memory. He coached the first generation of the Nova Saxophone Quartet and in 1976 sponsored the group's first recording, still available on the Crystal Records label.

The third sketch in this trilogy completes a journey back to my roots as a jazz composer and performer. My passion for this unique, American art form is apparently too great to yield entirely to the 20th Century classical influences apparent in the first sketch. This third sketch served as the basis of an extended work for jazz ensemble that depicts the numerous changing moods we associate with *Mother Nature*. The jazz ensemble rendition is available from UNC Press."

Recorded at the **Fire Station Studio**, San Marcos, Texas

Engineer: **Bobby Arnold**

Assistant Engineer: **James Adamson**

Edited by **Bobby Arnold** and **Nova**

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Notes by **Nova**, **Michael Titlebaum** and **Richard Lawn**

Special thanks to **THE Commission Project**, **Ned Corman Director**, and the Department of Music at **Southwest Texas State University**.

Richard Lawn's *Three Sketches For Saxophone Quartet* is available from Dorn Publications at [www.dornpub.com](http://www.dornpub.com) [dornpub@dornpub.com](mailto:dornpub@dornpub.com) or (508) 359-1015

Information about the Nova Saxophone Quartet including discography, reviews and availability for concerts and clinics can be found on the WWW at  
<http://jazzed.music.utexas.edu>.



**Douglas Skinner** (soprano) is Professor of Saxophone and Acting Chair of the Department of Music at Southwest Texas State University. He received Bachelor of Music and Master of Music Education degrees from The University of North Texas. Skinner has presented solo and ensemble concerts and clinics throughout the United States, and in Mexico, England, Russia, Poland and Scotland. He has also published articles in *The Saxophone Symposium*, *Jazz Educators Journal* and a textbook titled *Popular Musicians*.

**Richard Lawn** (alto) is Founding Director of the jazz studies program in the School of Music at The University of Texas at Austin. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Eastman School of Music. As a composer, he has received several notable awards from the National Endowment of the Arts and has been published by Kendor Music, C.L. Barnhouse, and UNC Press among others. His books entitled *The Jazz Ensemble Director's Manual* and *Jazz Theory and Practice* have become staples among jazz educators and students. Lawn has performed with Lionel Hampton, Chuck Mangione, the Austin Symphony, Houston Opera Orchestra and the Rochester Philharmonic. He holds the Meyerson Centennial Professorship in Music.

**Greg Wilson** (tenor) earned a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of South Carolina and Master of Music degree from the University of Texas where he studied with Al Regni and Harvey Pittel. He currently is Instructor of Saxophone at Southwest Texas State University. He has been a member of the Nova Saxophone quartet since 1981. An active performing and recording musician, he can be heard with the groups 47 Indians and Blue Millennium.

**Joseph Colarusso** (baritone) holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin. His teachers include Harvey Pittel, Rick Lawn, and Elias Haslanger. He is an active free lance musician, currently performing with 47 Indians and Blue Millennium. Colarusso also teaches saxophones in the Round Rock and Pflugerville Independent School Districts.

## Quartet No. 1

12:28

*Russell Howland (Ybarra Music)*

1. I 4:30
2. II 4:30
3. III 3:27
4. **Contrapunctus VII** 3:33

*J. S. Bach*

5. **Prelude and Wobbly Dance** 8:00

*Mike Titlebaum (BMI)*

## Seven Interludes from *Ludus Tonalis*

12:52

*Paul Hindemith /arr. G.W. Knapp (Schott Music Corp.)*

6. Allegro pesante 2:28
7. Moderato - Molto tranquillo 3:42
8. Scherzo 1:23
9. Pastorale 1:38
10. Vivace 1:19
11. Marcia 2:18

12. **Sax-O-Doodle** 3:16

*Rudy Wiedoeft / arr. Richard Lawn (Robbins Music Corp.)*

## Three Sketches for Saxophone Quartet

16:51

*Richard Lawn (Dorn Publications, ASCAP)*

13. Outside the Box 7:38
14. Old Friends 6:13
15. Mother Nature 2:58

**Total Time - 57:01**



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