



A Feast for the Ears



Saxophonists are hungry –
Hungry for repertoire,
hungry to push to the limits
of their own and their instruments' abilities.

Saxophonists are also fearless:
when confronted by an endless string of notes, they learn to circular-breathe.
When faced with stratospheric heights, they develop an *altissimo* register.
If they find a work for oboe that they like, they will find
a way to make it sound even better on their own instrument.

Composers conspire with them in this brazen behavior, egging on players
with challenges of greater speed, greater registral flexibility,
multiphonics. Saxophonists eat this up like candy.

Saxophonists are hungry,
and the ones with the biggest appetites are omnivorous.
Their tastes don't run to only one or two styles of music.
Bring on serialism! Bring on minimalism fired by jazz! Electronics?
No problem, either live or pre-taped.



The nature of the musical language makes no difference;
they feast upon all manner of musics.
The thrill, the joy, is in the challenge and the playing.
The present collection covers a wide range of styles,
but the common thread is how each work invites its player to dig in.

TIMOTHY

Timothy McAllister has emerged as one of the foremost concert saxophonists of his generation. His professional debut took place at age sixteen and, since then, his career has taken him throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe, having recently made solo appearances in New York's Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and Merkin Hall; Rotterdam's Zaal de Unie and Wilhelm Pijper Hall; and Holland's Festival Ensemblage and Festival 'La boîte e punaises'. Among his numerous awards include First Prize in the 1993 North American Saxophone Alliance Young Artist Competition, as well as prizes and recognition from several other competitions in the U.S. and abroad, including the GAUDEAMUS International Interpreter's Competition. He holds degrees from the University of Michigan where he studied saxophone with Donald Sinta and conducting with H. Robert Reynolds, and is the only saxophonist to ever receive the School of Music's most distinguished award, the Albert A. Stanley Medal.

McAllister has made several critically acclaimed, internationally released recordings on the Einstein, Equilibrium and Centaur labels, as well as having recorded for Dutch National Radio, G.I.A. Publications and AUR. An active proponent of new music, he has premiered/commissioned over thirty works for saxophone by award-winning, recognized composers including Gunther Schuller and John Harbison, and is co-founder of the contemporary chamber ensemble, QUORUM, and the saxophone/piano team, Duo Nuova. He has also appeared in major musical centers, including Philadelphia, New York City, and Detroit, with chamber groups such as the acclaimed PRISM Quartet, QUORUM, Resounding Winds, Detroit Chamber Winds and the Michigan Saxophone Quartet featuring Donald Sinta. In addition, he has been featured at meetings of the World Saxophone Congress, the North American Saxophone Alliance, the U.S. Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, and the New England Saxophone Symposium. McAllister serves as Assistant Professor of Saxophone at The Crane School of Music of the State University of New York at Potsdam, and is artist teacher for the Hot Springs (AR) Music Festival and the Interlochen Arts Camp (MI) All-State Program.

MCALLISTER

S C E N A

FOR OBOE OR ALTO SAXOPHONE BY ANDREW MEAD

I wrote *Scena* in 1989 as a virtuoso solo work for oboist Harry Sargous. In 1996, saxophonist Kelland Thomas asked me if he could try it on the alto sax. I said, "Sure!" and I have never regretted it. Thomas played the first performance of the work on saxophone in the Spring of 1997, and shortly thereafter Timothy McAllister took up the work. Both have reinvented the piece for me, not superceding the original version, but adding to it. I have since gone back and specified that it be for either oboe or saxophone.

For all its use of a highly chromatic, twelve-tone compositional language, *Scena* was conceived as a 19th century operatic scene, complete with a dramatic recitative, a large *da capo* aria, and a virtuosic cabaletta. In composing the piece, I did not specify to myself the gender of the protagonist, nor was I concerned with the circumstances of the scene. I wanted to keep these open to interpretation, and broadening the work to a wider range of instruments has only increased the possibilities. What I did want to shape was an emotional progression, from the high dudgeon of the recitative through the initial sorrow and wistfulness of the opening of the aria, to a point of acceptance and transcendence in the highly varied *da capo* followed by the resurgent cabaletta.

STEADY STUDY ON THE BOOGIE

FOR SOLO ALTO SAXOPHONE BY CHRISTIAN LAUBA

Christian Lauba (b. 1952) was born in Sfax, Tunisia, studied at the Conservatory of Bordeaux, and has lectured at a number of institutions in Europe and North America. In 1994 he was the recipient of the first prize in the Berlin International Composition Competition (Institut für Neue Musik). He has received multiple commissions to write works for contemporary music ensembles and for orchestra. He has also produced a series of daunting études for the various members of the saxophone family. *Steady Study on the Boogie* (1993) is a heady mix of jazz licks, multiphonics, slap-tongue effects, break-out virtuosic explosions, and circular breathing. While the music is full of incessant varied repetition reminiscent of American minimalism, its restlessness and intensity never allow the listener to relax into a groove. Part of the work's intensity comes from the fact that for vast stretches, the music is marked *ppp*, *pp*, or at most, *mp*. Here, on top of all the rest of the player's challenges, is demanded the virtuosity of restraint. Only late in the piece, amid a huge flurry of thirty-second notes, can the player lean into the tone. But this is short-lived: in no time at all the music sinks to the low dynamic levels of the opening, so that the *forte* stinger at the end comes as a tonic jolt. Under the playing circumstances provided, *piano* and *pianissimo* here are no quiet comfort. Their sound is of great intensity barely held in check.

SAX NOTES

FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND DIGITAL TAPE BY PAUL STEINBERG

Paul Steinberg (b. 1946) is the Director of the Center for New Music Resources at the Crane School of Music, State University of New York at Potsdam. Schooled at New Mexico State University, Southern Methodist University and the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Steinberg has received a number of awards for his compositions. His background as a woodwind player is readily heard in his daring yet idiomatic treatment of the saxophone.

Steinberg wrote *Sax Notes* expressly for Timothy McAllister, his colleague at the Crane School. The piece offers the player multiple challenges, pursuing fleetness and lyricism throughout the instrument, but particularly in the highest registers. The composer has added twelve carefully prescribed multiphonics to the palette of colors drawn from the instrument, and has used these in ways that echo and distort the motivic material of the rest of the piece. These are not simply sound effects, but are ways of extending the music by extending the instrument. The greatest challenge for the player, however, comes from coordinating the saxophone with the digital tape. Much of the music moves extremely rapidly, and the player must be able to play with the cleanest possible articulation in order to partake in the musical dialogue. Virtuosity here is in the art of concealment. Since the electronic instrument is relentless, the human performer can only transcend by sounding effortless. The result is a dazzling display of *sang-froid*, of grace under pressure.

INNER SONG

FOR SOLO SOPRANO SAXOPHONE BY ELLIOTT CARTER

Elliott Carter (b. 1908) wrote *Inner Song* in 1992 for solo oboe, as the central panel in a triptych of works for oboe Heinz Holliger and his wife, harpist Ursula Holliger. *Inner Song* was written to the memory of composer Stephan Wolpe, and along with the other portions of the complete work *Trilogy*, bears an inscription from one of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*: "Words still peter out into what cannot be expressed..." In adopting the work, saxophonist Timothy McAllister elected simply to play from the score as it is written for oboe. Doing so transposes the music down by step, and so obscures the literal quotation from Wolpe in the music. But by placing the oboe's music in the analogous parts of the soprano saxophone's range, McAllister is able to preserve the subtle feel of each note's position in the instrument as a whole. This offsets any losses incurred by the transposition. Since the music unfolds gradually over such large arcs, and lingers carefully on each place in the instrument, it is crucial to the experience of both player and listener alike that Carter's sense of the geography of the oboe be translated to the soprano saxophone. Fortunately, the dispositions of the two instruments allow for this.

IN FREUNDSCHAFT

FOR SOLO ALTO SAXOPHONE BY KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

* **Karlheinz Stockhausen (b. 1928)** emerged as one of the central figures at Darmstadt in the 1950's, exhibiting a deeply serial music while serving as a pioneer in electro-acoustic music. Having reached his 70th birthday recently, he has maintained his status as one of the most celebrated, and controversial, giants of Twentieth-Century composition. His works range from vocal, chamber music, orchestral pieces, and ground-breaking electronic music. *In Freundschaft* (*In Friendship*) was written in 1977, and immediately precedes Stockhausen's plans for a cycle of seven epic operas entitled *Licht*, one for each day of the week. The composer has made settings of the work for various instruments, and this current realization was the result through a collaboration with saxophonist John Sampen.

As extracted from the composer's notes, the work displays a three-part voice structure using three distinct registral layers: high, low and middle. The middle layer contains two pitches, G and F# concert for alto saxophone, which evolve into trill segments generated from a lengthy accelerando early in the work. The upper and lower layers truly provide the tools for horizontal polyphony, for which the composer states, "demands a special art of listening." The upper register contains five dissimilar melodic cells, or limbs, heard in the opening of the work. The lower layer is somewhat of a reflection of the upper while presenting the cells with faster, more jagged rhythms and louder dynamics. The layers move towards each other, "exchanging limbs and uniting into a continuous melody in the same register." This process is disrupted twice by solo "cadenzas," focusing more on tremolo effects, which the composer describes as vehement and happy. In performance, the musician must reflect each registral layer, and the intervals that comprise each cell, by altering the direction of performance with the body, within a circular area.

"Clear differentiation, relation to a common and constant centre, exchange, approaching one another, movement of the lively ascending elements towards the end of the formula:

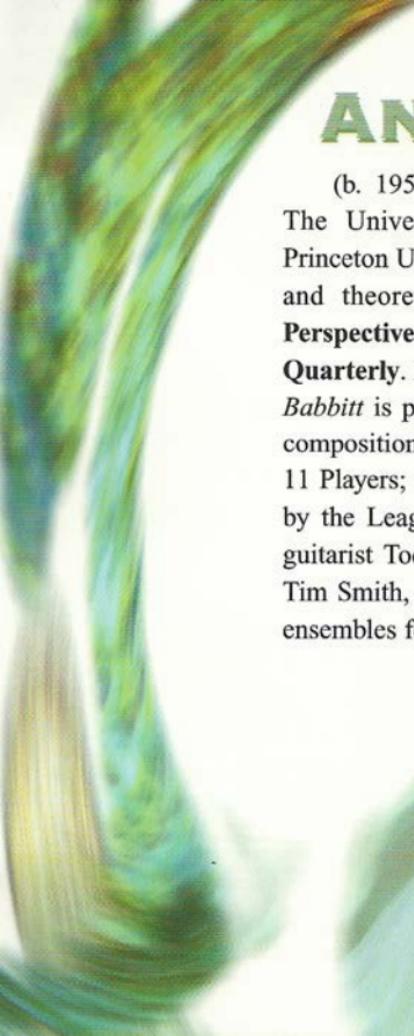
"IN FRIENDSHIP." - STOCKHAUSEN

VARIATIONS/DOUBLES

FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND ELECTRONICS BY **BENJAMIN BROENING**

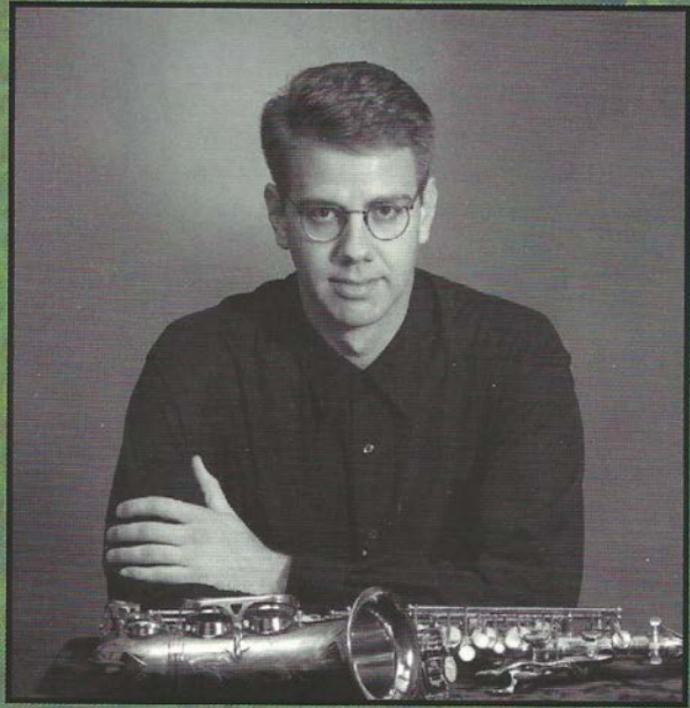
Variations/Doubles was commissioned by saxophonist Tim McAllister for this recording. Its title is a play on words: its two meanings describe the changing relationship between the live saxophone and the electronic transformations and extensions of it. *Doubles* is the 17th century French term for variations, and in this sense, the electronics vary and extend the timbre of the soloist. But the electronics also respond to the saxophone's melodic motion, sometimes confirming (doubling) and summarizing, sometimes extending, altering or recontextualizing. The title thus suggests the dual nature—timbral and melodic—of the variations that characterize the piece; the title also reflects the recursive of the variation technique employed, where the first half is a set of variations on a small group of notes and the second half is a *double* of the first. An extended coda follows. Composer **Benjamin Broening** (b. 1967) has written works for many media including orchestral music, vocal music, chamber music and electronic music. Recent commissions include a Concerto for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble for Richard Hawkins and the Interlochen Arts Academy Wind Ensemble, an evening-length multi-media cantata for Hampton-Sydney College, and a cantata commissioned by the Charlotte Symphony and the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte. His *Via Negativa: The Cloud of Forgetting*, for two-channel tape, is forthcoming on the Centaur label. Broening holds degrees from the University of Michigan, and Cambridge, Yale and Wesleyan Universities. He is an assistant professor in the department of music at the University of Richmond, in Virginia.

- Program notes by Andrew Mead and Timothy McAllister*



ANDREW MEAD

(b. 1952), chair of the Music Theory Department at The University of Michigan, earned his Ph.D. from Princeton University. He has edited and published analytical and theoretical articles in **Music Theory Spectrum**, **Perspectives of New Music**, **Entretemps** and **Musical Quarterly**. His book *An Introduction to the Music of Milton Babbitt* is published by Princeton University Press. Recent compositions include his Concerto for Alto Saxophone and 11 Players; a trio for violin, horn and piano, commissioned by the League/ISCM; Variation-Fantasy, commissioned by guitarist Todd Seelye, a Cello Concerto commissioned by Tim Smith, and three new works for saxophone and mixed ensembles for Kelland Thomas and Timothy McAllister.



TIMOTHY McALLISTER

SCENA

TIMOTHY McALLISTER, SAXOPHONE

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1. <i>Scena</i> (1990) | Andrew Mead (b. 1952) | 10:09 |
| 2. <i>Steady Study on the Boogie</i> (1993) | Christian Lauba (b. 1952)
(pub. Billaudot) | 11:37 |
| 3. <i>Sax Notes</i> (1998) | Paul Steinberg (b. 1949)
(ASCAP) | 8:39 |
| 4. <i>Inner Song</i> (1992) | Elliott Carter (b. 1908)
(pub. Boosey & Hawkes, Hendon Music, ASCAP) | 5:28 |
| 5. <i>In Freundschaft</i> (1977) | Karlheinz Stockhausen (b. 1928)
(pub. Stockhausen Verlag, GEMA) | 14:05 |
| 6. <i>Variations / Doubles</i> (1999) | Benjamin Broening (b. 1967)
<i>Recording supervised by the composer</i> (ASCAP) | 8:03 |
| | Total | 58:35 |

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Mastered by Will Spencer

Produced by Timothy McAllister

Executive Producer: Michael W. Udow

Program Notes: Andrew Mead

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Contact http://www2.potsdam.edu/crane/mcallitp/Main_Page for more information.



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