

During his short but dramatic life, **Jules Demersseman** (1833-1866) gained a reputation as a flute virtuoso of the first rank. He was said to possess prodigious lung capacity, endurance, and extraordinary facility on the instrument. He was famous for his extended cadenzas during which he overwhelmed audiences with brilliant finger work and articulation. Demersseman composed the Carnival of Venice Variations for the music director of the Imperial Grand Band, Adolphe Mayeur, who, in addition to his conducting abilities, was also an accomplished saxophonist. The familiar Carnival of Venice theme appears more often than any other melody as the subject of variations for wind instruments; a recent recording offers sets of variations for trumpet by fifteen different composers! Like many of these variations, Demersseman's version offers a melodramatic introduction and a simple statement of the theme followed by a succession of increasingly elaborate and technically impressive variations.

Paule Maurice (1910-67) composed her famous *Tableaux de Provence* during her tenure as professor of music at the Paris Conservatory. The work, now a staple in the saxophone repertoire, is highly regarded for Maurice's coloristic approach to the instrument. The composition's five movements consist of a series of musical portraits of Provence, a picturesque region of southeastern France bordering on the Mediterranean. Maurice herself provided explanations of the movements:

"The joyous rhythms of the Provençale round dance, known as the Farandole, is depicted in the first section; the second is a serenade whose accompaniment sound the open strings of the guitar at the beginning of the piece. "La Bohémienne" is a rhythmic soliloquy of the people of Gitans who are going on a pilgrimage to St. Mark's by the Sea. "Des Alyscamps l'Ame Soupire," recalls the laments of friends as they hover over the cemetery at Alyscamps expressing nostalgia, sadness and regrets. "Le Cabridan" is a great buzzing, flying creature, turning and bustling--he poises on the flowers, then, watching his chance, flees his narrow valley."

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) enjoyed an impressive career as a composer, pianist and conductor in both Russia and in the United States. As one of the most renowned musicians in pre-Soviet Russia, he became friends with the country's most distinguished artists, and during his tenure as conductor of the Moscow Grand Opera (1904-6) the composer worked extensively with many prominent singers. It was during this time that Rachmaninoff composed his Fourteen Songs, Op. 34. The final song in the collection, a wordless melody simply titled *Vocalise*, was inspired by and dedicated to the gifted coloratura Antonine Neshdanova, with whom Rachmaninoff often collaborated. The haunting melody became a favorite of audiences and soon appeared in transcriptions for nearly every solo instrument (including a particularly somber setting for tuba and piano).

With the rise of nationalism in the last part of the nineteenth century composers across Europe and Asia became attracted to the folk music of their own countries. It was often the unpolished charm of these rustic tunes that attracted composers; and many, like Bartok, Rimsky-Korsakov and Percy Grainger, sought to incorporate these melodies into their concert music. English composer **Ralph Vaughn Williams** (1872-1958) was widely regarded for his settings of English folksongs. Ever since collecting his first folk tune in 1903, his career was shaped by an enthusiasm for England's rich folk heritage. By the 1950's, Vaughn Williams had collected and cataloged over 800 melodies, many of which he featured in his more formal music. Many of the hymns in the 1906 English Hymnal were adapted by the composer from his own collection of folk music. His *Six Studies in English Folksong* (1926), originally composed for cello and piano. Although the score contains no explicit folksong titles, scholars have suggested that the songs were drawn from the folk traditions of Sussex, Essex and Norfolk counties. The Studies were subsequently rearranged for numerous other instrumental combinations, including a version by the composer for violin, viola, clarinet and piano.



Maurice Whitney's (1909-84) *Rumba* is one of the mainstays in the saxophone literature. This provocative piece requires the player to lock into a persistent rhythmic cadence while at the same time delivering a kind of humid sensuality so often found in the dance music of Latin America. From its initial whole-tone flourish, the work is immediately engaging and seems to draw the listener into the motion of the Rumba, whose traditional movement is a rocking of the hips, often creating cross-rhythms with the accompaniment. The dance itself evolved from dance and popular elements of Afro-Cuban culture. A performer, conductor, arranger, and teacher, Whitney attended numerous distinguished institutions including Ithaca College and the New England Conservatory. He served as an organist, choirmaster, music director for dance and theater orchestras, and taught in public school systems and in college. Like its companion piece *Introduction* and *Samba*, *Rumba* was inspired by saxophone virtuoso and teacher Sigurd Rascher.



Although the saxophone of the nineteenth century was primarily in the hands of French and Belgian musicians, its versatility was such that by the beginning of the twentieth century, composers the world over began to write extensively for the instrument.

Bernard Heiden's (1910-2000) *Sonata for Saxophone and Piano*, composed in 1937, is one of the earliest multi-movement sonatas written for the instrument. It also remains one of the composer's most frequently performed works. Heiden's music was strongly influenced by the German neoclassic style and features clear formal design and an almost organic sense of structure. The Sonata is concise and unified, complete with the Hindemithian penchant for tight thematic development and rhythmic energy that percolates throughout, particularly in the second movement. Especially noteworthy is the lovely, elegiac opening of the third movement and the contrasting Allegro, in which, with a flurry of rapid passage work, the saxophone flutters and ripples its way to the work's conclusion. Heiden studied composition with Paul Hindemith at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin from 1929 to 1933 and emigrated to the United States in 1935. During his American career he conducted the Detroit Chamber Orchestra, earned a Masters degree in Musicology from Cornell, and finally served as professor of composition at Indiana University.



Robert Schumann (1809-1854), one of the foremost German composers of the nineteenth century, also distinguished himself as a pianist, pedagogue and music critic. Although Schumann composed a number of orchestral works, including four symphonies, he was known primarily for his piano works and Lieder; and the long-breathed lyricism evident in his songs and song cycles carries over into his instrumental compositions. *Three Romances, Op. 94*, originally written for oboe and piano, is characteristic of Schumann's haunting cantabile and inward reflection. Composed shortly after an intense period of song writing, these Romances embody the almost heartbreaking melancholy of Schumann's vocal style. The present transcription preserves the sensitive balance between solo part and piano, and the unique sound of the saxophone lends the work an extra measure of bittersweetness.

Executive Producer: Michael W. Udow

Producers: Clifford Leaman & Derek Parsons

Engineering and Editing: Jeff Francis

Recorded December 8-12, 2000 in the Recital Hall of the

University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia, SC

Program Notes: Dr. Gary Malvern

Photography: © Diane Hopkins-Hughes

Graphic Production & Audio Replication: World Class Tapes,
Ann Arbor, MI

Design: Michael P. Tanner

The Ambassador Duo would like to express their sincere thanks to Furman University and the University of South Carolina for their partial funding of this project and for their continued support of the Duo's musical endeavors.



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 Dr. Parsons serves on the faculty of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina and Dr. Leaman serves on the faculty of the University of South Carolina.

Prior to his appointment at the University of South Carolina, Leaman served on the faculties of Furman University, Eastern Michigan University, and

The University of Michigan. In great demand as a soloist and clinician, he has performed and given clinics extensively throughout the United States and Canada. His recordings include Henry Brant's Concerto for Saxophone with Nine Instruments (Redwood Records), Ernst Pepping's Suite für Trompete, Saxophon, und Posaune (CRS), and Benjamin Boone's Election Year (University of Arizona Recordings) on compact disc. An avid supporter of contemporary music, he has commissioned and given the world premiere performances of numerous pieces, including Pulitzer-prize-winning composer Leslie Bassett's Concerto for alto saxophone and orchestra at the XII World Saxophone Congress in Montreal, Canada. Leaman is an artist-clinician for the Selmer Company, Inc. and performs exclusively on Selmer saxophones.

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 United States performing and giving clinics, having appeared at numerous colleges, universities, and concert venues from Green Bay, WI to Tucson, AZ. Their repertoire covers a wide range of musical styles, 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 Kilstoffe's Sonata at the XI World Saxophone Congress in Valencia, Spain. Their critically acclaimed debut recording, *Brilliance*, is also available on the Equilibrium label (EQ-21).

	Paule Maurice	14:30
1.	I. Farandoulo di Chatouno	2:26
2.	II. Cansoun per ma mio	1:50
3.	III. La Boumiano	1:13
4.	IV. Dis Alyscamps l'amo souspire	5:20
5.	V. Lou Cabridan	3:41
6.	VOCALISE, OP. 34, No. 14	
	Sergei Rachmaninoff, transcribed by Clifford Leaman	6:09
7.	RUMBA	
	Maurice Whitney	2:52
	THREE ROMANCES, OP. 94	
	Robert Schumann, edited by Fred Hemke	11:20
8.	I. not fast	3:25
9.	II. simple, heartfelt	3:47
10.	III. not fast	4:08
	SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO	
	Bernhard Heiden	15:57
11.	I. Allegro	6:23
12.	II. Vivace	3:26
13.	III. Adagio - presto	6:08
	SIX STUDIES IN ENGLISH FOLKSONG	
	Ralph Vaughan Williams, transcribed by Clifford Leaman	7:42
14.	I. Adagio	1:46
15.	II. Andante	1:09
16.	III. Larghetto	1:27
17.	IV. Lento	1:17
18.	V. Andante tranquillo	1:14
19.	VI. Allegro	0:49
20.	LE CARNAVAL DE VENISE	
	Jules Demersseman, edited by Fred Hemke	5:21
	Total Time:	63:53

EQUILIBRIUM

P.O. BOX 305, DEXTER, MI 48130 USA

PH: 734-426-5814 • FAX: 734-426-5834

www.equilibri.com

