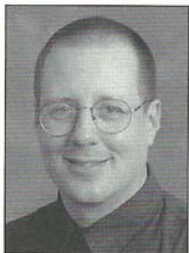


Composer **James Matheson** is rapidly emerging as one of the most distinctive, vital, and creative musical voices of his generation. A 2000 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship recipient, Matheson's music has been programmed by such organizations as Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Albany Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orchestra 2001 (Philadelphia), and at music festivals including Aspen, Spoleto, Santa Fe, Eleazar de Carvalho, Token Creek, Norfolk, Bowling Green and Hartwick.

In addition to the Guggenheim, Matheson has received fellowships from the Bogliasco (2001) and Sage (1993, 1997) Foundations, as well as awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, American Music Center and ASCAP, and the Robbins Prize. Matheson has held residencies at Yaddo (summer 2002) and the Liguria Study Center (fall 2001), and has been a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. He holds degrees from Cornell University (DMA 2001, MFA 1997) where he studied composition with Steven Stucky and Roberto Sierra, and Swarthmore College (BA 1992) where he majored in music and philosophy, studying composition with Gerald Levinson. He resides in Brooklyn, New York with his wife, Lara.

"Pull - light, hot and virtuosic - is a brief but intense struggle between two groups of musical material. Pungent, pounding chords open the work, followed by fleet, cascading arpeggiated figures which enter about a minute later. These blocks, and a few structurally related offspring, are repeated and varied, but retain their essential characteristics throughout the work. They tug at each other, try to influence each other, vie for preeminence. But in the end neither dominates and there is no resolution of the internal conflict. There is only the push and pull of contrary, though complimentary, forces."

- James Matheson



Reginald Bain (b. 1963, Denver) teaches composition at the University of South Carolina. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and the University of Notre Dame where he studied music, mathematics and computer science. Dr. Bain has received numerous awards for his compositions including an ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Award. He has composed a wide variety of instrumental, choral and vocal music that has been performed across the U.S. and Europe. He has also written extensively for the theatre, producing original songs and incidental music for plays by Bertolt Brecht, June Havoc, Molière, Sean O'Casey, and Sophocles, as well as six plays by William

Shakespeare: As You Like It, King Lear, Macbeth, Midsummer Night's Dream, Othello, and Twelfth Night. An accomplished electroacoustic composer, his works employ a wide variety of algorithmic and real-time interactive techniques that are implemented in computer music composition environments such as Csound, Max/MSP, and SuperCollider.

"Illuminations (2004) was commissioned by, and is dedicated to, the Ambassador Duo. The title refers to a collection of poems by French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-91). The work explores sonically the colorful imagery of Rimbaud's poem "Métropolitain." Selected passages from the poem were chosen to serve as a source of inspiration for the basic musical material of the work. The world premiere of the *Illuminations* was given by the Ambassador Duo at the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Biennial Conference in April of 2004."

- *Reginald Bain*



Stacy Garrop (D.M., Indiana University, 2000) has won several competitions resulting in performances by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Omaha Symphony, New England Philharmonic, and Women's Philharmonic, and readings by the Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, and the Dale Warland Singers. She has received awards from the Barlow Endowment and Illinois Arts Council, and was the 2004-2005 composer-in-residence of Chicago's Music in the Loft chamber music series. Her works have been performed by the Biava Quartet, Enso Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), EARPLAY, NewEAR, Third Angle, Seattle New Music

Ensemble, Society for New Music, and at the 2000 and 2003 World Saxophone Congress; the Princeton Singers, Volti, Vox Caelestis, and Murray State University Concert Choir; Minnesota Orchestra, Amarillo Symphony, Santa Cruz Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and the National Repertory Orchestra; and danced to by the a-ha! dance theatre of Kansas City. She has attended residences at the Banff Centre for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony, Yaddo, Wellesley Composers Conference, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Aspen Music Festival, and the Oxford Summer Institute. Theodore Presser Company and Hildegard Publishing Company publish several of her works.

"*Tantrum*, for alto saxophone and piano, has the formal structure of a traditional sonata, but its connection with the historical form stops there. The first movement obsesses continuously on a four note figure (introduced immediately following an extended slow introduction). Lost, the second movement, actually began as a piece for voice and piano; it subsequently lost its text, and the saxophone sings forlornly in its place. The third movement takes a quirky bit of music and modulates it up an interval of a perfect fourth every chance it gets. This high energy piece presents a challenge for both the saxophonist and pianist."

- Stacy Garrop



Benjamin Boone (b. 1963), originally from Statesville, N.C., is currently a Professor at California State University, Fresno. With eclectic musical interests, Boone has conducted research on speech pitch, assisted with the infrasonic recording of rhinoceros vocalizations in Zimbabwe and Zambia, served as a music business manager in New York City and performed as a jazz saxophonist across the U.S. and Europe. His other works for saxophone include Squeeze (alto concerto with orchestra or band), Vicissitudes (saxophone quartet concerto and band), the world's first Concerto for Baritone Saxophone and Orchestra, the saxophone quartets Alley Dance, Favorite Things, We Four (Three) Kings, and We Wish You a Merry Christmas (all commissioned and recorded by the New Century Saxophone Quartet on Channel Classics CDs CCS 15498 and CCS 14698), and the saxophone solo Election Year (recorded by Clifford Leaman on Arizona University Records' Millennium Tribute to Adolph Sax, vol. IV, AUR CD 3101). Boone can be heard on the TransAtlantic Reed-String Project's Capstone Records (CPS-8686) CD, Ostwärts-Westwärts, produced by Bavarian Radio; the Electronic Music Foundation compilation CD, State of the Union, 2001 (EMF CD 028); and the Artship Recordings CD (disc 35), Benjamin Boone: Four corners and center stage; four characters and forgotten artifacts. For publication links, sound files and detailed bio, please visit www.BenjaminBoone.com

"PsychoTherapy was commissioned by Clifford Leaman (with funding from the South Carolina Arts Commission and Furman University) and premiered by the Ambassador Duo at the 2000 North American Saxophone Alliance national convention. In the first movement, Anger: Anger Management, a rhythmically active and cluster-laden piano part relentlessly rumbles beneath a ferociously aggressive saxophone line. The movement drives from beginning to end with few reflective moments. Angle of Repose is both the title of a marvelous novel by Wallace Stegner and a technical term which refers to the maximum angle at which soil and/or rocks can remain without rolling downhill. Thus finding the "angle of repose" is to find the maximum point at which some semblance of balance can be maintained. The third movement, Attitude: Fun With Funk, is based on, well · a down and dirty funk groove.

This movement features a flurry of notes, jazz/rock licks and over-the top playing. The saxophonist is invited to improvise a cadenza. The fourth movement, Action: Vandermarking, refers to the music of avant-garde saxophonist and composer Ken Vandermark. I love the quirkiness of Ken's music and his use of counterpoint and hope this hyperactive movement, which virtually explodes at the end, is a fitting tribute to his musical influence."

- Ben Boone

This work is partially supported by a grant from
the University of South Carolina Research and Productive Scholarship Fund
and a grant from the Furman University Research and Professional Growth Fund.

THE AMBASSADOR DUO

Critics have hailed the Ambassador Duo as "intuitive, exciting, and enthralling." "Clifford Leaman is an artist of the first order [and] Derek Parsons is truly his musical match." (Paul Wagner, *The Saxophone Journal*) "... they reveal themselves to be artists of technical brilliance and emotional commitment." "The range of colors is impressive..." (Jack Sullivan, *American Record Guide*) Saxophonist Clifford Leaman and pianist Derek Parsons formed the Ambassador Duo in 1990 after meeting as graduate students at the University of Michigan, from which they both hold the Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in performance.

Prior to his appointment at the University of South Carolina where he is Professor of Saxophone, Leaman served on the faculties of Furman University, Eastern Michigan University, and The University of Michigan. He is in great demand as a soloist and clinician, and has appeared widely as an artist-clinician for Selmer saxophones. He appears on recording projects on the Redwood Records, CRS, and University of Arizona Recordings in addition to three previous recordings on the Equilibrium label. An avid supporter of contemporary music, Leaman has commissioned and given the world premiere performances of numerous pieces including concerti by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers Leslie Bassett and Michael Colgrass. His recording of the Bassett Concerto with the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra is available through Equilibrium Recordings (EQ-63).

Parsons, currently Professor of Piano at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, is a native of Newfoundland, Canada. He began his musical studies at the age of four and gave his orchestral debut at age twelve. He has appeared extensively throughout the United States and abroad as a soloist, collaborative musician, clinician, and adjudicator, including performances for SCETV, South Carolina Educational Radio, and CBC Radio and Television in Canada. He has performed with such prominent saxophonists as Donald Sinta, Debra Richtmeyer, Steven Mauk, and Joe Luloff. His piano reduction of Leslie Bassett's Concerto for saxophone and orchestra is published by C. F. Peters.

Since their debut at the 1990 Southwest Contemporary Music Festival and Conference in San Marcos, Texas, Leaman and Parsons have been active as a duo performing and giving clinics at numerous colleges, universities, and concert venues throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Italy, Spain, and China. Their repertoire covers a wide range of musical styles, from Baroque transcriptions to the most recent avant-garde works for saxophone and piano. The Ambassador Duo has inspired and commissioned many new works for saxophone and piano, including three of the works on this recording. Their two previous compact disc recordings as a duo, which were released on the Equilibrium label, are entitled *Brilliance*, (EQ-21) and *Excursions* (EQ-55).

Illuminations The Ambassador Duo

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| 1. Pull (1995) (ASCAP) | James Matheson | 6:03 |
| 2. Illuminations (2004) (BMI) | Reginald Bain | 15:01 |
| 3. A Savage Calculus (2001) (ASCAP) | John Fitz Rogers | 8:51 |
| Tantrum (2000) (ASCAP) | Stacy Garrop | 14:18 |
| 4. Obsessive Behavior | | 6:17 |
| 5. Lost | | 5:14 |
| 6. Fits and Fists | | 2:47 |

PsychoTherapy: A Sonata for alto saxophone and piano (2000/04)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------|
| | Benjamin Boone | 15:35 |
| 7. Anger management | | 4:57 |
| 8. Finding the "Angle of Repose" | | 3:02 |
| 9. Attitude: Fun with Funk | | 4:41 |
| 10. Action: Vandermarking | | 2:55 |

Total Time: 59:48

Executive Producer: Michael Udow

Producers: Clifford Leaman & Derek Parsons

Engineering and editing: Jeff Francis

Recorded August 4-7, 2004 in the recital hall
of the University of South Carolina
School of Music, Columbia, SC

Funding for this recording was provided
by the University of South Carolina
and Furman University.

photos by Michael Brown.
Design: Michael P Tanner

Graphic production & audio replication:
World Class Tapes, Ann Arbor, MI



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