

CHANNEL CROSSINGS
CCS 5994



New Century *Saxophone Quartet*

drastic
MEASURES

Michael Stephenson, soprano saxophone - James Boatman, alto saxophone
Stephen Pollock, tenor saxophone - Brad Hubbard, baritone saxophone

DRASTIC MEASURES New Century Saxophone Quartet

Russell Peck (b. 1945)
Drastic Measures
Poco adagio, molto espressivo 5.06 1
Allegro 4.40 2

Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)
Fantasia (Arr. James Boatman) 7.50 3

Harald Genzmer (b. 1909)
Zweites Quartett für vier Saxophone
Allegro 3.38 4
Amabile, tranquillo 4.28 5
Intermezzo 3.00 6
Allegro 3.48 7

Caryl Florio (1843-1920)
Quartette (Allegro de Concert)
Andante 1.53 8
Allegro 3.42 9

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)
Zwölf Variationen in C, K 265
'Ah, vous dirai-je Maman' 13.25 10
(Arr. James Boatman)

Jean Françaix (b. 1912)
Petit quatuor pour saxophones
Gaguenardise 2.40 11
Cantilène 2.28 12
Sérénade comique 1.55 13

Edward C. Barroll
(birth/death dates unknown, work
is written in the 1920's)
The Piggly-Wiggle 2.42 14
(Arr. Harry L. Alford)

Total time 63.00

Recording dates: February 1993

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New Century

Saxophone

Quartet

Michael Stephenson,
soprano saxophone

James Boatman,
alto saxophone

Stephen Pollock
tenor saxophone

Brad Hubbard
baritone saxophone

Recording Session, Renswoude, The Netherlands
photo: Colorteam, Veenendaal

Channel Classics Records has launched its "Winning Artists Series", designed to introduce the winners of the most important music competitions throughout the world to an international audience. The series opens with recordings of the winners in the prestigious New York "Concert Artists Guild" competition. This competition is different from many others in that it has no age limit and is open to all musical ensembles. Moreover, the jury bases its decisions not only on the level of musical achievement, but particularly on the personal magnetism of the musicians. This is perfectly in tune with the aim of Channel Classics: «continually searching for the perfect combination of sound and performance».

Concert Artists Guild is a non-profit organization based in New York City which, since its founding in 1951, has been dedicated to discovering, launching, and furthering the careers of exceptionally gifted performers of classical music. The Guild chooses the soloists and chamber ensembles it serves through its annual international New York Competition, and works with each winner for several years, providing full-service management, commissioning new works. Each winner also receives an exclusive contract with Channel Classics Records. Concert Artists Guild serves the field at large through career development workshops for performing artists and publications, including 'Making Music in Looking Glass Land': 'A Guide to Business Skills for the Classical Performer' and the annual 'Guide to Competitions'.

In 1992, the **New Century Saxophone Quartet** became the first saxophone quartet to win First Prize of the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition in its forty-two year history. This pioneering and versatile young group's diverse performing engagements have ranged from an appearance with the U.S. Navy Band to their acclaimed New York debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, described by the 'New York Post' as a "virtuoso display of dexterity and keen ensemble work", in which the quartet "demonstrated both the liquid sinuosity and the pointillistic snap of the saxophone."

Other engagements include the ensemble's West Coast debut at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, California - the first performance of a saxophone quartet in this distinguished venue - and its debuts in Chicago at the Pick-Staiger Concert Hall of Northwestern University, Atlanta in the Spivey Concert Hall, and Boston at the Gardner Museum. Based in Winston-Salem, the members of the New Century

Saxophone Quartet attended the North Carolina School of Arts, where they studied with James Houlik.

Since completing his studies with Ross Lee Finney and Leslie Bassett at the University of Michigan, **Russell Peck** (b. 1945), has won the Koussevitsky Prize in Composition and honors from the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and several state arts councils in the U.S.A., and has served as composer-in-residence of the Indianapolis Symphony. His music (which includes a concerto for tenor saxophone), has been recorded and performed by fifteen major orchestras in America, as well as the London Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Great Britain.

'Drastic Measures' (1976), contrasts a lyrical opening followed segue by a rhythmic closing 'Allegro' movement. The work draws considerably on pop and jazz influences, especially the funky 'Allegro', which is built on a twelve-bar blues bass-line. Peck interjects a reminder of the quiet opening before ending the piece with a tutti flourish.

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621), Flemish composer, organist, and teacher, studied with Zarlino in Venice before being appointed organist of the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, where he remained for his entire professional career. Known today primarily as a composer of organ music, Sweelinck was known by his contemporaries as a vocal composer because only these works were published during his life. He was also a renowned teacher, nicknamed 'the maker of organists'.

The *'Fantasia'* featured on this recording lends itself for adaptation from its original as an organ piece because of the organ-like sound that a quartet of saxophones can achieve. The contrapuntal lines in all ranges also make for a perfect opportunity to display the agility of the saxophone quartet in all its voices.

German composer, pianist and clarinetist, **Harald Genzmer** (b. 1909) studied composition with Paul Hindemith, and like his teacher, is a prolific composer in all genres (except opera) who has written music both for concert performance as well as for amateurs and students. His catalogue includes a 'Rhapsodie' for baritone saxophone, two pieces for alto saxophone, a sonata for soprano saxophone, and several saxophone quartets.

The opening 'Allegro's' precise rhythms and modern harmonies set the mood for 'Genzmer's Quartet no. 2 for Saxophones'. The second movement, marked 'Amabile, tranquillo', features a melody played by the soprano saxophone over a dense accompaniment from the other instruments. The third movement is an 'Intermezzo' in rondo form. Following the opening theme, there is a 30 measure solo for unaccompanied tenor saxophone, after which the theme is taken up successively by the soprano, alto, and baritone. After several statements and developments, the movement concludes with a final statement of the theme by the baritone. The lively finale is propelled by energetic rhythms until eight measures before the end; after a short silence, the work comes to a close with a long crescendo.

Born William James Robjohn, **Caryl Florio** (1843-1920) was an American composer of English birth. Except for a few lessons as a child, he was self-taught in music. His family opposed his musical career, which led the young composer to change his name to Caryl Florio in 1870. After spending the early years of his career in New York City, in 1896 he took charge of music at Biltmore, George Vanderbilt's estate near Asheville N.C., where he remained until 1901. He spent the next two years in New York, and then returned to Asheville to teach and conduct choruses and church choirs.

The '*Quartette for Saxophones*' was written for the Wonder Saxophone Quartet, also known as the New York Saxophone Club, in 1879. It features crisp, flowing lines and lush harmonies that take complete advantage of the full, rich sonority characteristic of the saxophone quartet. The '*Quartette*' is unique as an original work for the saxophone quartet from the Romantic period.

'*Twelve Variations in C*' on the French song: 'Ah vous dirai-je Maman', was composed by the 22 year old **Mozart** (1756-1791) in Paris in 1778. This delightful set of variations may be a farewell to his beloved mother, who died just days before its composition. The New Century Saxophone Quartet originally intended this arrangement for its children's concerts, but has found it a favorite with concertgoers of all ages. While the French song's title may not be familiar, most listeners will instantly recognize this popular melody.

French composer and pianist **Jean Françaix** (b. 1912) began composing at the age of six under the tutelage of his father, the director of the Le Mans Conservatory, and completed his studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. His numerous works include concertos, chamber music, operas and ballets, including many works for wind instruments.

The *'Petit quatuor pour saxophones'* was written in 1935, and published in 1939. The first movement, a rollickingly fun exercise in over-emphasized dynamics, is marked with the nonsense title 'Gaguenardise'. In the second movement 'Cantilène' tacit for the soprano saxophone, the alto sings gracefully over a spare accompaniment from the tenor and the baritone. The jolly and humorous mood returns for the final movement, 'Sérénade comique' which features alternating triple and duple meters. The quartet concludes with a chromatic flurry followed by a simple two-measure cadence.

Edward C. Barroll's *'The Piggly-Wiggle'* subtitled 'A Saxophone Episode', is a fine example of American novelty music from the first half on the 20th century. It is a favourite encore of the New Century Saxophone Quartet.

DRASTIC MEASURES
New Century Saxophone Quartet

Russell Peck (b. 1945)

Drastic Measures

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|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Poco adagio, molto espressivo | 05.06 |
| 2. Allegro | 04.40 |

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)

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| 3. Fantasia (Arr. James Boatman) | 07.50 |
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Harald Genzmer (b. 1909)

Zweites Quartett für vier Saxophone

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|------------------------|-------|
| 4. Allegro | 03.38 |
| 5. Amabile, tranquillo | 04.28 |
| 6. Intermezzo | 03.00 |
| 7. Allegro | 03.48 |

Caryl Florio (1843-1920)

Quartette (Allegro de Concert)

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| 8. Andante | 01.53 |
| 9. Allegro | 03.42 |

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Zwölf Variationen in C, K 265

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| 10. 'Ah, vous dirai-je Maman' (Arr. James Boatman) | 13.25 |
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Jean Françaix (b.1912)

Petit quatuor pour saxophones

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|----------------------|-------|
| 11. Gaguénardise | 02.40 |
| 12. Cantilène | 02.28 |
| 13. Sérénade comique | 01.55 |

Edward C. Barroll (birth/death dates unknown, work is written in the 1920s)

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| 14. The Piggly-Wiggle (Arr. Harry L. Alford) | 02.42 |
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Total time	63.00
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Recording date: February 1993



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CHANNEL CLASSICS



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