

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE SAXOPHONE SONATA IN TWENTIETH  
CENTURY AMERICA: CHRONOLOGY AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF SELECT REPERTOIRE

Robert Edward Beeson, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2011

Dissertation directed by: Professor Michael Votta  
School of Music

The first documented American saxophone sonata was composed in 1928. From then until 2000, the genre experienced remarkable growth and development that mirrored many of the significant trends of 20<sup>th</sup> century music. This dissertation traces the development of the sonata through a series of three recitals divided chronologically: 1928-1960 encompassing the sonata's beginnings, 1960-1980 documenting the growth of the genre, and 1980-2000 covering the continued growth and diversification of the sonata in America. The works performed were selected from the one hundred and sixty six American saxophone sonatas documented in Jean-Marie Londeix's *A Comprehensive Guide To The Saxophone Repertoire: 1844-2003*. Program notes are furnished for each

recital to summarize the musical content of each work, provide a biographical sketch of each composer and convey why it is a significant work in the repertoire.

THE SAXOPHONE SONATA IN TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA:  
CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELECT REPERTOIRE

By  
Robert Edward Beeson

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Michael Votta, Chair

Professor Paul C. Gekker

Professor Chris Vadala

Professor L. Richmond Sparks

Professor Steve Marcus

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this dissertation project is to perform and record three recitals of representative 20<sup>th</sup> century American saxophone sonatas in chronological order. Program notes are furnished for each recital to summarize the musical content of each work, provide a biographical sketch of each composer, and convey why it is a significant work in the repertoire. The first documented American saxophone sonata was composed in 1928, thus narrowing the focus of this project from 1928 until 2000. The three recitals were divided into chronological sections: 1928-1960 encompassing the sonata's beginnings, 1960-1980 detailing the growth of the genre, and 1980-2000 covering the sustained growth and diversification of the sonata. The works were selected from the one hundred and sixty six American Saxophone Sonatas documented in Jean-Marie Londeix's exhaustive catalogue of all saxophone works composed from 1842 until 2003.<sup>1</sup>

The saxophone was invented in Europe circa 1838 by Belgian inventor Antoine Joseph "Adolph" Sax. In addition to inventing the instrument, Sax filled the roles of teacher and performer as an advocate for his new creation. Consequently the history of the instrument's first nine years was centered in France and Belgium. Famous early soloists such as Louis-Adophe Mayuer, Charles Souallé, and Edouard Lèfebvre spread word of the saxophone through Europe. These and other artists subsequently left for

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Marie Londeix, *A Comprehensive Guide To The Saxophone Repertoire: 1844-2003*. Edited by Bruce Ronkin. Cherry Hill, New Jersey: Roncorp Publications, 2003.

America to take advantage of the burgeoning professional and town band scene in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The first documented use of the saxophone in America occurred on December 19, 1853 in the *Santa Claus Symphony* written by American composer William Henry Fry.<sup>2</sup> Belgian clarinetist Henri Wuille performed the solo soprano saxophone part.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the instrument's American debut as a member of the orchestra, the saxophone was solidifying a permanent position in the instrumentation of the concert band. Since the instrument was intended as a bridge between the brass and woodwind sections, it was readily embraced by the American bands of Patrick Gilmore, Edwin Franko Goldman, Arthur Pryor, and most famously by John Philip Sousa.

It is important to document the early history of the saxophone in America in classical music, as its association with the development of jazz and popular music tends to obscure this part of the saxophone's legacy. It is in large part due to the early pioneers of classical saxophone that the American saxophone sonata was developed and occupies an important position in classical saxophone repertoire.

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<sup>2</sup> Harry Burdette Hindson, "Aspects of the Saxophone in American Culture 1850-1980." (DMA diss., University of Wisconsin, 1992), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1.



## SECTION I

## Recital I 1928-1960

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano Op. 130 (1928)      Jascha Gurewich (1896-1938)

The history of the saxophone sonata in America begins with European performers migrating to the U.S. to seek performance opportunities. There was no better exposure for any performer than to be featured as a soloist with the renowned John Philip Sousa band during the nascent twentieth century. Many European saxophonists crossed the Atlantic to perform with Sousa: Edward A. Lefebre, Jean H.B. Moeremans and the Russian Jascha Gurewich. Mr. Gurewich only performed as soloist briefly with the Sousa band in 1920 and 1921.<sup>4</sup> His playing style has been described as a bridge between the popular style of saxophone performance, as demonstrated by saxophone icon Rudy Wiedoft, and more mainstream classical soloists with the Sousa band such as H.Benne Henton, who preceded Gurewich.<sup>5</sup> Though his time with the band was brief, he left a great impression upon Sousa and in a May 15, 1927 article in *The Metronome* Sousa is quoted as saying

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Eric Hester, "A Study of the Soloists Performing With the John Philips Sousa Band: 1893-1930."(DMA diss.The University of Arizona, 1995), 66-67.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 67.

about Gurewich: “I have heard all the finest saxophone players of the past thirty years and the majority of them have played for me; but I have never heard anyone to equal you.”<sup>6</sup> The year with the Sousa Band was enough to give Gurewich a foothold in the new world and launch a career that burned brightly for a few years, though fading almost as quickly with his name scarcely mentioned after 1927.<sup>7</sup> He is credited with being the first saxophonist to present a formal recital in New York City’s Aeolian Hall in January 31, 1926 to great critical acclaim. On that program was featured a work composed by Gurewich that is known to many saxophonists today, the *Concerto in E minor Op.102*. This neo-romantic work was dedicated to J.P. Sousa and is still programmed today.

The Gurewich *Sonata Op. 130* was written two years after the concerto and merits consideration as the first sonata written and published in America. Comprised of four movements, it is written in a very lush romantic style similar to Gurewich’s twenty other saxophone compositions. The piano accompaniment is quite demanding and has a very full Russian texture similar to the writing of Sergei Rachmaninoff. The first movement is in F minor and presents a lyrical first theme that is subtly transformed throughout the movement, but never receives a traditional sonata development and recapitulation. Instead, it is treated as a series of developing variations and acts as an introductory movement to the rest of the work. The second movement is similar to a Baroque da capo aria written in ternary form and in the key of G minor. The *piu mosso* second theme frames a piquant minor melody in the saxophone with tremolo chords in the upper right

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Eric Hester, “A Study of the Soloists Performing With the John Philip Sousa Band: 1893-1930,” 67.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 66.

hand in the piano. This device is evocative of silent movie soundtracks in the 1920's which Gurewich performed in movie houses, bringing to the listeners' minds visions of a morose Charlie Chaplin scene. The third movement is a scherzo in F major that showcases the saxophonist's proficiency in rapid articulation, a skill that Rudy Wiedoft was well known for, and that others of the era sought to emulate. The Finale is a jocular rondo in compound meter and ABACA form that closes the work in D major. This composition originally published in 1928 by Sam Fox Music, Inc., has been out of print for quite some time, and currently exists only in the archives of the Library of Congress. Duplication rights were granted by Alfred Publishing which owns the copyright.<sup>8</sup>

Sonata for E-Flat Alto Saxophone and Piano (1937)          Bernhard Heiden (1910-2000)

The *Sonata* by Bernhard Heiden is considered the first major American saxophone sonata and has become a staple in every saxophonist's repertoire.<sup>9</sup> Prior to the Heiden *Sonata* there were only eight sonatas written worldwide including the Gurewich *Sonata*.<sup>10</sup> Heiden was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1910 and studied with

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<sup>8</sup> See appendix I for rights letter.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Walsh, "A Performer's Guide to the Saxophone Music of Bernhard Heiden," (DM diss., Indiana University, 1999), 4-8.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Walsh identifies these eight sonatas written before 1937: "Walter Kainz (1907), Erwin Dressel (1932), Jascha Gurewich (1928), Joseph Holbrooke (1928), Erwin Schulhoff's *Hot Sonate* (1930), Wolfgang Jacobi (1932), Ernst Lothar von Knorr (1932), and Slavko Osterc (1935). Other sonatas written before 1937 include *Atonal Sonata* (1929) for unaccompanied alto saxophone by Sigfrid Karg-Elert, *Sonatina, Op. 21* (1932) for alto saxophone, trumpet, and piano by Jacobo Fischer, and *Sonata, op. 28* (1934) for alto saxophone and banjo by Sándor Jemnitz. In addition to these, there are at least ten sonatas listed by Londeix with no date given that could have preceded Heiden's *Sonata*."

Paul Hindemith before immigrating to the United States in 1935. Mr. Heiden obtained a Masters' Degree from Cornell in 1946 and was a pupil of Donald J. Grout. He was appointed to teach composition at the University of Indiana that same year and remained there until his retirement in 1983.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after moving to America, Heiden lived for a while in Detroit and befriended saxophone pioneer Larry Teal. Heiden taught at Teal's Detroit Wayne Music Studio and would on occasion accompany the saxophonist in concert. As a consequence of their friendship, Larry Teal asked his friend to write a sonata for saxophone. Heiden obliged and the resulting work was acclaimed by the composer's highly critical former composition teacher Paul Hindemith:

A saxophonist [Larry Teal] came and played, with Bernhard at the piano, the latter's new sonata. It was an amazingly good piece, the best piece of work so far from any of my pupils. Very nicely inventive, technically tidy and, apart from three blunders of form, flawlessly written. A bit overloaded still, but it is just a matter of time before the ballast is thrown overboard. When I think how pushed around and twisted the boy once was, and what hard work it was to straighten him out with kindness, strictness, anger, and patience, I feel really proud to have drawn something truly upstanding and serviceable out of such damaged goods.<sup>12</sup>

Despite Hindemith's mixed message, the sonata has been unanimously well-received by saxophonists and is one of the most recorded and programmed works in the repertoire.

The first movement is in traditional sonata-allegro form and begins with a march-like theme that outlines the principle melodic material used throughout the sonata.

Contrasting major and minor seconds form the germ cell that drives much of the thematic material in all three movements and is undergirded with very well-crafted contrapuntal writing that makes this work a duet, particularly when contrasted with the Gurewich

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Walsh, "A Performer's Guide to the Saxophone Music of Bernhard Heiden," 14.

*Sonata*. The second movement is a *scherzo* that begins in a driving C minor and concludes the second phrase with the emblematic half-step whole-step motive.

The third and final movement has a tempo scheme of *adagio*, *presto*, *adagio*, and *prestissimo*, is built entirely on thematic material that alternates between minor and major seconds. The harmonic structure of the sonata is primarily tonal, though there are many instances of modal mixture, quartal harmonic progressions and chords that are often missing a third to offer an open quintal texture. The work is dedicated Larry Teal who was influenced by Jascha Gurewich's predecessor in Sousa's band, H. Benne Henton. Larry Teal became the first full professor of saxophone at an American university when he joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1953 and is a founding father of American saxophone performers and pedagogues.<sup>13</sup>

Sonata for E-Flat Alto Saxophone and Piano Op. 19 (1939) Paul Creston (1906-1985)

Born to Sicilian immigrants in Brooklyn, New York as Guiseppe Gutoveggio, the composer demonstrated an early aptitude for picking out melodies on a neighbor's piano.<sup>14</sup> This convinced his parents Gaspare and Carmela to enroll him in piano lessons with a neighbor. Private piano and organ lessons represent the only formal musical

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Ingham, *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2005), 39.

<sup>14</sup> Willie L. Morris III, "The Development of the Saxophone Compositions of Paul Creston" (DMA diss., the University of Missouri- Kansas City, 1996), 2.

education that the composer had. In fact, Creston was primarily self-taught in both musical and general subject areas after withdrawing from high school to enter the workforce to pay for the piano lessons his parents could no longer afford.<sup>15</sup> He worked for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for many years while continuing to teach himself composition and general academic studies. Creston formally changed his name in 1944, taking the name of his favorite saint and part of the name of a character he portrayed in a school play. When asked why he changed his name, Creston said it was to avoid the many attempts at mispronunciation and resultant frustration.<sup>16</sup>

Through Creston's burgeoning reputation as a pianist in New York he was called upon to accompany ground-breaking saxophonist Cecil Leeson when the performer's pianist was called away right before an audition with the National Music League.<sup>17</sup> Creston was a great sight-reader and impressed Leeson with his facility and accuracy. This accidental collaboration resulted in many concert tours including a groundbreaking recital in New York's Town Hall in 1937 during which Creston accompanied.<sup>18</sup> The duo performed the American premiere of the Glazunov *Concerto* and the composer's *Suite for Saxophone and Piano*(1935), considered to be the first work written for saxophone by an

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Willie L. Morris III, "The Development of the Saxophone Compositions of Paul Creston" (DMA diss., the University of Missouri- Kansas City, 1996), 1-5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Hulsebos. "Cecil Leeson: The pioneering of the concert saxophone in America from 1921 to 1941" (DA diss., Ball State University), In *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 9003627; accessed April 10, 2011), 160-162.

American-born composer.<sup>19</sup> Creston wrote his *Sonata Op. 19* (1939) and *Concerto Op. 26* (1941) as a result of his relationship with Leeson.

The three movements of *Sonata Op. 19* are written in Creston's distinct rhythmic and harmonic style. He is focused on a distinct approach to rhythm, formulated through didactic works such as his *Rythmicon* etudes for piano and his time as an accompanist with the Martha Graham dance company where he met his wife, who was a dancer.<sup>20</sup> This exposure to dance rhythms manifests itself in the quasi-rumba style of the D theme in the third movement of the *Sonata*. His harmonies are tonal, though often modal or pan-diatonic with the use of expanded, jazz-tinged altered ninth chords. The coloristic use of parallel ninth chords and the extensive use of the Lydian mode contributes a modern jazz patina to much of the *Sonata* and creates a distinct American sound. Creston eschewed the use of Italian tempo markings and used English indications for tempo throughout his scores.

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1959)

Lawson Lunde (1935)

This Chicago-based composer and pianist wrote thirteen compositions utilizing the saxophone, and six of those works are sonatas. His compositional style features great lyricism and rhythmic energy. As a pianist he appeared at the age of 14 with the Chicago

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<sup>19</sup> Willie L. Morris III, "The Development of the Saxophone Compositions of Paul Creston" (DMA diss., the University of Missouri- Kansas City, 1996), 1-5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 18.

Symphony, and he later studied composition with Vittorio Rieti and Robert Delaney. This three movement sonata was dedicated to Cecil Leeson and Brian Minor, saxophonists that were vital in enhancing the reputation of the classical saxophone in the United States.

The first movement begins with an *a cappella* fanfare in the saxophone that leads to the first theme. Lunde employs a modern variation of the traditional sonata form. The elements of exposition, development and recapitulation are all present, though obscured somewhat by the composer's penchant for melodic invention. Transitions spill melodic material through those three distinct sections creating a kaleidoscopic spinning effect throughout, so that one melody organically flows into another. The harmonic material is decidedly tonal, with a predisposition toward tertian modulations starting in measure seven that impart a forward-falling feel to all three movements and particularly contribute to the feeling of energy in the outer movements.

Saxophonist Stephen Mauk has described the mood of the second movement as "sacred jazz."<sup>21</sup> The ternary form in the movement contrasts an initial hymn-like simple theme with a moody and modulatory *agitato*.<sup>22</sup> The serene ending in F major yields to the effervescent ABACABCA rondo finale of the sonata's third movement. The playful nature of the writing is evident throughout, particularly when Lunde uses hocket to interject humor into the third rendition of the A theme. By far the most performed and popular of the composer's six sonatas, this final work on the program was written in 1959.

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<sup>21</sup> Steven Mauk, "Master Lesson: *Sonata* by Lawson Lunde." Ithaca College Saxophone Studio Website. <http://faculty.ithaca.edu/mauk/docs/lunde> (accessed March 20, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



By 1959 the saxophone had made significant progress worldwide as a serious classical instrument. Although not as celebrated as the jazz saxophone, by the 1960's there were classical saxophone teachers at a few major American institutions and the instrument gained increasing acceptance in Europe, due primarily to the performance and pedagogy of Marcel Mule and the concert tours of Sigurd Rascher. Many American performers, like Frederick Hemke, Eugene Rousseau, and Marshall Taylor ventured to Europe to study with Marcel Mule. Like so many other pre-war immigrants, Sigurd Rascher moved to New York in 1939 and became a citizen in 1940. The next two decades would continue to see a proliferation of new saxophone works and the growth of the status of the instrument.

## SECTION II

### Recital II 1960-1980

The first era of the American saxophone sonata was mainly focused upon two main icons and the repertoire they helped create. They forged this repertoire through relationships they cultivated with composers who became personal friends. In the case of Bernhard Heiden and Paul Creston, both were collaborative pianists who not only wrote for the saxophone but performed with Larry Teal and Cecil Leeson, the two primary early American concert saxophone pioneers. By 1953, Teal had secured the first full-time position as a saxophone professor at the University of Michigan, and Leeson began teaching at Northwestern University in 1955. Prior to that, most students of the saxophone came to the instrument after studying clarinet and had to adapt what they learned to the saxophone. Now saxophonists had established a foothold in academia and began growing a cadre of performers that would shape the future of the instrument.

In addition to recognition in the collegiate world, the saxophone began to propagate repertoire through the mechanism of the North American Saxophone Alliance and its affiliated organization the World Saxophone Congress, the first of which was held in 1968. These meetings of all the world's saxophonists, teachers and students caused some changes in the way saxophonists cultivated repertoire. Now large groups of people could hear new works for the instrument and exchange ideas on a global scale. New

techniques could be heard and assimilated at a quicker pace than before; consequently, a rich culture of experimentation and risk-taking was developed through these world and local symposia. At the 1970 World Saxophone Congress in Chicago, French saxophonist Jean-Marie Londeix premiered a *Sonata for Saxophone and Piano* written by Russian composer Edison Denisov. This work explored a new sound palette for the instrument. In addition to being the first major composition for saxophone to employ serial composition techniques, Denisov's *Sonata* was the first to utilize slap tongue, glissando, demanding altissimo passages and multiphonics in one composition. These new sounds coupled with an international forum with which to present them, were a potent combination to spur the development of the saxophone from 1970 onward. The American saxophone sonata changed as well; diversifying from its clinging to post romantic tonal roots with modest technical demands written for a few select virtuosi, into a more challenging style geared to meet the burgeoning group of capable American players emerging from institutions that now had for the first time qualified saxophone teachers.

Sonata for Tenor Saxophone and piano (1968)

Garland Anderson (1933-2001)

Garland Anderson was born in Union City, Ohio in 1933 and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Earlham College in 1953. He then pursued studies in composition with Hans Gal at the University of Edinburgh (1954-56), and with Roy Harris at Indiana University (1958-60). Anderson earned several awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1976 and an ASCAP award in 1980. He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1984. His compositional output includes opera, oratorios, and chamber works for various instruments including violin, saxophone (alto, tenor and baritone), tuba, and piano. He has written nine works for saxophone including a concerto for saxophone and band, and a saxophone quartet. He wrote four saxophone sonatas, two for alto saxophone one for baritone and one for the tenor saxophone.

The Anderson *Sonata for Tenor Saxophone*, along with James Di Pasquale's *Sonata for Tenor Saxophone* (1967), represent the first American sonatas to be written for the tenor saxophone. It is important to note that the majority of the solo literature before these works had been primarily composed for alto saxophone. Therefore, this sonata occupies a valuable position in the repertoire. This four movement work uses Hindemith-inspired quartal melodic lines for the first and last movements, both written in traditional sonata-allegro form. The harmonic element of these two movements features median modulations and inversion of the primary thematic groups in contrapuntal interchanges between the saxophone and piano. Though the tenor saxophone part makes modest demands on the player, the writing requires the performer to have command of the full

range of the instrument and demands sensitivity of tone and understanding of nuance and ensemble for an effective performance. A brief *scherzo* in the second movement contrasts with a lush and languorous third movement that showcases the lyrical ability of the tenor saxophone. This work is dedicated to Cecil Leeson, who was teaching at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana at the time of its composition. Not much is known surrounding the circumstances of the *Sonata*'s genesis: it may be that because Cecil Leeson was a pedagogue he was attempting to grow the literature for the tenor saxophone and provide teaching pieces for his saxophone studio.

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano Op. 29 (1972)      Robert Muczynski (1929-2010)

Robert Muczynski was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1929. He attended DePaul University, studying piano with Walter Knupfer and composition with Alexander Tcherepnin, graduating in 1952 with a Master's degree in piano performance. He taught at DePaul until 1958 when he presented his Carnegie Hall debut piano recital featuring his own compositions. Following his debut he was a recipient of a Ford Foundation Fellowship as part of the Young Composers in-Residence Program. During this time he resided in Oakland, California then subsequently Tucson, Arizona in 1961. In 1965 he procured a position as a piano teacher and head of the composition department at The University of Arizona at Tucson, until his retirement in 1988. As professor emeritus he continued to compose until his death in May of 2010.<sup>23</sup>

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Muczynski composed over fifty works, mostly for piano. Muczynski has also written works for solo woodwind instruments that are a cherished part of the standard repertoire particularly for flute and saxophone. His two works for solo saxophone, the *Sonata Op.29*, and *Concerto Op.41*, are performed often and have become mainstays in saxophone recitals worldwide. In Jean-Marie Londeix's *A Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire* the author states that: "Muczynski's music is very melodic in an Aaron Copland fashion and very rhythmic and percussive— an American Béla Bartok if you will. The unique combination of these two disparate styles along with the regular use of jazz harmonic structures combines to create Muczynski's style."<sup>24</sup>

The *Sonata Op.29* was commissioned in 1970 by Trent Kynaston with the goal of premiering the work at the Second World Saxophone Congress in Chicago. This performance provided an effective platform from which to launch a new work and did in fact generate a great deal of interest along with the premiere of the saxophone *Sonata* of Edison Denisov. Both of these works introduced a more innovative style of writing into the genre of the sonata which before this point tended to be more conservative in its tonal

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<sup>23</sup> Anne Marie Thurmond. "Selected woodwind compositions by Robert Muczynski: A stylistic and structural analysis of Muczynski's Sonata, Opus 14, for flute and piano, Sonata, Opus 29, for alto saxophone and piano, "Time Pieces", Opus 43, for clarinet and piano, and "Moments", Opus 47, for flute and piano. "DMA diss., University of Georgia, 1998. In Dissertations & Theses: Full Text [database online]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 9908572; accessed March 29, 2011), 1.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Marie Londeix, *A Comprehensive Guide To The Saxophone Repertoire 1844-2003*. Edited by Bruce Ronkin. (Cherry Hill, New Jersey: Roncorp Publications, 2003), 272.

milieu. Originally Muczynski fashioned the two movement work with a more evocative title in mind: *Desert Sketches* or *Desert Serenade*. Mr. Kynaston stated in a 1993

interview for *The Saxophone Journal* that:

the mind-set of the classical saxophonist at the time was such that if he used one of those titles, many players might not consider it a “serious” piece and overlook it. I suggested he call it Sonata, even though it had only two movements. After it had been out for several years he had said he was glad we had made that decision but now when I play it I have these visions of that desert scene and I wish we had followed his original thought.<sup>25</sup>

The opening melodic line in the saxophone part of the *Sonata Op.29* presents the germ cell that is developed throughout both movements; i.e. a major second followed by a minor third. All of the melodic material in the first movement’s ternary form flows organically from this idea that is restated dramatically in the saxophones altissimo range then transformed into a 5/8 Gershwin-like jazz riff . The movement closes with an austere *sotto voce* sounding of the opening theme. The second movement opens with a driving rhythmic figure that frames an altered sonata-rondo form based on a dissonant harmonic underpinning of parallel major-seventh chords that give this movement a feeling of raw energy. The coda transforms the opening thematic material into a scintillating 6/8 that closes the sonata with dramatic style.

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<sup>25</sup> Anne Marie Thurmond. “Selected woodwind compositions by Robert Muczynski: A stylistic and structural analysis of Muczynski’s Sonata, Opus 14, for flute and piano, Sonata, Opus 29, for alto saxophone and piano, “Time Pieces”, Opus 43, for clarinet and piano, and “Moments”, Opus 47, for flute and piano,” 12.

Sonata for Alto saxophone and piano (1980)

Phil Woods (1931)

Saxophonist Phil Woods is an American jazz icon. He studied clarinet at the Julliard School from 1948 until 1952, since there was no instruction provided in saxophone at the time, and also received jazz instruction from pianist Lennie Tristano while in New York City. He minored in composition while at Julliard and cites the influence of Bartok, Cage, Varese and other modernists as well as traditional eighteenth and nineteenth century compositional techniques. He moved to Paris forming The European Rhythm Machine in 1968, subsequently moving back to the United States in 1972 and formed the Phil Woods Quintet. He has recorded over 50 albums as a leader, countless others as a sideman and received four Grammy Awards in addition to dozens of other awards in recognition of his extraordinary performing career. As a composer, Mr. Woods has written over 200 songs in the jazz idiom and has composed four chamber works for saxophone in what is termed a crossover style between classical and jazz.<sup>26</sup>

Phil Woods' *Sonata* occupies a unique place in classical saxophone repertoire. The work was composed for saxophonist and fellow Julliard alumnus Victor Morosco at the time of his Carnegie Hall debut in 1962. Originally titled *Four Moods for Alto Sax, Piano and Bass*, this work was initially written in a jazz style with no improvisation. Woods revised the work in 1972, changing the name to *Sonata for Alto Sax and Piano*

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<sup>26</sup> Biographical information obtained from the composers official website:  
<http://www.philwoods.com/>



and removed the bass part to facilitate performance with the usual recital instrumentation of saxophone and piano. In addition, he added sections in the first and third movements for improvisation when he further revised the work in 1980. Other important classical saxophone works such as Jacques Ibert's *Concertino da Camera* and Paul Creston's *Sonata Op. 19*, have melodic and harmonic underpinnings that are derivative of jazz, but it is the Woods *Sonata* that represents the first work with improvisation coexisting with more mainstream classical writing. All four movements are written in a loose ternary form with the expected development section that the term sonata engenders, left to the saxophonist during the improvisational sections.

Despite other significant classical saxophone works that had jazz-tinged harmonic and rhythmic underpinnings, and the great tradition of jazz saxophone performance in popular music, saxophone literature during the period of 1928-1960 was largely devoid of direct jazz writing. Perhaps it was the classical saxophonist's desire to distance themselves from the instrument's rich jazz heritage that underscored that tendency to maintain that fine distinction. Since the saxophone's reputation as a classical instrument was more secure in the 1960's and 1970's, performers began to experiment with more cutting edge repertoire. Classical saxophone literature began to diversify even more in the final two decades of the 20th Century. The development of the North American saxophone alliance and The World Saxophone Congress, in addition to the establishment of highly competitive university programs greatly enriched and expanded the repertoire for a burgeoning population of highly trained performers that demanded more challenging and diverse music to perform.

## SECTION III

## Recital III 1980-2000

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and piano (1988)

David Maslanka (1943)

Born in Massachusetts in 1943, Maslanka studied clarinet and performed with the Greater Boston Youth Symphony and then subsequently attended Oberlin Conservatory. After two years at the Mozarteum in Salzburg he attended Michigan State University and studied clarinet with Elsa Ludwig, composition with H. Owen Reed, and theory with Paul Harder. Among the numerous awards the composer has received are three National Endowment of the Arts fellowships and five MacDowell Colony residency fellowships. Maslanka has earned an excellent reputation as a wind composer having written solo works for clarinet, flute, horn, wind band, and of course four works that utilize the saxophone.

The Maslanka *Sonata* is an epic, thirty-minute work that makes concerto-like demands upon both soloist and accompanist. Commissioned by the North American Saxophone Alliance the work is dedicated to 30 saxophonists listed in the title page of the *Sonata*.<sup>27</sup> This is the first large scale commission in the repertoire and the work is printed and sold by the Alliance, with proceeds exceeding production costs donated back to the organization. In this, his first solo for saxophone, Maslanka states that his intent is to

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<sup>27</sup> David Maslanka, *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, The North American Saxophone Alliance, 1988.

create a dichotomy between traditional common practice tonal writing and contrasting episodes of upheaval and angst. The composer, in an interview with saxophonist Nathan Keedy stated that his models for this work included: Franz Liszt's *B Minor Piano Sonata*, the Poulenc *Oboe Sonata*, the madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo, and *Symphony Twelve* of Allan Pettersson. In particular, the repetitive emphasis of tone centers in the piano part of this work has been compared to hitting the listener with an "emotional sledge hammer" a device germane to the music of Pettersson.<sup>28</sup> The emotional content of the *Sonata* is based upon the Chilean Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda's poem, *The Corpses in the Plaza*.<sup>29</sup>

The first movement begins with a pensive theme in the key of A minor. Within sixty measures all three main themes have been introduced and the mood has abruptly changed from tonal and melancholy to frenetic and dissonant. In Keedy's interview Maslanka states:

the emotional power that Liszt generates, particularly in that *B minor Sonata*, which I think is a fabulous piece, is a thing which moved me in the writing of my own Saxophone Sonata. So not only is there an emotional kind of quality to the music, there is a wistful character and there is this "monster leaping on your face" kind of character to the piece. All of this translates into a big emotional kind of music.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Nathan Andrew Keedy. "An Analysis of David Maslanka's Chamber Music for Saxophone." (DMA diss.; University of Colorado, 2004), 22.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 21-22. Both the Pettersson *Symphony Twelve*, and Neruda poem are "full of grief and rage" according to the Keedy dissertation.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 23.

After a second episode of cascading thirty-second notes and emotional turmoil, a recapitulation of the pensive opening theme occurs in a sotto voce coda over a secco series of piano chords.

The second movement begins as a recitative and slowly unfolds into a ballad, maintaining the most consistent mood of the *Sonata*. After two climatic forays into the altissimo register the melodic material begins to “melt” in a descending sequence of chromatic lines— a passage influenced by the music of Carlo Gesualdo.<sup>31</sup> The second movement closes quietly with a florid, tritone-based theme reminiscent of the Poulenc *Oboe Sonata*. The third movement is the most schizophrenic of all three movements.<sup>32</sup> Written in a large ABACA form the A sections feature a frenetic 6/8 theme with motor-driven rhythms and manic energy in the identical A sections, contrasted with the melancholy B and C thematic groups that resemble the emotional content of the second movement. The third movement ends with a quiet and introspective coda and concludes with the saxophone using the “melting” gesture from the second movement.<sup>33</sup>

San Antonio Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1994)

John Harbison (1938)

Born in East Orange, NJ, John Harbison quickly established himself as a significant American composer. His early interest in jazz piano resulted in the composer fronting his own jazz band at the age of eleven. He attended Harvard University and Princeton, studying composition with Roger Sessions and Walter Piston. He credits much

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<sup>31</sup> Keedy, “An Analysis of David Maslanka’s Chamber Music for Saxophone,” 49.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 96.

of his distinctive development to eschewing the usual path of most composers of his generation that studied with Nadia Boulanger, and choosing instead to reside in Germany and study with Boris Blacher at the Berlin Musikhochschule in 1961. His early years were marked by the influences of serialism, Stravinsky and jazz. He has written over seventy notable works, many for voice including *Mottetti di Montale* and dramatic works including the opera *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>34</sup> Harbison currently teaches composition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The composer's self-described personal creative mission is "to make each piece different from the others, to find clear, fresh, large designs, to reinvent traditions."<sup>35</sup>

This was the first work commissioned by World-Wide Concurrent Premiere and Commission Fund, Inc. (WWCPCF). WWCPCF was a grassroots commissioning consortium started by saxophonist Kenneth Radnofsky in 1992. The concept of WWCPCF was to solicit up to one hundred musicians to purchase performing rights to an advertised work by a particular composer for approximately one hundred to two hundred dollars apiece. Then all would agree to concurrently premier the work in different locations. This was a novel way to raise money at an affordable cost to individuals, while

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<sup>34</sup>Barbara Bonous-Smit. "John Harbison: His Life and Works With Piano." (PhD diss.; New York University, 1996).

<sup>35</sup>David St. George. "Harbison, John." in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/47252> (accessed April 12, 2011).

also generating public interest in a performance that would take place around the world.

36

In the *San Antonio Sonata*, Harbison avoids traditional absolute music expectations and introduces programmatic elements focused on the city of San Antonio, Texas. The first movement forgoes traditional sonata-allegro form and instead develops thematic material from a *misterioso* three note motive based on half-steps in the piano. The theme quickly transforms into a series of fanfare like motives that follow in imitation between the saxophone and piano. The two voices imitate each another in a stretto, finally coalescing into a series of rhythmically unified strident cluster-chords in the piano with altissimo-register clarion calls in the saxophone. The second and third movements are written in an embellished ABA song form. Musical material is based on Latin American dance music including salsa, mambo and tango rhythms and tonal harmonies. The composer ends each movement softly, almost as if the listener is walking into a scene with music playing then leaving as it fades organically in the background. Harbison wrote elaborate notes as to the programmatic intent of each of these movements and are quoted below to further elucidate his intentions.<sup>37</sup>

#### I. The Summons

The traveler has a free afternoon in San Antonio. It is August, 105 degrees. Expecting to start with a cool promenade along the river, he is instead lured by a sound. He follows it up a long stairway and finds himself in a little fiesta—a hot square, no shade, many people, a few dancing to a fast beat, the band playing and singing in Spanish.

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<sup>36</sup> Jenifer Corl Bill, “World Wide Concurrent Premiers and Commissioning Fund, Inc. A History of the Non-Profit Commissioning Organization.” (DMA diss., Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2007), 1-5.

<sup>37</sup> John Harbison, *San Antonio Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, (Associated Music Publishers, 1994).

## II. Line Dance

The first dancers finish exhausted. Then, as if on cue, practically the whole crowd gets into a line, all ages, nine to ninety. They all know the steps, which changes with the phrases and hardly stops.

## III. Couples Dance

Then the music changes again, still slower; they go on in couples. No one seems to feel the heat; the band hardly stops. Everyone, the traveller included, sinks into it. Towards the end, a young girl asks the traveller to dance. He declines. But a year later, when the tourist jots down the memory of the sounds—something about a saxophone, and a few rhythms—in his distorted memory he accepts.

Sonata deus sax machina (1999-2000)

Gregory Wanamaker (1968)

Contemporary composer Gregory Wanamaker is currently Professor of Composition and Theory at The Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. He lists compositional influences from former teachers Ladislav Kubík, William Averitt, and Thomas Albert. He has written extensively for wind band, clarinet and saxophone and has received a National Endowment of the Arts grant in 2011. Saxophonist Timothy McAllister commissioned the composer to write the *sonata* when he was a student at the University of Michigan in 1999-2000. The composer provides notes in the piano part as to the musical and programmatic elements contained within the sonata:

*Sonata deus sax machina* combines the traditional formal aspects of the classical sonata genre with some more recent trends and languages. The work exploits many of the coloristic and virtuosic qualities unique to the alto saxophone

including the use of multiphonics, quasi-pizzicato slap tonguing, and its altissimo register.

*Sonata deus sax machina* was commissioned by Timothy McAllister with the intention that the work may evoke images of machines or machine-like activity. The title itself is merely a play on words to employ the words “sax” and “machine” it is not meant to imply anything resembling the literary device “deus ex machina.”

The work is in three movements, each of which reflects a specific abstract style of machine or machine-like quality.

The first movement is in a strict sonata-allegro form and may be likened to some sort of perpetual motion motor.

The second movement is a chaconne of sorts that exploits the lyric and melodic use of multiphonics in the saxophone over a steady hum of an electric clock or fluorescent lights.

The third movement (rondo-psycho) may bring to mind the various stages of the operation of a cartoonish machine.

The work is cyclic as similar motives and themes appear in all movements.

*Sonata deus sax machina* was premiered by Timothy McAllister and David Heinick at the 2000 World Saxophone Congress in Montreal on July 9, 2000.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gregory Wanamaker, *Sonata deus sax machina*, Gregory Wanamaker, 2000.



## CONCLUSION

In this series of recitals the objective has been to demonstrate the development of the American saxophone sonata in three discrete chronological periods. The period of 1928-1960 was characterized chiefly by individual efforts to establish the saxophone as a serious solo instrument. The repertoire was primarily created by performer-composer relationships and subsequent collaborations. The tendency seemed to be that saxophonists were pursuing major works in a conservative style to help further the cause of establishing the instrument as a serious concert instrument. Concerti and sonatas made up the majority of most sought-after genres and despite the rapid development of contemporary music idioms during this time period, most of these works were written in a fairly conservative tonal style. It is possible that this was in an effort to stay well within the borders of mainstream concert-going taste and foster the greatest possible audience utilizing a familiar musical milieu to introduce an unfamiliar instrument. It took a longer time to make repertoire known to the listening public during this era as the chief means of reaching an interested audience was through concertizing and the fairly new method of distributing vinyl records and tape recordings.

In the 1960 to 1980 time period, the reputation of the classical saxophone in academia continued to gain traction. Nascent professional organizations like the North American Saxophone Alliance provided a mechanism for national and worldwide exposure to new compositions, solo competitions and excellent role models for students to emulate. Upon entering the 1980-2000 time period there were an abundance of flourishing saxophone studios in major institutions like the University of Michigan and Northwestern University as well as rapid growth in ancillary universities and colleges that offered instruction in classical saxophone performance. Such early compositions as the Creston and Heiden Sonatas were well established essentials in the canon in this period, but the virtuosity of the average concert performer eclipsed the modest demands of these earlier pieces. There was a desire for more technical challenge and the capacity to meet these greater demands.

In addition to the fruits of these pedagogical advances, the increasing membership of the North American Saxophone Alliance fostered exponential growth of the literature and engendered an unprecedented global reach through the advent of technological advances brought on by the digital age. Saxophonists began to harness the effectiveness of their increasing numbers by collaborating on commissions through the North American Saxophone Alliance and World-Wide Concurrent Premiere and Commission Fund, Inc. Many composers took advantage of this platform to showcase their new works to a group of performers eager to accept new risks and challenges.

The future of the American saxophone sonata in 21<sup>st</sup> century America is promising. The sheer number of capable performers, teachers and composers is a potent measure of the capacity for future success, particularly when contrasted with the paucity of performers and literature in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Expectations are for continued generation of new works and gifted performers to meet new challenges in the saxophone studios of Michigan, Northwestern and Indiana Universities as well as performers in the professional realm. Protégés of iconic American pedagogues Fred Hemke and Donald Sinta, among others, will continue to push the envelope of the instruments' technical and musical limitations and ensure the production of promising new American saxophone sonatas in the future.

## APPENDIX I

Sam Fox Publishing Co., Inc.  
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"Sonata" for saxophone with piano accompaniment (music by Jascha Gurewich)

[The sheet music consists of the following:

- 1) E-flat saxophone part [1 title page, plus 10 pages of music]
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## APPENDIX II

### RECITAL PROGRAMS

#### ABOUT THE CENTER

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, opens new doors to performance and learning experiences for the many communities within and around the University. Dynamic and spirited, the Center is firmly committed to programming that integrates learning, service and performance, actively engaging people in arts exploration and providing artists with a collaborative environment to nurture their talents and present their art. The Center's mission is reflected in its unusual building design, evocative of a community for the arts, which unites six intimate performance spaces, three performing arts academic departments, a performing arts library, rehearsal spaces and classrooms under one roof.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
presents

Robert Beeson  
Saxophone

THE SAXOPHONE SONATA IN TWENTIETH CENTURY  
AMERICA: CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELECT  
REPERTOIRE

ACCOMPANIED BY:  
Roy Hakes, piano

MAY 8, 2010 5:30 PM



**Please note:** As a courtesy to the performers and your fellow patrons, please turn off all cell phones and pagers (or leave them with the House Manager with your seat location); please remember that food, drink, smoking, photography, recording (audio and video) and animals (other than service animals) are not permitted in the performing spaces; please refrain from unnecessary talking, noise, or disruptive behavior. Note that we make every effort to start on time and that we recommend you arrive at least 15 minutes before the performance time. Latecomers are delayed entry and ushered in at an appropriate seating break, determined in consultation with the artist. For your own safety, in case of an emergency, look for the nearest exit. Walk, do not run, to that area.

ULRICH RECITAL HALL  
CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



PROGRAM

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Jascha Gurewicz (1896-1938)

Sonata op. 130 (1928)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Romanza
- III. Scherzo
- IV. Rondo

Bernhard Heiden (1910-2000)

Sonata (1937)

- I. Allegro
- II. Vivace
- III. Adagio, presto

This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree. Robert Beeson is a student of Dale Underwood.

I would like to thank Dale Underwood for his guidance and Roy Hakes for his tremendous contribution to this musical endeavor.

I would like to give special thanks to my wife Marilyn, who makes everything possible.

Intermission

Paul Creston (1906-1985)

Sonata op. 19 (1939)

- I. With Vigor
- II. With Tranquility
- III. With Gaiety

Lawson Lunde (1935)

Sonata (1959)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andantino cantabile
- III. Allegro vivace

Roy Hakes, piano

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THE SAXOPHONE SONATA IN TWENTIETH CENTURY  
AMERICA: CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELECT  
REPERTOIRE

ACCOMPANIED BY:  
Roy Hakes, piano

NOVEMBER 21, 2010 2:00 PM

JOSEPH & ALMA GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL  
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CLARICE SMITH  
PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER AT MARYLAND



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PROGRAM

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Garland Anderson (1933-2001)

Sonata for Tenor Sax. And piano (1968)

- I. Adagio-Allegro con brio-Adagio
- II. Scherzo
- III. Andante con moto
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Robert Muczynski (1929-2010)

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano op. 29 (1972)

- I. Andante maestoso
- II. Allegro energico

Intermission

Phil Woods (1931)

Sonata for Alto Sax. And piano (1980)

- I. ♩ = 50
- II. Slowly
- III. Medium Fast
- IV. Freely-Fast!

Roy Hakes, piano

This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree. Robert Beeson is a student of Dale Underwood.

I would like to thank Dale Underwood for his guidance and Roy Hakes for his tremendous contribution to this musical endeavor.

I would like to give special thanks to my wife Marilyn, who makes everything possible.

Philippians 4:13

#### ABOUT THE CENTER

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
presents

Robert Beeson  
Saxophone

THE SAXOPHONE SONATA IN TWENTIETH CENTURY  
AMERICA: CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELECT  
REPERTOIRE

ACCOMPANIED BY:  
Roy Hakes, piano

APRIL 10, 2011 2:00 PM

ULRICH RECITAL HALL  
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PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER AT MARYLAND



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PROGRAM

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David Maslanka (1943)

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1988)

- I. Moderate
- II. Slow
- III. Very Fast

Intermission

John Harbison (1938)

San Antonio Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1997)

- I. The Summons
- II. Line Dance
- III. Couples' Dance

Gregory Wanamaker (1968)

Sonata deus sax machina (1999-2000)

- I. Quarter note = 132
- II. Quarter note = 48
- III. Eighth note = 180

Roy Hakes, piano

This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree. Robert Beeson is a student of Dale Underwood.

I would like to thank Dale Underwood for his guidance and Roy Hakes for his tremendous contribution to this musical endeavor.

In addition I would like to recognize the contributions to the success of this dissertation project made by Dr. Michael Votta.

I would like to give special thanks to my wife Marilyn, who makes everything possible.

Philippians 4:13

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