

## **DEDICATED! THE TORONTO SAXOPHONE QUARTET**

Programme notes by Steve Fuller and James Pybus

For more than 30 years, *The Toronto Saxophone Quartet* has dedicated itself to music and the joy of playing the saxophone. *The Toronto Saxophone Quartet* was founded in 1970 by Steve Fuller. In its present configuration the members of the TSQ collectively represent over 150 years of artistry. We have produced this, our debut CD recording, to share with our audience our dedication and enthusiasm for the saxophone and its quartet repertoire.

The members of *The Toronto Saxophone Quartet* are: - Steve Fuller, *soprano saxophone* - Gary Soles, *alto saxophone* - James Pybus, *tenor saxophone* - Gary Magill, *baritone saxophone*

### **Dedicated to the Canadian Saxophone**

1. *The Great Horned Owl*. This is a musical portrait of one of the birds of the Canadian wilderness, drawn by Toronto based composer Ben McPeck(1934-1981) in his *Canadian Audubon Suite* (1977)

**Dedicated to the Saxophone in Concert** This is a group of three original compositions written especially for saxophone quartet by Warren Barker (b. 1923)

2. *Voici le Quatuor* features each saxophone. The four movements are i) Soprano, ii) Alto, iii) Tenor, iv) Baritone
3. *Scherzo* is Barker's modern version of a well-known classical format, consisting of a slow introduction leading into a faster conclusion.
4. *Divertissement* is a whimsical piece, a real "diversion" as the title suggests. It gives a musical picture in each of its movements using an intriguing and imaginative interplay of the four voices in the quartet. The movements are i) *Fanfare*, ii) *Conversations*, iii) *Quiet Thoughts*, iv) *Prattle*.

### **Dedicated to the American Saxophone**

Here our musical journey through the heartland of the United States introduces the "jazzy" voice of the saxophone, as we take a musical trip from Chicago (North) to Dixie (South).

5. *Chicago*, written by Fred Fisher (1875-1942), is a swing version of the Frank Sinatra hit. Listen for the fugue-like middle section which features a gem of ensemble writing.
6. *Mississippi Rag*. We journey musically down the mighty Mississippi River in this fine ragtime tune by William H. Krell. *Mississippi Rag* is the first ragtime song ever published in the United States (1897).
7. *When You Got the Blues, Invent Something*. The music we know as the blues is based on a well-known series of chords. Many people who love listening to the blues probably have no idea (and couldn't care less) what a chord really is, but they always recognize a blues when they hear it. This is a blues composed in the style of a Bach invention by Canadian composer Michael J. Baker (b. 1949).

### **Dedicated to the Saxophone of Great Britain**

This grouping of three songs is associated with the member countries of Great Britain.

8. **ENGLAND:** *Sweet Day*, in a setting by R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), is taken from his suite of Elizabethan Part Songs, and is arranged by James Pybus.
9. **SCOTLAND:** *My Darling Ploughman Boy* is a lively traditional Scottish dance tune from the suite *Celtic Collage*, arranged by the English saxophonist Paul Harvey.
10. **WALES:** *Suo Gan*, arranged by Bruce Evans, is a traditional Welsh lullaby. This beautiful melody was used in the score for the film *Empire of the Sun*.

### **Dedicated to the European Saxophone**

**FRANCE:** *Petit quatuor pour saxophones* is from one of the best of the twentieth-century French composers to write specifically for saxophone quartet, Jean Francaix (1912-1999).

11. i) *Gaguenardise*
12. ii) *Cantilene* (alto, tenor and baritone only)
13. iii) *Serenade Comique*

### **BELGIUM:**

14. *Introduction et Scherzo Capriccioso*. Belgium is the birthplace of Adolph Sax (1814-1894), the inventor of our great instrument. This is a wonderfully melodic composition by Edgar Leclercq, who dedicated the piece to the well-known and respected Belgian Saxophone Quartet, led by Francois Daneels.

### **AUSTRIA and GERMANY:**

15. The *Queen of the Night's Aria* from *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*). W. A. Mozart(1756-1791) wrote *Die Zauberflöte*, the last of his six operas, in the summer of 1791 near the end of his short life. This famous aria is from Act Two, scene three.

### **Dedicated to Our Listeners**

16. *It Might as well be Spring* comes to us from the pens of lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II (1845-1960) and composer Richard Rogers (1902-1979), via the Broadway Stage for the popular musical *State Fair* (1941). This is a lovely ballad featuring an improvised, extended alto saxophone solo. When this album was recorded (March 2002) Spring was just around the corner, with its anticipation of fine sunny days.

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Our friend and colleague Denny Ringler recorded this CD in March 2002 at the Lakeshore Yacht Club in Toronto. He encouraged us to make very few adjustments to the recording in order to ensure the spontaneity and "live performance" qualities of the music. We hope you enjoy the results.

To order copies of the CD

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