

# Todd Oxford

Baritone Saxophone

Finesse



**Todd Oxford** is the world's pre-eminent classical Baritone Saxophonist. His touring schedule has taken him from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Bangkok, Thailand to Lisbon, Portugal and back again to his native United States. The Chronical Herald of Halifax said with regards to Mr. Oxford's playing: "Bach's D Minor Toccata and Fugue demanded a superlative degree of musicianship and got it from Oxford's Baritone Sax. He whipped through the crazily pianistic fugue subject with the finesse of a ballerina, which is a little like asking a semi-trailer to zig-zag from sidewalk to sidewalk at top speed down a crowded street without hitting anybody." Mr. Oxford began his studies of the saxophone at age 13 and after receiving many young artist awards, initiated his advanced studies with Harvey Pittel at The University of Texas.

After only two years at the university and having amassed further award recognition, he was invited to join the Harvey Pittel Saxophone Quartet as the youngest member in the 25 year history of this prestigious ensemble. As the solo Baritone Saxophonist of the HPSQ, he began to hone the skills he uses so eloquently. With the quartet, Mr. Oxford has presented concerts, radio/television performances and master classes in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., Honolulu, Sacramento CA, Rochester MN and Dallas to name a few. He performs and records as a virtuoso solo artist on the Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone Saxophones with symphony orchestras, wind ensembles and jazz ensembles to include a most recent performance/recording in Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Oxford describes the process of arranging for the Baritone Saxophone as follows: "Despite flattering observations by Hector Berlioz in 1842 regarding the unveiling of Adolphe Sax's new Baritone Saxophone, today's classical music lovers are largely unaware of its capabilities as a captivating solo instrument. It's gorgeous rich tone is a solo voice demanding attention. The Baritone Saxophone produces a wide range of tone color, dynamic variation and dazzling technical possibilities. My love of performing a variety of musical styles and the ability of the instrument to encompass these styles has inspired me to expand the concert repertoire by arranging works from other instrumental voices in the same tessitura. As a result of performing two middle movements of Bach's First Suite for Cello in concert with the HPSQ, I became interested in performing the entire work. I approached the world famous virtuoso cellist Paul Olefsky for coaching, who further suggested I transcribe the Franck Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano. I immediately fell in love with its flowing romantic lines and virtuosic challenges and instantly imagined playing the piece on my instrument." The Baritone Saxophone is a solo instrument of the highest order expressing musical thoughts and emotions on a par of any other solo instrument used in western classical music. Todd Oxford has managed to bring these musical possibilities to the forefront of world class artistry.



EQUILIBRIUM

**CÉSAR FRANCK** (1822-1890) was born in Belgium but studied in Paris. His compositional style fuses elements of Romanticism within traditional Classical forms while also incorporating a chromatic language present in the music of Liszt and Wagner. In 1871, Franck founded the National Society for French Music where students such as Vincent d'Indy were instrumental in the revival of French music. Many of Franck's works, including the famous violin sonata in A Major, make use of cyclical thematic material.

**SONATA IN A MAJOR FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO** was written in 1886 and dedicated to the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. The work was also premiered by Ysaÿe in Brussels the following year. After the first Paris performances, *Le Ménestrel* issued the following brief analysis. "It is modern in its formal design, and yet it retains the attractive qualities of the best of the classical sonatas. The first movement, somewhat legato in its general style, is constructed entirely on the basis of a persistent 9/8 rhythm, which makes one think of what Bach might have written had he lived in our nineteenth century. The recitativo, quasi fantasia-very free in form-is superbly lyrical. And the finale, which is treated almost throughout in canonic texture at the octave, reveals beneath its outward shell of academicism an ease, a grace, and a charm seldom equalled by anyone."

The sonata is traditionally performed by either violin or cello with piano. However, there exist today many adaptations of the work for woodwind instruments to include this arrangement for baritone saxophone by Todd Oxford.

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH** (1685-1750): The period of time that Bach served as kappelmeister and chamber music director at the court of Prince Leopold in Cöthen (1717-1723) yielded an incredibly productive output of instrumental music. Some of his famous works composed during this period in addition to the Six Suites for Solo Cello are the first book from the Well-Tempered Clavier, the Two and Three Part Inventions, the English and French Suites for Harpsichord, Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, the Brandenburg Concertos, the Four Orchestral Suites and many other chamber works.

The exact date of composition for the **SUITE NO. 1 FOR UNACCOMPANIED CELLO IN G MAJOR** is unknown since the original manuscripts for the entire six suites are lost. Modern editions of the six suites are based upon manuscripts copied by either Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, or by one of his pupils. Many of these editions are in fact incomplete due to performance instructions such as bowing, ornamentation, tempi and dynamics that are either incorrect or have been left out. As a result, the performer is left to make his or her own performance edition as Todd Oxford has done with his arrangement. The late great cellist Pablo Casals is largely responsible for bringing the Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello to the forefront of the string repertoire.

**EUGÈNE BOZZA** (b. 1905): A French composer and conductor who championed the saxophone, Bozza composed many works for the saxophone including solo pieces as well as saxophone quartets and chamber music. French saxophone legend Marcel Mule, through his international performances and reputation singlehandedly established the **IMPROVISATION ET CAPRICE** as a standard of the French classical saxophone repertoire.

**PAUL BONNEAU** (b. 1918): The **CAPRICE EN FORME DE VALSE**, as well as Bozza's **CAPRICE**, exemplify the French style of virtuoso saxophone playing. This work was dedicated to Marcel Mule.

## Carla McElhaney, pianist

Collaborative artistry with wind instruments is an emerging field for pianists which is quickly coming to the forefront of modern musical performance. Carla McElhaney has embraced this richly diverse medium for more than a decade, defining the role of pianist as that of an equal partner through her imaginative and compelling performances, and thus establishing herself as a favored collaborative artist.

Born in Baltimore in 1967, Carla McElhaney grew up in the Orlando area where she began studying piano at age 3. She pursued intensive musical training with Dr. James Gary Wolf from 1973 to 1986, and as his pupil, became active as a young performer and prize winning competitor. Among her most notable achievements during her youth was winning first prize at the 1975 American Music Scholarship Association National Piano Competition in Cincinnati, where she was honored with a special award for Most Outstanding Performance given by renowned concert artist Gina Bachauer.

Carla McElhaney continued her musical studies with Barry Snyder and David Burge at the Eastman School of Music, where she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Applied Piano in 1989. In 1990 she began studies with Gregory Allen at The University of Texas at Austin, and earned two degrees in Piano Performance -- a Master of Music degree in 1992 and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1998. Her distinction as a chamber musician and ensemble pianist during her graduate years was exemplified by winning the Sydney Wright Competition for Excellence in Piano Accompanying (1993), and performing as keyboardist on a live recording entitled *The University of Texas Wind Ensemble at Carnegie Hall* (1998). A champion of the duo repertoire for saxophone and piano, her doctoral treatise, *The Saxophone and Piano Version of Ingolf Dahl's "Concerto for Alto Saxophone."* *A Guide to Performance for the Collaborative Pianist*, explores ways in which Dahl's musical language requires an equal partnership between pianist and saxophonist.

A frequent recitalist, Carla McElhaney has appeared as a collaborative artist and ensemble pianist throughout the United States and Europe. A strong advocate of new music, she has participated in premier performances of works by notable living composers such as Donald Grantham and John Harbison. She has performed with faculty artists from the Eastman School of Music and The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and Austin Symphony Orchestra, and prizewinners of competitions including the Concert Artists Guild, Concours Internationale de Geneva, San Diego Young Artists, Kingsville International, Sorrensin International and Mu Phi Epsilon International. Dr. McElhaney currently serves on the piano faculty of The University of Texas.



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- Todd Oxford performs on Selmer saxophones, mouthpieces, ligatures and Vandoren reeds.
- Instrument repair by Kent Winking at Strait Music