

ALASTAIR PENMAN
JONATHAN PEASE

SAXOPHONE
PIANO

SOAR



Meadowbank Music

I HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF WORKING WITH MANY MUSICIANS IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS, BUT ONE FORMAT I ALWAYS SEEM TO RETURN TO IS IN DUO WITH PIANO. HAVING FIRST MET AND WORKED WITH **JONATHAN PEASE** IN 2007, WHILST STUDYING TOGETHER AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, IT IS ONLY SINCE 2018 THAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER AS A DUO, PERFORMING COUNTLESS RECITALS BOTH IN THE UK AND ABROAD. THIS ALBUM BRINGS TOGETHER SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE REPERTOIRE, INCLUDING MUCH LOVED AND PERFORMED WORKS FOR THE SAXOPHONE ALONGSIDE NEWER ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE. THE WORKS ARE DRAWN TOGETHER BY THEIR USE OF MELODY AND THE WAY THEY ALLOW THE SAXOPHONE TO SING, SOARING OVER THE LANDSCAPE CREATED BY THE PIANO.

ALASTAIR PENMAN, 2023

FOR FULL PROGRAMME NOTES PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT
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I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR SUPPORT WITH THIS PROJECT:

JONATHAN PEASE, FOR HIS EXCEPTIONAL PIANO PLAYING AND MASTERFUL MUSICIANSHIP.

ROLAND HEAP, FOR HIS TIRELESS WORK ON THE EDITING, MIXING AND MASTERING OF THE DISC.

DANNY MARSDEN, FOR CREATING THE STUNNING COVER IMAGE.

ALEKSANDAR AND DRAGANA VESELIĆ, FOR THE BEAUTIFUL ALBUM ARTWORK.

HENRI SELMER PARIS AND **VANDOREN UK**, FOR THE BRILLIANT SAXOPHONES, MOUTHPIECES AND REEDS THAT I PLAY ON.

MY PARENTS, FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF ALL MY MUSICAL ENDEAVOURS.

RACHAEL, FOR HER LOVE, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE.

PEQUEÑA CZARDA - PEDRO ITTURALDE (1929-2020)

PEQUEÑA CZARDA IS PERHAPS THE PIECE I HAVE PERFORMED MOST IN MY CAREER TO DATE, BOTH IN THE ORIGINAL VERSION WITH PIANO RECORDED HERE, AND IN ARRANGEMENT WITH WIND ORCHESTRA. HAVING FIRST LEARNT THE PIECE AT SCHOOL (AND INDEED RECORDED IT FOR A-LEVEL MUSIC!) IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF MY FAVOURITE SHOWPIECES FOR THE INSTRUMENT.

PEDRO ITURRALDE WAS A SPANISH SAXOPHONIST AND COMPOSER, WHO GAVE HIS FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AT THE AGE OF JUST ELEVEN AND WENT ON TO STUDY AT THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY IN MADRID. AFTER TOURING THE MIDDLE EAST AND GERMANY HE RETURNED TO SPAIN AS THE LEADER OF A GROUP OF GERMAN JAZZ MUSICIANS. HIS EXPERIMENTS WITH FUSIONS OF FLAMENCO AND JAZZ LED HIM TO RECORD SEVERAL ALBUMS, INCLUDING FLAMENCO-JAZZ. HE STUDIED BRIEFLY AT BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES, AND TAUGHT THE SAXOPHONE AT THE MADRID CONSERVATORY UNTIL 1994, WHILE ENJOYING A CAREER AS A PERFORMER BOTH IN JAZZ AND AS A SOLOIST WITH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS. WHEN HE WAS 20 YEARS OLD HE COMPOSED THE FLAMBOYANT PEQUEÑA CZARDA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE. ORIGINALLY ORCHESTRATED BY HIS BROTHER JAVIER, IT IS DEDICATED TO HIS FRIEND, THE SAXOPHONIST, THEODORE KERKEZOS.

FOUR COUNTRY DANCES - RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT (1936-2012)

STR RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT WAS AN ENGLISH COMPOSER WELL KNOWN FOR HIS FILM SCORES AND JAZZ PERFORMANCES AS WELL AS OVER 200 CONCERT WORKS. THIS SETTING OF FOUR COUNTRY DANCES FOR SOPRANO SAXOPHONE OR OBOE WAS WRITTEN IN NEW YORK IN 2000 AND DEDICATED TO SAXOPHONIST JOHN HARLE AND OBOIST NICHOLAS DANIEL. THE DANCES ARE ARRANGEMENTS OF TUNES TAKEN FROM PLAYFORD'S DANCING MASTER WHICH WAS A COLLECTION OF 535 POPULAR TUNES FOR COUNTRY DANCING, PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1651-1728 AND EDITED BY JOHN PLAYFORD (1623-1686) AMONGST OTHERS. RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT'S ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNMISTAKABLY HIS OWN, WITH THE PIANO PROVIDING A BEAUTIFUL ACCOMPANIMENT TO THESE SIMPLE ENGLISH MELODIES.

THIS SUITE IS ONE OF RODNEY BENNETT'S LESSER KNOWN SAXOPHONE WORKS AND I CONSIDER IT TO BE SOMEWHAT OF A HIDDEN TREASURE. I FIRST CAME ACROSS THIS PIECE WHILST STUDYING AT THE ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND SUBSEQUENTLY WENT ON TO PERFORM IT IN THE FINAL OF THE COLLEGES GOLD MEDAL COMPETITION. I HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMING THIS PIECE IN RECITALS EVER SINCE!

THREE LETTER WORD - ANDY SCOTT (1966-)

ANDY SCOTT IS A BRITISH SAXOPHONIST AND COMPOSER EQUALLY AT HOME IN JAZZ AND CLASSICAL CONTEXTS. HE WAS COMMISSIONED TO WRITE THREE LETTER WORD BY THE PARK LANE GROUP FOR SAXOPHONIST HUW WIGGIN, AND THE PIECE WAS PREMIERED AT THE PURCELL ROOM ON 14TH JANUARY 2009. THREE LETTER WORD IS DEDICATED TO THE MUSIC AND MEMORY OF THE SWEDISH COMPOSER AND PIANIST-ESBJORN SVENSSON, WHO WAS TRAGICALLY KILLED IN A DIVING ACCIDENT ON 14 JUNE 2008, AGED ONLY 44 YEARS.

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF STUDYING WITH ANDY SCOTT WHILST AT THE ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND HAVE ENJOYED PLAYING MANY OF HIS COMPOSITIONS. THREE LETTER WORDS IS A PARTICULAR FAVOURITE HOWEVER. WHILST IT IS A FIENDISH PIECE TO PLAY, IT UTILISES THE FULL RANGE OF THE SAXOPHONE BOTH IN TERMS OF PITCH AND COLOUR.

AND EVERYTHING IS STILL - ANDY SCOTT (1966-)

A COMPLETE CONTRAST TO THREE LETTER WORD, AND EVERYTHING IS STILL IS A BEAUTIFUL MELODIC PIECE SHOWCASING THE EXPRESSIVE POSSIBILITIES OF THE SAXOPHONE. IN THE WORDS OF THE COMPOSER:

INSPIRED BY A POEM WRITTEN BY LEMN SISSAY (TAKEN FROM HIS CHILDREN'S BOOK THE EMPEROR'S WATCHMAKER), AND EVERYTHING IS STILL... WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC & WAS PREMIERED BY CARLA SOUSA (FLUTE) & LUCY COLQUHOUN (PIANO) ON 22ND JUNE 2008 IN A CONCERT THAT MARKED THE RETIREMENT OF THE COLLEGE PRINCIPAL EDWARD GREGSON. A SIMPLE MELODY UNRAVELS ALONGSIDE DELICATE HARMONIC STATEMENTS, CREATING A CALM AND GENTLE ATMOSPHERE.

PRELUDE ET SALTARELLE - ROBERT PLANEL (1908-1994)

ROBERT PLANEL WAS A FRENCH COMPOSER, TEACHER AND VIOLINIST AND A WINNER OF THE PRESTIGIOUS PRIX DE ROME. AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR HE BECAME INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE CITY OF PARIS AND IN THIS TIME HE HELPED TO STRUCTURE THE MUSICAL TRAINING INSTITUTES OF THE CITY, INCLUDING CO-FOUNDING THE CONSERVATOIRES OF THE PARIS REGION.

I BELIEVE PRELUDE ET SALTARELLE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PIECES WRITTEN FOR THE SAXOPHONE AND THINK THAT IT IS NOT AS WIDELY RECOGNISED AS IT SHOULD BE. JONATHAN AND I ENJOY PROGRAMMING THIS IS MANY OF OUR RECITALS AND ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RECORD THE PIECE.

SOAR - ALASTAIR PENMAN (1988-)

SOAR IS PERHAPS THE FIRST SERIOUS COMPOSITION THAT I WROTE FOR SAXOPHONE AND PIANO. ORIGINALLY COMPOSED FOR A COMPETITION RUN BY THE CLARINET AND SAXOPHONE SOCIETY, SOAR ALSO WENT ON TO BECOME MY FIRST COMPOSITION PUBLISHED BY SEXTET PUBLICATIONS, WITH WHOM I NOW HAVE OVER TWENTY PUBLICATIONS.

SOAR TELLS THE STORY OF AN INJURED EAGLE WHO HAS BEEN KEPT IN CAPTIVITY BEFORE BEING RELEASED BACK INTO THE WILD. IN THE OPENING MATERIAL WE HEAR THE BIRD LAMENTING ITS LOSS OF FREEDOM AND VOICING ITS FRUSTRATION. AFTER THIS BRIEF INTRODUCTION, HOWEVER, WE HEAR THE EAGLE INSTANTLY RETURN TO ITS NATURAL STATE, FLYING FREELY AND INSTINCTIVELY ENJOYING DANCING IN AND OUT OF THE PATTERNS OF THE WIND WHILST IT TRAVELS ON ITS JOURNEY TO REJOIN ITS EYRIE.

LULLABY - PAUL MITCHELL-DAVIDSON (1946-)

PAUL MITCHELL-DAVIDSON IS A COMPOSER OF CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL MUSIC WHOSE COMPOSITIONS COVER MOST GENRES OF MUSIC INCLUDING SYMPHONIC, CHORAL, CHAMBER MUSIC AND JAZZ. HE WORKS IN THE FIELDS OF MEDIA, THEATRE, EDUCATION AND IN THE COMMUNITY AND WAS A LECTURER IN MUSIC COMPOSITION AT THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS.


LULLABY WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR TENOR SAXOPHONE AND HARP IN 1996 AND WAS PREMIERED BY ANDY SCOTT AND LAUREN SCOTT, WHO RECORDED IT ON THE CD, "MY MOUNTAIN TOP". IT WAS WRITTEN TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF ANDY AND LAUREN'S SON STANLEY, AND THE PIECE IS DEDICATED TO STANLEY.

ALTHOUGH I HAVE PERFORMED LULLABY MANY TIMES I HAVE NEVER DONE SO IN THE ORIGINAL INSTRUMENTATION! I FIRST PERFORMED THE PIECE IN DUO WITH GUITARIST EMMA SMITH TRANSCRIBED FOR SOPRANO SAXOPHONE AND GUITAR, BEFORE LATER ADDING IT TO MY REPERTOIRE WITH JONATHAN PEASE FOR SOPRANO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO IN THE VERSION RECORDED HERE. IT IS A TESTAMENT TO THE BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY OF THE TUNE THAT IT WORKS SO WELL IN SO MANY DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTATIONS.

DOCTOR GRADUS AD PARNASSUM - CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918) ARR. JENNI WATSON (1985-)
CLAUDE DEBUSSY IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST CELEBRATED FRENCH COMPOSERS IN HISTORY AND WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL COMPOSERS OF THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES. DOCTOR GRADUS AD PARNASSUM IS TAKEN FROM CHILDREN'S CORNER, A SET OF SIX SOLO PIANO PIECES THAT DEBUSSY WROTE BETWEEN 1906 AND 1908 AND DEDICATED TO HIS DAUGHTER CLAUDE-EMMA.

I CAME ACROSS JENNI WATSON'S WONDERFUL ARRANGEMENT OF DOCTOR GRADUS AD PARNASSUM WHEN I HEARD HER PERFORMING IT AT THE WORLD SAXOPHONE CONGRESS IN ZAGREB IN 2018. I WAS BLOWN AWAY BY BOTH THE ARRANGEMENT AND JENNI'S PERFORMANCE AND KNEW THAT IT WAS AN ARRANGEMENT I WANTED TO LEARN AND ADD TO MY CONCERT REPERTOIRE.

LIGHT OF SOTHIS - AMY QUATE (1953-)
AMY QUATE IS AN AMERICAN COMPOSER WHO WORKS IN A WIDE VARIETY OF MUSICAL STYLES, FORMS AND MEDIA AND WHO HAS PUBLISHED BOTH MUSICAL AND LITERARY WORKS. LIGHT OF SOTHIS WAS COMMISSIONED FOR THE SEVENTH WORLD SAXOPHONE CONGRESS HELD IN NUREMBERG, GERMANY, AND IS DEDICATED TO DEBRA RICHTMEYER, WHO PREMIERED THE WORK. LIGHT OF SOTHIS HAS SINCE BECOME A WORK POPULAR BOTH WITH PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS, SETTING TWO BEAUTIFUL OUTER MOVEMENTS AGAINST THE DRAMATIC MIDDLE MOVEMENT.

The image is a composite. In the foreground, the head and neck of a bird, possibly a hawk or eagle, are shown in profile, facing right. The bird is rendered in warm, golden-brown and orange tones, with a dark, hooked beak. The background is a misty, atmospheric scene with a large, dark tree on the right side. The sky is a mix of dark blue and grey, suggesting a twilight or dawn setting. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

CARNIVAL OF VENICE - JULES DEMERSSEMAN (1833-1866) ARR. FRED HEMKE (1935-2019)
JULES DEMERSSEMAN WAS A VIRTUOSO FLUTE PLAYER AND COMPOSER, BUT ALSO A FRIEND OF ADOLPHE SAX, THE INVENTOR OF THE SAXOPHONE. IT IS THANKS TO THIS THAT DEMERSSEMAN COMPOSED SOME OF THE EARLIEST PIECES FOR THE SAXOPHONE, INCLUDING HIS POPULAR FANTASIE SUR UN THÈME ORIGINALE WRITTEN IN 1860. THE FANTASY ON CARNIVAL OF VENICE WAS WRITTEN FOR ONE OF ADOLPHE SAX'S STUDENTS, AND SHOWS OFF THE FULL VIRTUOSIC CAPABILITIES OF THE INSTRUMENT.

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1. PEQUEÑA CZARDA - PEDRO ITTURALDE 6'51
2-5. FOUR COUNTRY DANCES - RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT
A NEW DANCE 3'12
LADY DAY 1'29
THE MULBERRY GARDEN 2'38
NOBODY'S JIG 1'55
6. THREE LETTER WORD - ANDY SCOTT 7'19
7. AND EVERYTHING IS STILL - ANDY SCOTT 3'01
8-9. PRELUDE ET SALTARELLE - ROBERT PLANEL
PRELUDE 5'22
SALTARELLE 1'48
10. SOAR - ALASTAIR PENMAN 5'48
11. LULLABY - PAUL MITCHELL-DAVIDSON 2'22
12. DOCTOR GRADUS AD PARNASSUM - CLAUDE DEBUSSY ARR. JENNI WATSON 2'23
13-15. LIGHT OF SOTHIS - ANY QUATE
GRACE 4'36
PASSION 2'41
FAITH 2'22
16. CARNIVAL OF VENICE - JULES DEMERSSEMAN ARR. FRED HENKE 5'11



ALASTAIR PENMAN - ALTO AND SOPRANO SAXOPHONES / JONATHAN PEASE - PIANO

PRODUCED BY ALASTAIR PENMAN

RECORDED ON 1ST JUNE AND 2ND SEPTEMBER 2022 AT GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

ENGINEERED BY PAUL ANDERS (TRACKS 1-5, 7-12, 16)

ENGINEERED BY MAISIE PINDAR AND HANNAH MILLAR (TRACKS 6, 13-15)

EDITED BY ROLAND HEAP AND ALASTAIR PENMAN

MIXED AND MASTERED AT SOUND DISPOSITION, SOHO BY ROLAND HEAP

FRONT COVER IMAGE BY DANNY MARSDEN, CREATED WITH MIDJOURNEY

OTHER IMAGES BY ALEKSANDAR VESELIĆ, CREATED WITH MIDJOURNEY

GRAPHIC AND LAYOUT DESIGN BY VESELIĆ & VESELIĆ

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