

# Clarinet & Saxophone

Spring 2016 Volume 41, No 1



SAX  
ON CD  
A dying  
medium?

ALL IN  
THE CHOPS  
Embouchure  
tips

MPINGO  
MAGIC  
Where  
clarinets  
come from

40  
years of  
Clarinet  
& Saxophone  
SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

1976 - 2016

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Cover:  
Karen Wimhurst  
and mpingo tree,  
Tanzania

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**CASSGB library:** The CASSGB Library is currently housed at Stapleford Granary, Cambridge. There are over four thousand titles of sheet music and other books, journals and recordings. A complete collection of *Clarinet & Saxophone Magazine* is also available. Members have full access by mail order and the library is administered by Stephanie Reeve, Librarian of CASSGB: CASSGB Library, Stapleford Granary, Bury Road, Stapleford, Cambridge CB22 5BP. Orders are made by our website: [cassgb.org/library](http://cassgb.org/library) or in writing to Stephanie Reeve.

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# CASSGB celebrates 40th birthday with event

CASSGB is set to host a special 40th Anniversary Clarinet & Saxophone Day to celebrate its 40th year of activity. The day will take place on 30 October 2016 at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama.



The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, host to the CASSGB 40th anniversary event

# 40

years of

## Clarinet & Saxophone

SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

1976 - 2016

'We are going to pull all the stops out for this event, and we would like as many members as possible to celebrate with us,' said CASSGB executive director Shea Lolin. 'We would also like to welcome all members to be present at the AGM to share views and help shape the future of the Society.' As well as the AGM there will be plenty of opportunities for members to play in ensembles, and a young performers' competition with prizes including a clarinet donated by Uebel. Full details of the event will be included in the next issue of *Clarinet & Saxophone*, and before that on the CASSGB website.

CASSGB would also like to hear from members with memories, anecdotes and funny stories about the last 40 years. Do you have any photos from the last four decades that could help create a tribute piece in a future issue of *Clarinet & Saxophone*? If so, please get in touch.

[editor@cassgb.org](mailto:editor@cassgb.org)

## CASSGB Library now free to all members

CASSGB has announced that its music library is now free to use for all members. Members can borrow up to four items per month with only postage costs payable. Non-members are now also able to borrow items and will be charged £1.50 per small item (solo or duo) and £5 per item per month for ensemble music. Members can request items through the website, by emailing [librarian@cassgb.org](mailto:librarian@cassgb.org) or by writing to Stephanie Reeve, 9 Hamden Way, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB23 3UG.

Several new and interesting collections have been donated recently. Thomas Dryer-Beers has given his collection of clarinet quartets and quintets, including original works and arrangements, and Charles Hine has donated a collection of music for clarinet including solos, duos and wind quintets.

David Hall has offered a collection including a copy of Elie Siegmeister's Clarinet Concerto. Written in 1955-56, this

work was performed and recorded by Jack Brymer and has since gone out of print. A collection of clarinet concertos, owned at various stages by George Clinton, Ronald Brooks and Wilfred Hambleton, was given by Hale Hambleton. These are early editions of concertos and concertinos by Weber, Lindpaintner, Valentin, Molique and other late Classical composers and include solo clarinet, strings and wind parts.

Catalogues of these collections are available by contacting [librarian@cassgb.org](mailto:librarian@cassgb.org) and will be put on to the database in due course. Feedback from hirers is welcome, whether about the music or the service itself. Further information will be added to the database over time so that hirers can have a clear idea whether particular pieces will meet their needs. All music is posted first class unless requested otherwise.

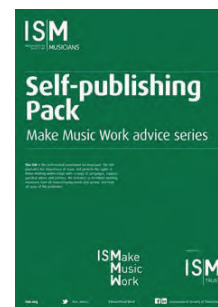
[www.cassgb.org](http://www.cassgb.org)

## ISM launches self-publishing pack

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) has launched a free self-publishing pack, providing advice for composers who are interested in self-publishing.

According to the ISM's head of legal David Abrahams, the pack 'explains why self-publishing is becoming increasingly popular, setting out some of the key challenges that self-publishing composers need to consider, along with advice about how you can meet those challenges.'

The pack is available to download at [www.ism.org/self-publishing-pack](http://www.ism.org/self-publishing-pack)



# TRIBUTE: DAVID BOWIE (1947-2016)



David Bowie, the musician and cultural icon who played the saxophone among many other instruments, died in January aged 69.

Bowie started playing the saxophone at the age of 12 when his mother reportedly bought him a plastic Grafton alto sax after he showed interest in the music of Charles Mingus and John Coltrane. He went on to have lessons with a local teacher.

The saxophone remained part of his work throughout his long and varied career – whether playing the instrument himself on the album *Pinups* and others, or inviting jazz saxophonist Donny McCaslin to take a leading role in what was to become his final album, *Blackstar*.

Speaking to music journalist Steve Weitzman in 1983, Bowie said: 'For me the saxophone always embodied the West Coast beat generation, as I was very entranced by that period of Americana. It became sort of a token, a symbol of freedom; a way of getting out of London that would lead me to America, which was an ambition at that time. I picked up originally on people like Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman. Somebody who really riveted me was Eric Bostic, just for the tonal quality.'

'Then when I started working with it, I found I didn't have a very good relationship with the sax and that lasted right the way through. We're sort of pretty embittered with each other. It lies there waiting for me to touch it. It defies me to. I really have to go through traumas to get anything out of it that is anything to do with what I want it to say. So it's not a steady relationship, it's not a good one. It really is a love-hate relationship.'

On being told by Weitzman that he had been voted top in a poll of well-known saxophone players, Bowie said: 'That's glorious! Well, I'll stand by myself and say I don't think you have to love something to be able to produce something which is creative out of it. I have the same relationship with paint. It's a struggle and we hate each other, but it doesn't have to mean you can't eventually get something on to a canvas that has a lot of spikiness to it.' ■

## BOWIE'S GRAFTON SAX

The Grafton saxophone, used by the young David Bowie, was an injection-moulded acrylic plastic alto saxophone with metal keys, manufactured in London by the Grafton company and later by John E. Dallas & Sons Ltd. Production began in 1950 and ended some ten years later, although a few last examples were assembled from residual parts in 1967. Only altos were ever made.

Designed by Hector Sommaruga, an Italian living in London, the saxophone was named after Grafton Way, his address during the late 1940s. The first non-working prototype was developed in 1946 and commercial production commenced in 1950. The retail price of the Grafton was £55, approximately half the cost of a conventional brass saxophone at that time, and marketing literature described the Grafton as a 'tone poem in ivory and gold'.

The most notable player of the Grafton saxophone was Charlie Parker. Parker was scheduled to perform at Massey Hall in Toronto in May 1953 but reportedly pawned his saxophone just before the concert. A passing Grafton sales representative suggested that Parker use a Grafton for the performance, which he duly did. Parker can be heard playing the Grafton on the record *Jazz at Massey Hall*, and the Grafton saxophone used by Parker was sold at the Christie's auction house in London in September 1994 for £93,500.

Ornette Coleman also played a Grafton, originally because it was the cheapest saxophone he could find. In the late fifties and early sixties Coleman was sometimes known as 'the man with the plastic horn', although he later

replaced the Grafton with a white-lacquered Selmer. Johnny Dankworth was also an early endorser, performing on a Grafton at the Festival of Britain in 1951 at the newly opened Royal Festival Hall.

Despite these high profile endorsements, the Grafton failed to gain widespread acceptance for a variety of reasons. Its acrylic plastic body was brittle, and spare parts were difficult to find or simply unavailable. Some players found its mechanical action too unreliable, and others found its sound harsh – although this was arguably used to positive effect by Ornette Coleman. Today, Graftons are sought after as collectors' pieces.





# SINGLE REED DOCTOR

Our resident single reed doctor answers questions sent in by readers. Please send your questions – or your further responses to advice given here – to [editor@cassgb.org.uk](mailto:editor@cassgb.org.uk).

The key is matching the resistance to the demands you are placing upon the set up

**Q.** I heard a rumour that putting a champagne cork into an alto saxophone bell helps when I want to play pianissimo. Is this true and if so how does it work? If it is not true how can I get a beautiful pp on my alto?

**A.** The practice of placing a champagne cork in the bell of an Alto or Tenor sax is more than a rumour. The use of such a cork or mouthpiece cap (a bit noisy if it rolls around but convenient) to add a bit of resistance and to occupy some volume (physical, not musical) has proven helpful to aid control of low notes for many players, and some instruments do benefit to a greater degree than others. Ideally one will develop a more refined approach by relying upon embouchure control at the sides of the mouthpiece and finding the best balance of reed strength and mouthpiece. Time – as well as practice – spent extending control to the low notes, slurred first and only then with added articulation, will bring success without reliance on a cork. It is worth remembering that if the reed/mouthpiece combination blows too easily, the player is not left with enough resistance to work with when the proper good level of air support is provided. The key is matching the resistance to the demands you are placing upon the set up.

**Q.** I find I squeak when I slur from top C to altissimo D on my clarinet. It doesn't always happen so don't think I can blame the instrument but when it does it is always the same pitch (roughly a fourth up).

**A.** This is a very familiar experience for almost all players at some point in their study. Assuming that the fingers are working/landing properly and a good air stream has been provided, the explanation for the squeak is often that the player is thinking of high D as indeed 'high' (which it isn't really) and subsequently struggling more than the high D deserves. The result is an overblown note, a 4th above in this instance (sounding as an unwanted high G). Knowing that this is what is going on should help guide the player both to avoid this struggling and know what may work later when trying to play the high G. Remember - the upper register of the clarinet is not meant to be difficult like a brass instrument in its high register. On the contrary, good lip placement on the reed, sufficient mouthpiece in the mouth, proper shaping of the tongue in the aural cavity and a strong, well-supported airstream are the key factors for success.

Here is a tip to check your likelihood of success with the high D. Play and sustain the high C, think about lifting and shaping the back of the tongue in the mouth to refine the sound as best you can while blowing, and then remove your left-hand thumb from both the hole and register key at the same time. If you can learn to hold on to the open G fingered but sounding high D, you will be much more likely to be able to use the normal D fingering with success.

A further tip is to learn to use a 'half hole' technique on the first finger of the left hand when playing high D with the standard fingering. This helps because the high D is actually F at the top of the stave overblown (a 6th overblown), and playing with the left-hand first finger partially covering the lower portion of the hole makes the note both more stable and more likely to 'speak' more reliably and consistently.

**Thomas Dryer-Beers** is a former professional freelance orchestral and jazz performer, lecturer, and teacher on all members of the woodwind family. For over 20 years he served as instrument sales manager for Woodwind and Reed, Cambridge ([www.wwr.co.uk](http://www.wwr.co.uk)). Further thoughts and tips on performance and topics of interest can be found in his blog, [windplayeradvice.blogspot.co.uk](http://windplayeradvice.blogspot.co.uk). ■

Soprano **Elena Xanthoudakis** introduces a new CD and publishing label devoted specifically to music for trio of soprano, clarinet and piano

# ART OF THE

For the past nine years or more, I have been keeping my eye out for pieces that my brother, the clarinetist and saxophonist Jason Xanthoudakis, and I could perform together. The idea was to make a recording that featured a number of 'new' works that had not been recorded before. I set out to find some pieces that I hadn't seen recorded anywhere and compiled a list of all recorded works for piano, voice and clarinet, and a list of all available works in print. Frankly, the list was not very substantial, and the number of regularly performed works was even smaller.

I had formed an ensemble, TrioKROMA, in 2010 with Jason and pianist Clemens Leske, to give greater exposure to the glorious but often-overlooked genre of romantic music written for piano, voice and clarinet. All three members of TrioKROMA have busy careers outside the group; I am an operatic soprano who has performed at the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera, Jason is a freelance clarinetist and saxophonist and a regular with a number of Australia's leading orchestras, and Clemens has performed as a soloist with all the national Australian orchestras as well as lecturing in piano at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Desperate to find something new to record with TrioKROMA, I started searching library catalogues when it occurred to me that there must be collections of old editions and manuscripts out there which had been forgotten. After sifting through a number of out-of-print scores and manuscripts, I compiled a selection of carefully selected works I had discovered from various sources in the UK and Vienna. These, paired with some better-known works from the period, would make up the repertoire for my new TrioKROMA album, *The Captive Nightingale*.

I have always loved performing Schubert's 'Shepherd on the Rock', and was fortunate to be involved in a group while I was at university with clarinetist, arranger and composer Paul Kopez who

ran a full year's concert series on tour around my home state of Victoria. We performed trios and arrangements of songs and arias for clarinet, bass clarinet, voice and piano, featuring everything from Mozart nocturnes and 'Shepherd on the Rock' to tangos by Astor Piazzolla. Through these concerts I grew even fonder of the tone and expressiveness of the clarinet and the combined sonority it creates with the voice – it's just a magical combination!

Here, we also performed other staples of the repertoire, including Spohr's popular *Sechs Deutsche Gesänge*, which I first came across when I was studying at McKinnon Secondary College, a music specialist school in Melbourne, Australia. I was so pleased to get the chance to perform this work along with 'Shepherd on the Rock' in Wiesbaden at Schubertiade, the Schubert festival, which was part of the first prize for winning the Australian National Liederfest in 2004. By

then, I had grown attached to the sound of these forces and I knew I wanted to make a recording.

Among the unrecorded pieces I discovered during my research was a charming piece by Franz Lachner (1803-1890) entitled 'Er, der Herrlichste von Allen' (He, the Noblest of All). Clarinetists may already be aware of Lachner in this combination, including his 'Seit Ich Ihn Gesehen' (published by Lazarus and Musica Rara). Although 'Er, der Herrlichste von Allen' came with a violin part, it was intended and indeed standard practice that this could be transferred to whichever obbligato instrument was at hand. Many of the pieces I found came with cello and violin parts as well as clarinet parts.

Being originally a flautist and not a great pianist, I asked a friend to play through the shortlist of music I had unearthed to help me select the strongest works. When we came to 'Er, der

Elena Xanthoudakis



Photograph: Johan Persson

# CD REVIEWS

## CLARINET

### EMILIAS LÄCHELN

**Klezmeyers:**  
**Franziska Orso (Clarinet)**  
**Robert Keßler (Guitar)**  
**David Hagen (Bass)**  
**GLM FM 203-2**



This is a great CD which represents so much about the place of the clarinet in the 21st century. Klezmer is an important aspect of the heritage of the clarinet, and the infectious tracks on this CD are great examples of how this style of music has evolved during the Klezmer revival, which developed during the latter part of the 20th century and continues to the present day. The Klezmeyers are a German trio consisting of clarinet, string bass, and guitar.

The guitar and clarinet share equal billing, and the playing is of the highest order. All are original tracks and range in style from those of toe-tapping brilliance to mellow ballads. The combination of instruments works extremely well, producing an overall mellow colour of sound. The clarinet playing of Franziska Orso shows off her brilliant technique but with the delicate refinement that is necessary for Klezmer playing of highest quality. The title of the CD is taken from the third track, which translates as 'Emily's smile'

Andrew Smith

### FINEST BLEND

**Passo Avanti:**  
**Sergey Didorenko (violin)**  
**Alexander von Hagke (clarinet, bass clarinet, flute and piccolo)**  
**Alex Jung (guitar)**  
**Eugen Bazijan (cello)**  
**GLM FM 209-2**



Passo Avanti is a German jazz quartet of violin, guitar, clarinet and double bass. The clarinetist Alexander von Hagke, also plays

bass clarinet, flute and piccolo. The premise of this disc is that each track takes a well-known classical piece such as 'The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' and

rips it to pieces. The original source is never far away however, and it may bring smiles when you hear how the ensemble goes about dismantling the music, bringing in unexpected harmonies and rhythmic quirks. Sometimes the tracks outstay their welcome, and the gimmick of distorting famous music can wear a bit thin. But this is what this CD is all about, and the playing is first class.

Andrew Smith

### TRIPLE DUTCH

**Kurios Klarinetkwartet:**  
**Boukje Musch (E flat clarinet)**  
**Peter Koetsveld (B flat clarinet)**  
**Corien Hoepman (basset clarinet)**  
**Mark Snitselaar (bass clarinet)**  
**Kurios 002.2015**



Triple Dutch, as the name suggests, is an offering of three works by Dutch composers for clarinet quartet. Jurrian

Andriessen's quartet of 1985 is in four movements and is a fairly intense work for E flat, 2 B flats and bass. The second movement begins with an eerie vibrato, trill-like effect which sounds more like a theremin, before clearly emerging as a clarinet. This is an aggressive sounding work, and on listening to the CD it does come as something of a relief and a surprise to hear the more recent (2014) Clarinet Quartet No. 2 by Henk Tromp. This is a much more lyrical and almost 'out of its time' piece, having a very classical feel to it. Due to the clarinet quartet being very much an invention of the 20th century, quartets often rely so much on classical arrangements when there is a need for lyricism, so it is nice to have another original work we can call our own. The final work on the disc, the Clarinet Quartet (2004) by Frank den Herder, stylistically bridges the gap between the other two. The slow movement has a bluesy feel to it, while the outer movements are fast and technically demanding. The playing is outstanding throughout, both in terms of intonation and ensemble.

Andrew Smith

## THE CAPTIVE NIGHTINGALE

**TrioKROMA:**  
**Elena Xantheadakis (soprano)**  
**Jason Xantheadakis (clarinet)**  
**Clemens Leske (piano)**  
**Move Records MCD472**



TrioKROMA features Australian siblings Elena and Jason Xantheadakis, joined by Clemens Leske, and was formed to explore German Romantic

art song for piano, voice and clarinet. As a result, this 65 minute disc features 12 tracks from eight composers. The disc represents the popular themes of *Heimat* (homeland) and *Heimweh* (homesickness), Switzerland and the Alps, and the folk who inhabit the pastures (shepherds and milkmaids). Alongside Schubert's *Shepherd on the Rock* and Kalliwoda's *Heimathlied* there are premiere recordings of Heinrich Proch's *Die Gefangene Nachtigall* (The Captive Nightingale), Franz Lachner's *Er, der Herrlichste von Allen* (He, the Noblest of All) and *Der Hirt und das Meerweib* (The Shepherd and the Mermaid) by Peter von Lindpaintner.

The performance is of an extremely high standard and a delight to listen to. Voice and clarinet soar and retreat expressively, complementing and contrasting each other with fine expressive detail, while virtuosic passages are executed to perfection. Notes in the accompanying booklet include background on the 19th-century art song, details of all composers and texts in German with English translations. See [article on page 30](#).

Stephanie Reeve