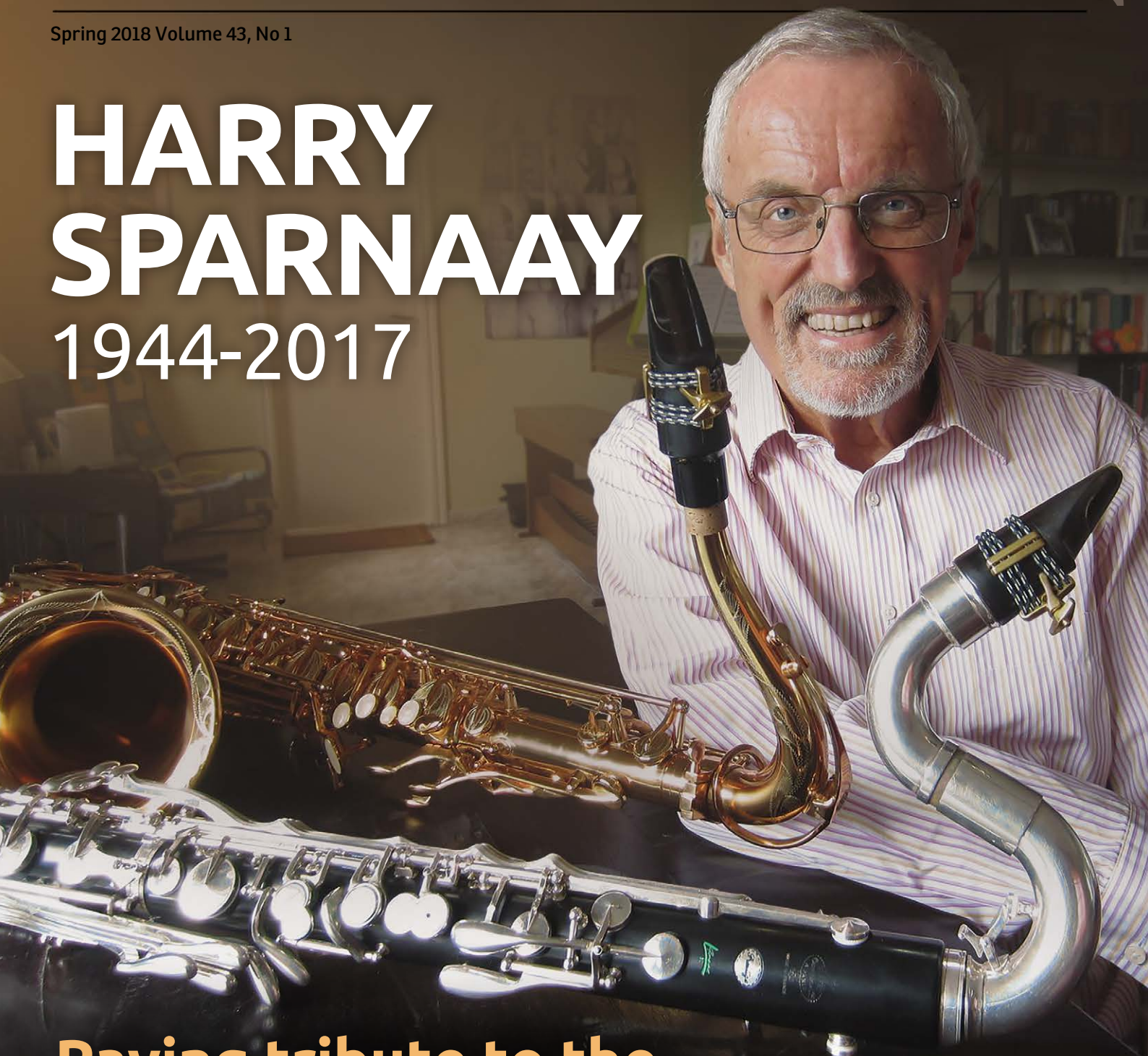




Clarinet & *Saxophone*

Spring 2018 Volume 43, No 1

**HARRY
SPARNAAY**
1944-2017



**Paying tribute to the
master bass clarinetist**

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Harry Sparnaay

Features

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Free sheet music when you join CASSGB

CASSGB has announced that new full-price individual members will receive a free copy from a selection of six titles of music for clarinet and saxophone published by Universal Edition.

CASSGB has a total of 100 items of music to give away. To claim yours, join on the website as a full price individual member. (Please note that this offer is not open to those joining at the concessionary under-25 rate of membership.) On confirmation of payment you will receive an email asking which title you would like to receive. Please note that you may be asked to make a second choice if your first choice is no longer available.

Annual individual membership costs £28 in the UK and Ireland, £30 for Europe and £36 for the rest of the world.

www.cassgb.org

BBC Young Musician returns for 2018



Finalist, Robert Burton



Finalist, Tom Myles

BBC Young Musician will return with a live grand final on 13 May 2018. Category finals will be broadcast this month and will also be available on the BBC iPlayer.

This year's woodwind finalists include Robert Burton who comes from a farming family in Cambridgeshire. He has achieved Grade 8 distinction on clarinet, piano, recorder and saxophone and is currently at the Royal Academy of Music, studying classical saxophone with Simon Haram.

Also a finalist is Tom Myles, a clarinetist from Northern Ireland who plays in a local pit orchestra, a 'Bavarian Strollers' band and several school ensembles, as well as singing in his school chamber choir. This year he is also principal clarinet in the National Youth Orchestra and is currently studying for his GCSEs.

Next year BBC Young Musician celebrates its 40th birthday. This series will once again be broadcast on BBC Television, beginning with the category finals on BBC Four, with complementary coverage on BBC Radio 3. The BBC Young Musician Jazz Award will also return and applications will open later this summer.

www.bbc.co.uk

Sax octet premier at Royal College

On Friday 22 June, the Royal College of Music (RCM) Saxophone Ensemble will give the world premiere of a new work for saxophone octet – *Film Noir*, composed by Birmingham-based composer Ivor McGregor – in their annual summer concert at the RCM.

The conductor of the RCM Saxophone Ensemble, Kyle Horch, has led a collaboration of saxophone ensembles from across the UK that have come together to commission the new work, which will receive performances all over the country in 2018 and 2019 as well as abroad at the World Saxophone Congress in Zagreb. The other ensembles are the Birmingham Conservatoire Saxophone Ensemble, led by Naomi Sullivan; the Equinox Saxophone Ensemble (Nottingham), led by Alistair Parnell; and the Chetham's School Saxophone Choir, led by Andrew Wilson.

The commission has been funded with the support of the RVW Trust and a grant from CASSGB. A longer article about the creation of this work, from inception to performance, will be published in a future issue of *Clarinet & Saxophone*.

www.rcm.ac.uk



Kyle Horch

Selmer Paris sells majority stake

Selmer Paris has sold a majority stake of its business to Argos Soditic, an investment fund. The saxophone and clarinet maker was founded in 1885 and has been operating from the same factory in western Paris for nearly a century. The Selmer family hopes that the sale to Argos Soditic will allow it to modernise its machinery and meet the challenge coming from Chinese manufacturers.

'There's still going to be a Selmer at the helm of the company,' said chief executive Jerome Selmer, the founder's great-grandson. 'But we agreed for a sale to this fund because we agree on the strategy, we know it will remain French and there will be no layoffs.'

Selmer remains the saxophone of choice for many artists. John Coltrane played a Selmer Mark VI tenor on his *A Love Supreme* album, while former US president Bill Clinton played a Selmer during the 1992 election campaign. More recently, French astronaut Thomas Pesquet played one on the International Space Station.

'There's more demand than supply right now,' said Louis Godron, a partner at Argos Soditic. 'We need to better respond to that demand by improving productivity.' Selmer Paris is profitable and generated revenues of 35 million euros in 2017. It employs 500 staff.

www.selmer.fr



Annelien Van Wauwe

Annelien Van Wauwe is a Belgian clarinetist whose participation in the BBC New Generation Artists scheme brought her to the attention of a global audience. Stephanie Reeve caught up with her after a performance in Cambridge

The Divinity School at St John's College Cambridge is an intimate space, perfectly suited to chamber music. It is where I first hear the Belgian clarinetist Annelien Van Wauwe perform live, along with viola player Eivand Holtsmark Ringstad and pianist Pavel Kolesnikov. All three are graduates of BBC Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme. On the programme is Mozart's 'Kegelstatt' trio, Schumann's 'Märchenbilder' and Sonata No 1 in F minor by Brahms. However, the Brahms is performed on viola and not by Van Wauwe on the clarinet, so naturally my first question to Van Wauwe after the performance has to be: how did it feel not to play the Brahms on this occasion? 'It's very relaxing! I know how it finishes and then it's my turn!'

The performers did not devise the programme and were invited by the New Generation Artists team to perform at the Mozartfest in Bath, which was taking place the following day. This particular concert was arranged by Van Wauwe to add an extra date while the trio are in England – an example of current artists being self-sufficient and working with promoters and agents rather than relying entirely on their management.

The BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists Scheme was set up in 1999 and 'helps to support talented musicians to reach the next stages of their careers and brings some of the world's most promising new talent to listeners across the UK through BBC Radio 3 broadcasts.' Getting on to the scheme is a rigorous procedure, seemingly a mix of being selected and applying. She says, 'I think my agent was contacted by the BBC, or the other way around, but I sent them a lot of recordings, live recordings. They heard my Weinberg recording without any cuts or anything. Apparently they were very impressed.' ➡

Eleven years after his death, Michael Brecker continues to be a highly influential saxophonist, unrivalled in the quantity and standard of his recorded work across jazz, rock and pop. Kenneth Morris looks at his life and career



Michael L Brecker was born on 29 March 1949 and died of complications arising from leukaemia on 13 January 2007. While principally a tenor saxophonist, he was equally competent on soprano saxophone, flute and Electronic Wind Instrument (EWI). He was quoted by many of his colleagues as a quiet and gentle musician and regarded by several eminent writers as the most influential tenorist since John Coltrane. Capable of 'really blowin' up a storm' while delivering his extended live concert solos, he garnered no fewer than 15 Grammy Awards during his relatively short lifetime. A quotation from Berendt and Huesmann's *The Jazz Book* (Lawrence Hill Books 2009, English translation) paints a realistic picture of his work:

Mike exerted a great influence on tenor playing in jazz-rock with his very fast lines shooting up into the flageolet register. [...] He linked acoustic to electric playing to become a fiery, harmonically flexible post-bop stylist, infusing the Coltrane legacy with the motor elan and impact of rock-oriented styles. Brecker called his music 'electric bebop' [and became] one of the few tenorists in the tonal sphere whose development of the Coltrane tradition was so original that they formed an unmistakably individual style of their own. That's why Brecker's sound – crystal clear, metallicly cutting, and yet full of radiant power dynamically rising and falling – has become a determining colour in post-modern jazz's tenor playing. George Duke has said: 'Of all the sax players I've worked with [...] Michael was always the melodic genius. He would string things together and play notes that nobody else would think about.'

To prove the point of my commentary so far, I would urge any reader with access to YouTube to call up and sample snatches from an incredible near one-and-a-half hour video compilation of Brecker solos from 1974 to 2004. Entitled 'The Evolution of Michael Brecker', this video allows one to follow not only the development of his style but his changes of set-up (and hair style!).

Michael's style embraced – or, more correctly, fused – modern jazz with not only rock but R&B and funk as well

Brecker was born in Cheltenham, a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to an artistically orientated family. Indeed, his mother was an artist, while his father, a lawyer, was an amateur jazz pianist, singer, songwriter and trumpet fanatic who clearly influenced both Michael and his elder

music

MUSIC REVIEWS



SUNNY BLUE

Keri Degg
Saxophone and piano
Clarinet and piano
Masquerade Music

Described by Masquerade as a 'Jazz-style jaunt', this piece moves through various sections beginning with alternating 6/8 and 4/4 bars. This makes feeling the beat while keeping some tricky lines going quite a challenge. The piece eases into a swing four-time, more traditional in its feel. There is a hint of 'Fly Me to the Moon' here, a nice touch in an otherwise entirely original work. Also within this section is space for an improvised solo, and two examples of improvisations are available on Masquerade's website as a free resource. A gentle three-time section adds contrast, before heading back into four for a lively finish, creating an interesting structure in this highly entertaining three-and-a-half-minute piece.

The book is well produced with demos and backings for E flat and B flat saxophones on the CD, although the sax parts are transposed rather than the accompaniment. A clarinet version is also available. The attractive cover is typical of Masquerade's publications and makes this a lovely addition to the repertoire for Grade 6 and above.

Stephanie Reeve



QUATRE PIÈCES CARACTÉRISTIQUES

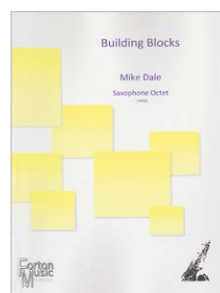
Léon Boëllmann
Saxophone quintet
Sax Culture Vol 14
Edition Dohr

I've been reviewing the *Sax Culture* series for quite a while now and it is fast becoming my musical equivalent of *War and Peace*. The

main surprise is that there's actually some music out there that hasn't been arranged for saxophone. Léon Boëllmann was a French composer who died at only 35 in 1897. He is best known for his organ work *Suite gothique*. The *Quatre pièces caractéristiques* are also organ pieces.

This is a very easy piece and would suit even an elementary group. Lots of repeated crochets will be a welcome sight for the rhythmically challenged. The soprano part doesn't go too high so it might also be in danger of being in tune, unless you heed the arranger's advice to use it in a saxophone band with duplicated parts. So that means it's OK to photocopy? Perhaps that's why this short piece for five saxes is priced at £29.95!

Gerard McCrystal



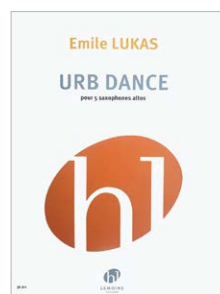
BUILDING BLOCKS

Mike Dale
Saxophone octet
Forton Music

This is an octet for the usual line up of two sops, two altos, two tenors and two baris. It is clearly written and with lyrical quavers passing through the instruments, which adds a rippling effect to the

line. Performers need to concentrate as it goes through every key save my car keys, adding a constant feel of transition. It is grounded by the moving quavers, which leaves us with an effective and atmospheric work. It's not technically difficult so would suit most groups. Repertoire like this is always welcome.

Gerard McCrystal



URB DANCE

Emile Lukas
Five alto saxophones
Lemoine

It's not every day you get to review a piece for five altos but this one works really well. It's in 3/8 and marked 'Comme une valse lancinante'. This literally means music that you can't get out of your head. There is an

allusion here to the French word 'lancinant' which is normally used with the phrase 'un mal de tête lancinant' – 'a throbbing headache'. Maybe Emile Lukas has a cheeky sense of humour and decided to use a variation on both. Certainly having to tongue eight consecutive bars of top F sharp semiquavers marked piano will have many of you reaching for the paracetamol.

This piece is probably about conservatoire standard and above. It would be fun and slightly painful to learn, but at least there's no slap tongue. The parts are all similar so even the fifth alto doesn't get an easy ride. It would be an interesting chat in the SU bar to discuss who gets to play alto 5. Perhaps Lukas should have written this for five alto 1s!

Gerard McCrystal