



Clarinet & Saxophone

Winter 2022 Volume 47, No 4

Plant-based power

MAKING YOUR MUSICAL LIFE GREENER, BY ALASTAIR PENMAN

Leak testing

CLARINET REPAIR TIPS FROM DANIEL BANGHAM

Together again

SINGLE REED PLAYERS REUNITE AT THE RCM

BARBARA THOMPSON

Remembered by her friends

Anna Clyne

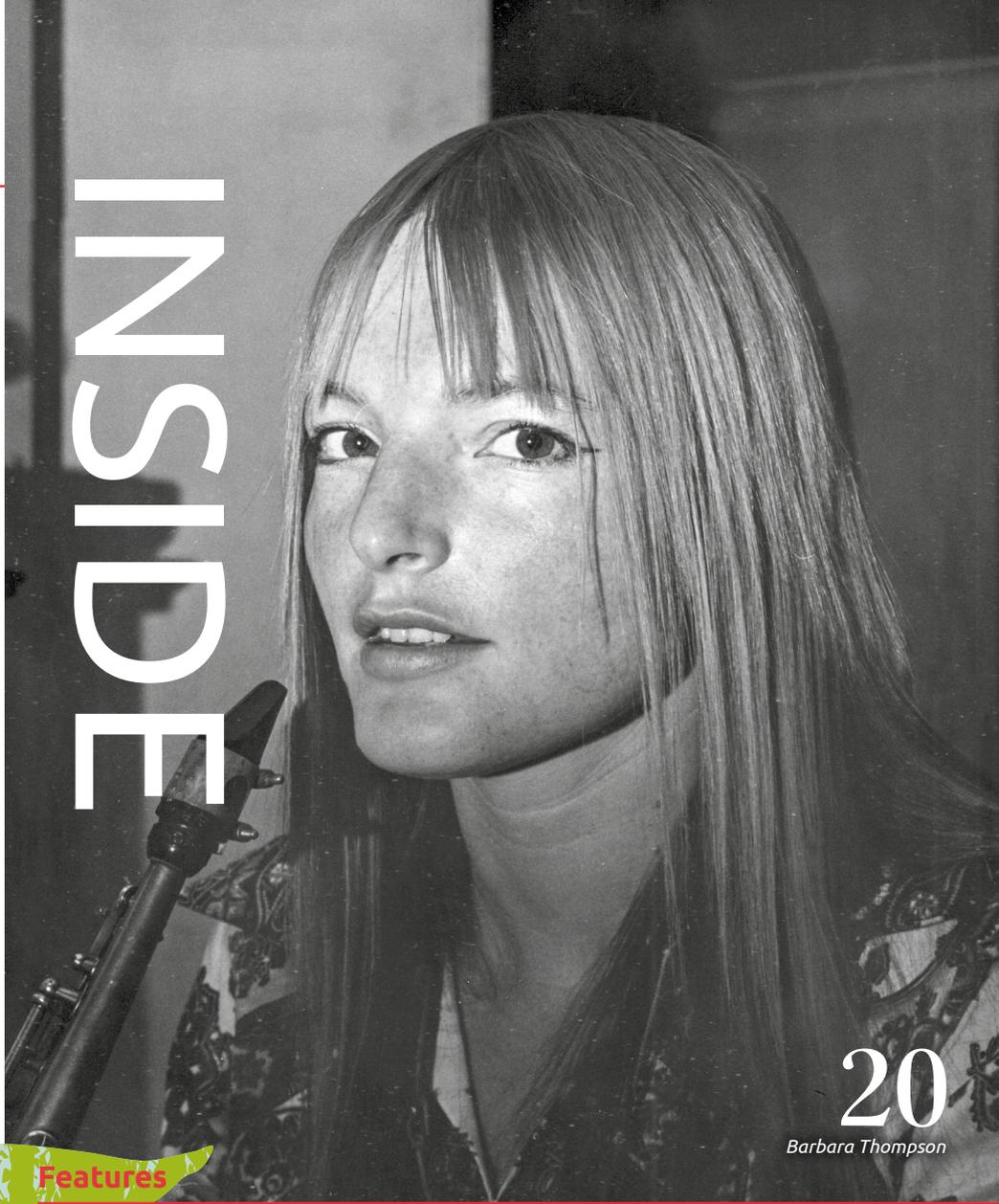
HER NEW CONCERTOS FOR SAX AND CLARINET

PLUS: BBC YOUNG MUSICIAN SINGLE-REED STARS | TRIBUTE TO MARCUS BLUNT | FREE SHEET MUSIC | LYNNE PLOWMAN | NEWS | REVIEWS | UPCOMING EVENTS | CLASSIFIEDS

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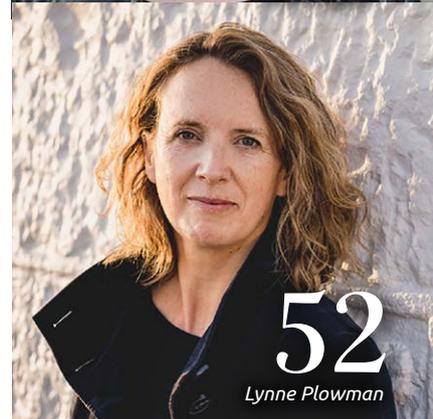
Alastair Penman



PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTINA KERNOHAN

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Sharon Kam wins Opus Classic award for Hindemith album

Clarinetist Sharon Kam has won the prestigious Opus Classic award for her recording of Hindemith's Clarinet Concerto, Clarinet Quintet and Clarinet Sonata, in collaboration with Antje Weithass, Julian Steckel, Enrico Pace and Daniel Cohen (see *Clarinet and Saxophone* Volume 47, Spring 2022, for an interview with Sharon about the CD). Sharon has also recently taken up a new teaching position at the Hanover University of Music.



PHOTOGRAPHY: NANCY HOROWITZ

Marie Lloyd appointed Head of Woodwind at RCM



Clarinetist Marie Lloyd has been appointed Head of Woodwind at the Royal College of Music. Marie said: "I am thrilled and honoured to be joining the Royal College of Music as Head of Woodwind. It is a pleasure to be taking over a woodwind department that not only has excellence as its byword, but is vibrant,

engaged, supportive and champions the individual. Being an alumna myself, I know how transformative an RCM education can be and am very much looking forward to working with both staff and students to continue to build on Simon Channing's extraordinary legacy." Marie took up her post in September, after Simon Channing's retirement. She studied clarinet at Trinity College of Music and the RCM with Colin Bradbury and Richard Hosford. She is a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and is in demand as a guest principal clarinet and Eb clarinetist throughout the UK. Marie will oversee over 120 students, ranging from undergraduate to doctorate programmes. Professor Colin Lawson, Director of the Royal College of Music, said: "With her distinguished career as a performer and educator, we look forward to her building on the extensive legacy of her predecessors in the post. Marie's energy and drive will help all students continue to fulfil their potential."

Milenko Stefanović (1930–2022)



Serbian clarinetist Milenko Stefanović passed away this year on 25 July. He was principal clarinetist of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, the first ever clarinet professor at the University of Priština, and clarinet professor and vice-chancellor of the University of Arts in Belgrade. He performed widely throughout Europe,

Africa and North America and was one of only a few artists to perform Copland's Clarinet Concerto under the baton of Copland himself. In 2010 the Association of Musical Artists of Serbia awarded him with the Lifetime Achievement Award. He also received the European Clarinet Association Honorary Membership for Lifetime Achievements in Performance, Teaching and Professional Service in 2016. He was also a prolific jazz performer and once claimed in an interview that he took up the clarinet because of Benny Goodman. He leaves his son Predrag Stefanović, who is also a clarinetist, and granddaughter Irina, a piano student.

20 Sax players assemble for playday with Gerard McChrystal

The Phoenix Saxophone orchestra, based in Market Harborough, Leicestershire, welcomed its patron Gerard McChrystal to lead a playday in November. Eight members of the orchestra were joined by 12 other players for an all-day workshop, focusing on arrangements of works by Elgar, Dvořák, Holst and Turina. Gerard McChrystal said: "I was really pleased that we covered all four pieces including an afternoon on conservatoire-level work, which was a great achievement for the group." Over lunch, the attendees also had the opportunity to try out the contrabass sax, the 'giant' of the saxophone family, which was brought along for the day by Jonathan Shaw. Gerard also gave the premiere of a new piece *Interlude 2*, by Jenni Watson.



Gerard McChrystal (centre) with workshop attendees at the Phoenix Saxophone Orchestra workshop.

Barbara Thompson MBE

27 July 1944 – 9 July 2022

A trailblazing saxophonist in the days when there were few women on the scene, her haunting sax is known to TV viewers as the voice of A Touch of Frost. But to musicians her virtuosity, creative compositions and adventures with Paraphernalia are what they will remember. Barbara Thompson's collaborator and friend Andy Scott remembers the good times and speaks to those who knew her

On July 9th 2022 the world lost one of its most distinctive, imaginative and creative musicians, Barbara Thompson. The British multi-instrumentalist (primarily saxophone and flute) and composer was a force of nature in the world of music. As a person she was kind and generous, fiercely driven and inspiring. She and husband Jon Hiseman (who was taken from us in 2018) had an unbreakable bond, a sparkly-eyed sense of discovery and determination, a fine balance of music and business. They were a brilliant team, and as Jon would say whenever he was faced with a challenge: "It's a game!" The purpose of this tribute isn't simply to list Barbara's achievements, which are well documented, but rather to offer a more personal insight into her life, with anecdotes and recollections from those who knew her, including Jess Gillam, Nigel Tully and Tim Redpath. Barbara wrote a piece of music called *Celebration* and that is exactly how her life should be remembered.

In 1982 I was sitting outside in the sun pretending to revise for my O levels whilst listening to music. I had a Weather Report cassette, another by The Police and an album called 'Mother Earth' by Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia. One track on this album, 'The Fear of Spiders', totally captured the imagination of this naive teenager. I was transfixed, my mind transported to another place entirely (which is probably why my grades were so bad!). This music was so distinctive; the saxophone sound, the composition, the band. Little did I know that I'd end up recording albums of Barbara's music, co-composing an album with her, and even have her guest on my album, at her home studio in leafy Sutton.

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“Music has the power to speak directly to people”

This season will see the premiere of two major new single reed works by composer Anna Clyne – a clarinet concerto written for Martin Fröst, and her first-ever saxophone concerto, for Jess Gillam. She tells Catherine Smith about reflecting on global warming, the effects of the pandemic and how a cellist writes for woodwind

Anna Clyne is on a whirlwind tour of London when I meet her in a cosy corner of a London hotel bar on a sunny afternoon. She is flitting between the BBC and rehearsals with the Philharmonia, where she is composer in residence. Anna was born in London but has lived in New York for twenty years. In summer she shared on Instagram a throwback to her arrival in the city; her advert in the Village Voice which read ‘Composer (UK) available for collaborations with innovative film-makers, dance & theatre groups.’ Now she is passing through her home town in the midst of a packed season that will encompass over one hundred performances of her works worldwide.

Those performances also include the world premiere of *Weathered*, a five-movement clarinet concerto which explores five elements – Metal, Heart, Stone, Wood and Earth. Martin Fröst will give the world premiere under the baton of Jaap van Zweden with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam in January. This piece was written during the pandemic, when we were all in lockdown in our homes, but despite these challenges Anna describes a creative process that is highly collaborative: “One of the things I love about writing concerti is that you can be so inspired by the character and musicality of the soloist. I started with a zoom call with Martin and he showed me lots of extended techniques – I got to know the upper register and what’s possible at that sort of stratosphere. I wrote five sketches for solo clarinet and he showed me how they could be ➡

concert

CONCERT REVIEWS



AN DEN WASSERN ZU BABEL, ARVO PÄRT
ARVO PÄRT... AND A LITTLEMORE FESTIVAL
 Raschèr Saxophone Quartet
 Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford
 25 November 2022

More original was the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet (RSQ)'s extraordinary performance at Christ Church Cathedral, the conclusion to Music at Oxford's Arvo Pärt... and a Littlemore festival. Whether they were nestled in the nave – as was the case for the opening piece, Bach's *Canzona* (BWV 588) – or playing from the balcony alongside the magnificent pipe organ (for Pärt's *An den Wassern zu Babel*), the German ensemble's collective sound astonished for its clarity and purity.

Tenor saxophonist Andreas van Zoelen has arranged several works by Pärt – including the 2001 choral piece *Nunc Dimittis*, which was adapted for nine saxophones and premiered in 2016 by RSQ and Van Zoelen's students at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Tilburg, The Netherlands. The version has since been endorsed by Pärt himself (the score is available via Universal Edition) and, with the composer's blessing, Van Zoelen has gone to arrange several other pieces. The RSQ's connections with Pärt's music (the quartet has played at the Arvo Pärt Centre in Estonia and recently recorded a new Pärt recital album), along with the quality of Van Zoelen's arrangements, made the quartet a natural choice to 'headline' Music at Oxford's Pärt-themed concert series.

But, as the title 'Arvo Pärt ...and a Littlemore' suggests, events – including the Christ Church Cathedral concert – featured other selected composers. ('Littlemore' refers to Pärt's 2000 choral work *Littlemore Tractus*.) The cavernous cathedral space flattered Van Zoelen's sensitive arrangements of Clara Schumann's *Prelude & Fugue Nos. 1-3, Op.16*, with some delicious

THE ART OF THE HANG, GUY BARKER (WORLD PREMIERE)
LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL
GIACOMO SMITH (CLARINET), EUGENE PAO (GUITAR)
CADOGAN HALL, LONDON
17 November 2022

The clarinet's virtuosic chromatic motifs puncture the rollicking big band sound. The 46-piece Southbank Sinfonia falls back, puts down its instruments and claps cross-rhythms as the clarinetist gives his glittering cadenza. Giacomo Smith, a regular collaborator of conductor-composer Guy Barker, was the impressive soloist in *The Art of the Hang*, a new clarinet concerto that was premiered at the recent London Jazz Festival. The music is intentionally derivative, based on the iconic post-war dance hall music that Barker specialises in (the composer has his own Big Band and has reimagined pieces for pop stars – as he did for Palmona Faith's 2014 late-night Prom). Smith, creative director of Kansas Smitty's – the ensemble originally based at the eponymous bar on Broadway Market in London – brings a light touch to the fast-paced phrases and is never over-shadowed by his colleagues. The orchestra (usually based at the neighbouring St John's Smith Square) is enhanced with a rhythm section and provides a polished backdrop – this is historic music with modern pizzazz. It's enjoyable, but regrettably there's not enough musical development to sustain interest for the 30-odd minutes it is afforded. The clarinet concertante piece was coupled with a similarly styled work for guitar and orchestra, with Eugene Pao as the soloist.

contrapuntal bass lines served on a silver platter by baritone saxophonist Oscar Trompenaars. The preludes' urging melodies were plaintive, passed between alto (Elliot Riley) and soprano (Christine Rall), countered by toe-tapping fugues.

As a group, RSQ's ensemble-playing is second to none. Not for nothing is its strapline '1+1+1+1=1': the four members breathed and moved as a single complex being. This was particularly noticeable in the Pärt works, such as *Es sang vor langen Jahren*, which received its UK premiere in Oxford. The interior melodies sung, finely spun phrases rose and fell, culminating in a barely-there extended trill. The gentle overtones rang out across the choir stalls where audience members were sitting. The actual choir – Schola Cantorum of Oxford, conducted by Luke Mitchell – moved around the venue, joining the RSQ for an uplifting arrangement of Bach's *Singet dem herrn ein neues lied* (BWV 225) and the premiere of *An den Wassern zu Babel*. This slow-moving, kaleidoscopic piece is striking for its sparse textures and shifting shapes. Originally composed in 1976 as a vocal work, it epitomises Pärt's famous tintinnabuli technique (a style inspired by chant music that uses set parameters for melodic development), resulting in a contemplative, meditative effect that was quite at odds with the student dinner party taking place in the adjacent refectory. *Summa*, another tintinnabuli work from 1977, was similarly evocative; slow-moving harmonies lapped like waves on the shore, the deceptively simple music – performed by RSQ – keeping its cards close to its chest (this piece was written as a religious work based on the Latin Credo, a dangerous undertaking in then-Soviet Estonia.)

Van Zoelen writes that he hopes that these new versions of Pärt's compositions are 'not merely adaptations, but rather translations into the language of the saxophone'. Listening to them in the impressive setting at Oxford it was difficult to imagine that they are translations at all, with nothing lost – and everything gained.

Claire Jackson