



Clarinet & Saxophone

Summer 2024 Volume 49, No 2

Anna Hashimoto

TELLS US ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL DEPTH OF FRANÇAIX'S CLARINET CONCERTO

Military Music

AIR SPECIALIST (CLASS 1)
SARAH SMITH ON PLAYING THE SAXOPHONE IN THE RAF

Apollo Saxophone Quartet

ROB BUCKLAND ON COMMISSIONING, COLLABORATIONS AND NEW ALBUM *CONTINUUM*

ANTHONY MCGILL

He's coming to the Proms: it's the NY Phil's principal clarinet

Poetry in motion

AARON IRWIN ON WHY A SECOND ART FORM COULD BENEFIT YOUR PLAYING

PLUS: NEWS | REVIEWS | BASS CLARINET CHAMBER REPERTOIRE | TONY COE STUDY | SUMMER DIARY | SAXOPHONE SUB-TONE AND GROWL



INSIDE

Regulars

- 4 **News**
- 10 **Masterclass**
Anna Hashimoto tells us why she had to choose the Françaix clarinet concerto
- 25 **Free Sheet Music**
Tony Coe's Clarinet Study No.1 with thoughtful markings added by Frank Griffith
- 36 **Reviews**
36 Concert
38 CDs
42 Book
43 Sheet Music
- 45 **Diary**
45 Concerts
48 Courses
- 50 **Membership Update**
- 50 **Classifieds**
- 52 **Teaching Tips**
Tracy Heavner on learning to sub-tone and growl on the sax

Features

- 14 **Anthony McGill**
A New York minute with the NY Phil's principal clarinet
- 21 **Apollo Saxophone Quartet**
Rob Buckland introduces the group's new album *Continuum*
- 28 **Playing sax in the RAF**
A look into the routine of Air Specialist (Class 1) Sarah Smith
- 30 **Aaron Irwin**
A saxophonist's essay on the case for slowing down thoughts to benefit music performance
- 35 **Bass clarinet repertoire**
Ian Mitchell brings to light John White's *Concertino*



Anna Hashimoto



Sarah Smith



apollo saxophone quartet



Aaron Irwin

COVER FEATURE
page
14
Anthony McGill

Dawkes' new superstore

CASSGB attended the opening of Dawkes' expanded Maidenhead store, which is now also a performance and recording venue

Dawkes, the UK's leading Woodwind and Brass specialists, have recently expanded their flagship workshop and store in Maidenhead, tripling the size of the overall premises. At 12,000 square feet this makes it one of the largest musical instrument shops in the world. The decor, designed by LR Interiors, is fresh and striking, with dark walls to highlight the brass instruments mounted there, a large aquarium among the clarinets and a beautiful photographic display of the history of the Dawkes family. This serves as a reminder of just how far one man's dream can progress. The company was established in 1966 by Jack Dawkes as a small workshop shed for repairing instruments, and the company is now going from strength to strength in its third generation.

Of course, instrument repair is still at the heart of the business, and the workshop at the back is a fully-functioning repair shop with multiple benches, albeit refreshed with illuminated neon signs more reminiscent of a modern art gallery. A happy customer, a local teacher who has been coming to the shop for years, commented that she always goes to Dawkes because "you know the set-up will be perfect. It's particularly important for young students as their parents don't necessarily know what to do when an instrument arrives, but Dawkes will always pay such great attention."

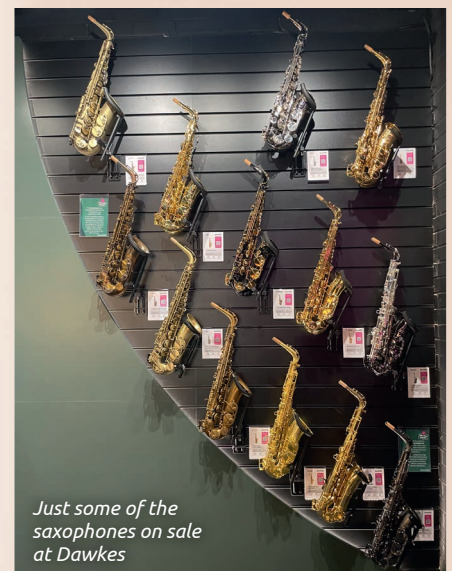
Down a corridor opposite the workshop lie some unexpected treasures: two soundproofed and stunningly decorated music rooms; the Imaginarium, decked out with more neon, leafy plants and, of course, a keyboard, and the Luna, a bright, all-white room containing a magical gadget that enables you to choose the acoustics you're playing in. It has nine settings ranging from a typical home practice room to Ronnie Scott's/a typical chamber music hall, through to the Barbican Hall, with the final option being Wembley Arena. So if you're buying a new instrument you can get a great idea of how you're going to sound in various acoustics.

There is also a recording studio and a stage, so Dawkes is now also a venue for performances, events, masterclasses and recordings. There was so much to take in that it was easy to forget that it is of course, also, a shop full of instruments for every price point, mounted beautifully on the walls (the brass) and within cabinets (the clarinets, bass clarinet and an enormous euphonium). After a whirlwind tour of the fabulous new surroundings, there was a ceremonious ribbon-cutting by Jim Trott MBE, founder of the charity Brass for Africa, and a long-time friend and collaborator of Dawkes. The shop regularly supplies donations and instruments to the charity, which provides instruments for children in Uganda.

Managing director Jon Dawkes said: "Since my Grandad started the business nearly 60 years ago in his shed, we've continued to grow, all thanks to our amazing customers. Now, with the fourth generation of Dawkes family members joining the team, we're delighted to have created this unique destination store for UK musicians." Jack Dawkes would surely be proud to see how well his family has stewarded his dream.



Jim Trott cutting the ribbon at the official opening



Just some of the saxophones on sale at Dawkes

American dream

Born in Chicago, Anthony began playing the clarinet because he was too small for his first choice, the saxophone. Studies at the Interlochen Arts Academy and the Curtis Institute of Music followed. McGill began his orchestral career aged just 24 in the Cincinnati Orchestra, moving to the New York Met before ending up in the principal's chair in the New York Philharmonic. His role with the orchestra allows some freedom and the chance to explore other projects. How does that work?

"I think it's kind of a mutually beneficial situation that I can hold the banner up of the New York Philharmonic whenever I travel and I get to come back and play and do my job of principal clarinet there which is a real honour for me and kind of a nice thing to have as a part of this varied career." He admits that while he doesn't necessarily speak for the organisation he is "very thankful that I get to have that opportunity that I get to be flexible with the type of music I play and the places I get to visit and share my music, so I know it's a win-win for everybody."

Anthony's other notable achievements include performing at

Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009 and he has received numerous awards including the Avery Fisher Prize, (an award given to American musicians for outstanding achievement in classical music), in 2020, and he is Musical America's Instrumentalist of the Year for 2024.

Anthony is well known as a campaigner for justice (his video following the death of George Floyd in 2020 went viral) and he is a role model and educator, working with young African-American and Hispanic musicians and youth orchestras. In looking at equality within orchestras and the music business I ask how he feels things have changed throughout his career so far? "It seems to me that the conversation surrounding having diverse repertoire, diverse composers or performers or just expanding the repertoire that people play, enjoy and listen to in classical music has shifted. Maybe outreach as a concept was around many years ago, but now there's more of an understanding that we can actually be enriched by a more diverse community." This is an important distinction.

"Right. Some people might think we're not missing anything because we play the most beautiful music but it's to reach out and explore what you don't know too. As a kid who grew up playing traditional classical music without even a discussion of much new music, or



Continuum

Pathways for commissioning new music have changed a lot over nearly 40 seasons. The Apollo Saxophone Quartet's Rob Buckland shares his thoughts on the ebb and flow of funding, the joy of finding collaborators and the story of the group's new album, Continuum



Rob Buckland (soprano saxophone), Jim Fieldhouse (baritone saxophone), Carl Raven (alto saxophone), Andy Scott (tenor saxophone)

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLOTTE WELINGS

From the very beginning, as a student group starting out in 1985 at the RNCM in Manchester, the Apollo Saxophone Quartet (ASQ) took the brave, determined decision that, wherever possible, we would only perform music written for the group. We wanted our repertoire choices to shape the musical landscape that we would be known for, to create the sound world that we worked in.

Very quickly the 'Apollo sound' became intrinsically interconnected with the repertoire that we commissioned and the next round of commissions were inevitably influenced by that earlier repertoire in a truly symbiotic, ever-evolving relationship.

Over the years, each new commission has come about through a unique set of circumstances, but there is some common ground: initial conversations are always between us and the composer in question, and as much as possible we love to meet up and play to them in a rehearsal setting, perhaps even workshopping their sketches, experimenting with scoring, key, instrumentation and colours to really allow them to get inside the sound and energy of the group. This also allows us to be quite specific with the type of piece we are looking for – something slow, something to start or close a set, something on a different combination of saxes, something to contrast with such-and-such a piece. ➡

CD REVIEWS



SMILING

Mark Lockheart (tenor and soprano saxophone), Nathaniel Facey (alto saxophone), George Crowley (clarinet), James Allsopp (clarinet and bass clarinet), Laura Jurd (trumpet), Mark Soper (trumpet), Jim Rattigan (french horn), Anna Drysdale (french horn), Harry Maund (trombone and bass trombone), Rowland Sutherland (flute and alto flute), John Parricelli (guitars), Tom Herbert (bass guitar and double bass), Dave Smith (drums)

Edition Records

"As I listened to the album about a week after the studio session – I always like to have a little distance after a recording – I started smiling. The music just made me feel really happy. So naturally the album had to be called *Smiling*. Simple as that." This is Mark Lockheart speaking to me about his latest release.

Mark is a British saxophonist who came to prominence in the 1980s as a member of the innovative big band Loose Tubes, and has since been part of some outstanding jazz projects, such as the inspirational quartet he co-led with Huw Warren called Perfect Houseplants, the offbeat Polar Bear, and the poetic trio Malija. Further afield he has also worked with a diverse range of musicians, such as Radiohead, June Tabor, Prefab Sprout, Stereolab, Robert Wyatt, Thomas Dolby, and Mark Anthony Turnage.

Under his own name he has released consistently excellent albums with groups both large and small, and has gained a reputation for his outstanding arranging skills, such as on *Ellington*



In Anticipation (winner of MOJO magazine's Jazz Album of 2013) on which he reinterpreted the Duke's compositions in a fresh and sometimes radical way.

The latest album brings together 12 superb musicians to play music which has an uplifting, exhilarating feel, in arrangements that are vivid, catchy, sophisticated, and often laced with humour. "The concept was to keep it simpler harmonically, staying in one place, and using orchestration for the interest rather than harmonic shifts. I wanted it pretty chirpy from the beginning, I didn't want anything too serious, I felt the music could be light and floaty."

The group is underpinned by a magnificent rhythm section: John Parricelli (guitars), Tom Herbert (bass), and Dave Smith (drums). "Groove and the bassline were the start of it. I worked with the rhythm section months before we got everyone in, and we went in detail through the feel of each piece." These catchy grooves have both immediate, toe-tapping impact, and are full of beautifully subtle cross-currents.

Mark's eloquent orchestration has a translucence and clarity to it, with a gorgeous palette of rich tonal colours. He had very definite ideas about how to achieve the sound he wanted. "I didn't want piano this time – I normally use piano on everything, so this was quite a big change. I wanted the guitar, something to give the music more space harmonically. And I was hearing the possibilities of two clarinets and flute, a sound I really like. And I definitely wanted two French horns and the distinctive sound they bring."

All this can be heard on the opening track, *Morning Smiles*. It begins with the rhythm section laying down a gently rolling repeated pattern. The long irresistible melody is repeated with different musical textures, lovely countermelodies and asides, while big sumptuous chords swell up like a rush of blood to the head. It's all beautifully constructed, so much going on but so clear and transparent that it never feels cluttered.

The closing track of the album, *I've Seen The Light*, an uptempo sprightly number, which Mark laughingly describes as dad dancing at a disco, has high clarinets and flute that bounce over the top of the melody like comical punctuation marks. Trumpets interject, trombone rasps a low counterpoint, and as the melody is repeated, the musical texture thickens and changes shape.

The solos throughout the album are all perfectly integrated and sympathetic to each individual track. "I've always liked that thing where the solo is integral to the piece rather than just tacked on. I have quite a strong idea about that. It's always been important that the improvised passages are related to the overall shape of the composition. Ellington is a beautiful example of that kind of writing and the use of individual players. I thought very carefully about all of that when putting this album together."

On *I've Seen The Light*, for instance, the first solo is Mark on tenor, vivacious and forceful, relishing the excitement of the piece. But after a few minutes the music dramatically slows to a bluesy half speed, with James Allsopp playing a ravishing bass clarinet solo. The seductive timbre of the instrument is the perfect choice for the change of mood, and the solo an enchanting contrast to the boisterous tenor.

In fact, there are so many great solos on this album: Mark on tenor and soprano is consistently electrifying; Nathaniel Facey is brilliantly effervescent on alto, especially on *Back and Forth*; Laura Jurd's trumpet on *In Deeper* is lyrical with a beautifully rounded sound; John Parricelli is magnificent on guitar in *Morning Smiles*. And so many more.

This is an album that will make you smile and uplift your spirits. Simply outstanding!

Mike O'Brien