



Olli-Pekka Tuomisalio
and his Orchestra

Lost
SAXOPHONE
Concertos

Cragun • Gunaropulos
Lindorff-Larsen • Pals • Tate



Lost Saxophone Concertos

John Beach CRAGUN (1885–1927) • Yrjö GUNAROPULOS (1904–1968)

Eilert LINDORFF-LARSEN (1902–1983) • Leopold van der PALS (1884–1966)

Phyllis TATE (1911–1987)

The number of saxophone concertos is surprisingly huge – there are probably two thousand works for saxophone and orchestra. Still, only a handful of these have made it to the so called standard repertoire: Glazunov, Villa-Lobos, Ibert, Larsson, Martin and Dahl. This canonisation is not a result of the superiority of these works – it is more likely a question of a few early players' personal opinions and the conductors, orchestras and intendants preferring more secure, household names. A phenomenal number of outstanding works has been left to gather dust in the archives, sometimes immediately after their first performance. In some cases the first performance have only been given during the 21st century. For this album I have made premiere recordings of five concertos that could have made it to the standard repertoire if the circumstances had been different.

John Beach Cragun (1885–1927) was an American composer and teacher who wrote a number of saxophone methods. Written in 1925, his *Saxophone Concerto* can be considered the first American concerto for saxophone and orchestra (Caryl Florio wrote his *Introduction and Variations* in 1879 and Charles Loeffler his *Divertissement espagnol*

in 1900 but these are not concertos). Jascha Gurewicz wrote his concerto in 1923 but he wrote it for saxophone and piano, not for saxophone and orchestra). This beautiful work disappeared from the scene very soon and it seems that it was never performed in its orchestral form. I found the material for the concerto in January 2016 after a decade of intensive search.

Finnish composer Yrjö Gunaropulos (1904–1968) was born in St Petersburg. As result of the Russian Revolution, his family moved to Finland in 1917. Gunaropulos studied composing under Erkki Melartin and Oskar Merikanto. Typical of that time, he was a very versatile musician, not only composing and conducting but also playing saxophone, clarinet, piano and violin. Gunaropulos met Matti Rajula, the greatest saxophone virtuoso of the 1920s and 30s in Finland. Inspired by his capabilities Gunaropulos wrote a huge *Saxophone Concerto in C minor* for Rajula in 1935. Rajula had enormous success with this work, performing it with the city orchestras of Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Wyborg, Oulu and Vaasa as well as the radio orchestras of Oslo, Riga, Tallinn and Helsinki. He had performances coming up in London and

elsewhere but these plans were cancelled due to the Second World War. In the early 1950s there was a fire at the composer's home and for over 60 years it was thought that this concerto had not survived. I found the original score in November 2016 and this treasure – one of the earliest large-scale Romantic saxophone concertos – began a new life.

Danish composer Eilert Lindorff-Larsen (1902–1983) wrote his *Saxophone Concerto* in the early 1950s. It is a small work heard every now and then in student exams. The problem with this concerto has been that it's too short and 'easy' for serious orchestral concerts.

Larsen began his studies at the Conservatory in Copenhagen in 1922 and for many years worked as organist at the City Cathedral. From 1930 he worked also as a conductor – one of his employers was Danish Radio. He composed orchestral music, songs and works for organ.

Leopold van der Pals (1884–1966) wrote a *Concertino* for Sigurd Raschèr in 1938. The times were difficult – due to his distaste for the Nazi regime, Raschèr moved to the US in 1939, unable to take everything with him. He never performed this work in its orchestral form, perhaps due to the fact that this work is quite short (9 min) and therefore hard to include in concert programmes, but also because this work does not include *altissimo* notes or slap tonguing.

Leopold van der Pals was born in St Petersburg where he wrote his first compositions at the age of twelve. He moved first to Lausanne in 1903 and then in 1907 to Berlin where he studied composition with Reinhold Glière, among others. Pals was very active during his Berlin years (1907–15) and composed his first 30 large scale works. After his wife died in 1934 Pals settled in Dornach where he lived for the rest of his life. Pals was a successful and celebrated composer until the political atmosphere in central Europe changed towards the late 1930s. Many artists moved to America but he decided to stay in Switzerland – even though this meant distancing himself from the modern music scene.

British composer Phyllis Tate (1911–1987) wrote her *Saxophone Concerto* in 1944–45 at the request of the BBC. She was very critical about her output and destroyed all her earlier compositions. The *Saxophone Concerto* is considered to be her first major work. It was performed a few times during its first decade but after that it disappeared from programmes almost completely.

Tate studied composition and conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. After the *Saxophone Concerto* she wrote a large amount including orchestral music, chamber music, operas, operettas, sacred music, piano music and especially vocal music.

Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo

Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo

Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo (b. 1970) has performed over 100 times as soloist with different symphony orchestras, playing mostly Finnish works (Nordgren, Haapanen, Gunaropulos, Fagerlund, Aho, etc) but also international classics (Debussy, Glazunov, Martin, Cowell, Waxman, Creston). He has encouraged a rising number of composers to create a whole new repertoire for him; almost 100 works have been written. Tuomisalo has performed these in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, Russia, Belgium, Spain, England, China and many times in the US. In 2009 he received his doctor of music degree from the Sibelius Academy – the first saxophonist ever to do so. Tuomisalo has so far released 15 solo albums. Included are 37 works for saxophone and orchestra.

www.ollipekkatuomisalo.com



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Studio Orchestra

1st violin

Linda Hedlund, Anne Somero,
Maarit Ranta, Tanja Palu, Pia Pelkonen

2nd violin

Linda Suolahti, Silja Lassila,
Sirja Puurtinen, Meelis Milli, Elina Salin

Viola

Max Savikangas, Linda Palin, Anitta Rajakoski,
Matleena Vehmaa, Kristian Sallinen

Cello

Seeli Toivio, Iida-Vilhelmiina Sinivalo,
Helena Plathan, Jan Cibulka

Double bass

Anna Rinta-Rahko, Joel Raiskio,
Tuomas Ertz

Piano

Tuuli Takkala

Piccolo

Nina Vuorinen

Flute

Lauri Toivio, Hellevi Lassfolk

Oboe

Sole Mustonen, Ilari Jokinen

Clarinet

Mikko Raasakka, Olli Silván

Bassoon

Vertti Tapanainen, Marika Toivonen

Horn

Timo Ronkainen, Mikael Pulkkinen,
Sari-Anna Lintunen, Alexis Routley

Trumpet

Esko Heikkinen, Jermu Koivukoski

Trombone

Hannu Lamminmäki, Sanna Tuhkunen

Timpani

Antti Suoranta



Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo and his orchestra recording
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A large number of saxophone concertos have been written, but only a handful are regularly performed. With these premiere recordings Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo showcases five works that, had circumstances been different, might easily have established themselves as repertoire pieces. John Beach Cragun's beautifully voiced work is the first saxophone concerto by an American and, like Yrjö Gunaropulos' concerto – which enjoyed celebrity in the 1930s – was only rediscovered in 2016. The concertos by Eilert Lindorff-Larsen and Leopold van der Pals are compact, varied and exciting, while that by Phyllis Tate is considered her first major work.

LOST SAXOPHONE CONCERTOS

John Beach CRAGUN (1885–1927)

Saxophone Concerto (1925) **16:21**

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | I. Allegro brillante | 7:19 |
| 2 | II. Romanza | 5:08 |
| 3 | III. Allegro giojoso | 3:48 |

Yrjö GUNAROPULOS (1904–1968)

Saxophone Concerto in C minor
(1935 – original version) **21:04**

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------|-------------|
| 4 | I. Moderato | 9:03 |
| 5 | II. Poco adagio | 5:15 |
| 6 | III. Finale | 6:40 |

Eilert LINDORFF-LARSEN

(1902–1983)

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 7 | Saxophone Concerto (1954) | 8:46 |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------|

Leopold van der PALS (1884–1966)

Concertino (1938) **9:15**

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 8 | I. Allegro moderato | 3:53 |
| 9 | II. Adagio | 3:14 |
| 10 | III. Allegro | 2:05 |

Phyllis TATE (1911–1987)

Concerto for Alto Saxophone
with Strings (1944) **23:08**

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 11 | I. Air – Hornpipe | 7:15 |
| 12 | II. Canzonetta | 4:52 |
| 13 | III. Scherzo | 3:41 |
| 14 | IV. Alla Marcia – Tarantella | 7:13 |

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo, Saxophone
and his Orchestra

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