
CHANDOS
Bernstein
Gershwin
Joplin
Morton
Price
Weill
Wiedoeft
STATESIDE
FERIO
SAXOPHONE
QUARTET



AKG Images, London

Leonard Bernstein, in New York, 1958

Stateside

Jelly Roll Morton (1890 – 1941)

première recording

1 **Finger Buster** (1938) **3:11**
Song with Piano Accompaniment
Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Iain Farrington (b. 1977)
Presto

George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)

2 **An American in Paris** (1928) **5:29**
Tone Poem
Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Nigel Wood (b. 1960)
[Allegretto grazioso] – Vigoroso – Blues – Broader –
Allegretto grazioso – Vigoroso – Allegro – Andante –
Maestoso – Vif

Florence Price (1887 – 1953)

première recording

Three Little Dances (1938) **4:04**

for Solo Piano

Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Iain Farrington

3	II	Hoe Cake. Allegro molto – Meno mosso	1:40
4	II	Rabbit Foot. Allegretto	1:10
5	III	Ticklin' Toes. Allegro molto	1:12

première recording

6 Adoration (before 1951) **2:36**

in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur

for Organ

Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Iain Farrington

Andante – A little slower – Tempo I

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990)

Selections from 'West Side Story' (1957) **22:25**

Musical

Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by James Boatman (b. 1958)

7	I Feel Pretty. Allegro	2:54
8	Scherzo. Adagio – Fast and light –	2:14
9	Somewhere. Adagio – Poco più mosso – Meno mosso – Ancora meno mosso	4:02
10	Balcony Scene. Very slowly (♩ = 60) ('Maria') – (♩ = 72) – Accelerando – Allegrett o (sempre un poco accelerando) – Allegro (ancora accelerando) – Molto allegro ('Tonight') – Molto meno mosso – Broadly	5:04
11	Cha-Cha. Andante con grazia – Twice as slow – Allegretto ('Promenade') – Tempo di Paso Doble	2:00
12	Jump. Fast, light, dry	0:54
13	One Hand, One Heart. Andante con moto – Adagio – Poco avanti – Tranquillo – Poco avanti – Molto tranquillo (meno mosso)	3:21
14	Gee, Officer Krupke. Fast, vaudeville style – Tempo I (but held back)	1:52

Scott Joplin (1868 – 1917)

première recording

15 **Pine Apple Rag** (1908) **3:10**
for Solo Piano
Respectfully dedicated to the Five Musical Spillers
Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Iain Farrington
Slow March tempo

Kurt Weill (1900 – 1950)

Music from 'The Threepenny Opera' (1928) **15:22**
(Die Dreigroschenoper)
Play with Music in a Prologue and Three Acts
*Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Christoph Enzel (b. 1978)
All other movements arranged for Saxophone Quartet by
John Crofton Harle (b. 1956)

16	Overture. Maestoso	1:50
17	Tango. Tango feel	2:50
18	Polly's Song. Andante con moto	2:19
19	Kanonen-Song. Charleston-Tempo*	2:39
20	The Ballad of the Good Life. Shimmy tempo –	2:36
21	Ballad of Mack the Knife. Blues tempo –	1:48
22	Chorale	1:18

Rudy [Rudolph Cornelius] Wiedoeft
(1893 – 1940)

première recording

23 **Sax Serene** (1925) **2:50**
for Saxophone and Dance Band
Arranged for Saxophone Quartet by Iain Farrington
Very Lively – Coda

TT 59:33

FERIO SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Huw Wiggin soprano saxophone
Ellie McMurray alto saxophone
David Zucchi tenor saxophone
Katie Samways baritone saxophone

Stateside

Introduction
Whilst the saxophone was invented in France by a Belgian, it was in the United States of America that the instrument came into its own. During the twentieth century the saxophone's distinctive single-reed timbre significantly enriched American music, permeating a variety of genres and styles. Through their rich and diverse cultural heritage, the composers represented on Stateside similarly enhanced American music. Composed between 1908 and 1957, this selection of repertoire bears witness to the artistry of Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990), George Gershwin (1898 – 1937), Scott Joplin (1868 – 1917), Jelly Roll Morton [Ferdinand Joseph Lemott] (1890 – 1941), Florence Price (1887 – 1953), Kurt Weill (1900 – 1950), and Rudy Wiedoeft (1893 – 1940). We hear this music reimagined for a quartet of saxophones, in arrangements by James Boatman (b. 1958), Christoph Enzel (b. 1978), Iain Farrington (b. 1977), John Harle (b. 1956), and Nigel Wood (b. 1960).

Joplin: Pine Apple Rag
Described by his biographer Edward Berlin as 'the pre-eminent composer of piano ragtime', Scott Joplin composed more than forty rags during his lifetime. Taking its name from the ragged nature of its rhythmic syncopations, ragtime permeated both instrumental and vocal music. *Pine Apple Rag*, for piano solo, first published in 1908, reached an international audience through its use in George Roy Hill's 1973 film *The Sting*. Iain Farrington's arrangement captures Joplin's melodic and harmonic creativity, the distribution of melodic material enhancing the jaunty effect of Joplin's rhythmic syncopation.

Price: Three Little Dances
Following the 2009 rediscovery of manuscripts and other valuable documents, the music of Florence Price has enjoyed a resurgence, both on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Her *Three Little Dances* initially appeared in 1933 as a suite for solo piano. The dances are an attractive evocation of Price's heritage, in taste, sight, and sound, idiomatically transformed here by Iain Farrington. 'Hoe Cake' blends elements of the cakewalk and shuffle, inviting us to

celebrate the savoury cornmeal flat bread of the American south. Reminiscent of the ragtime two-step, 'Rabbit Foot' calls to mind the minstrel troupe of that name, popular during Price's childhood. The up-tempo third dance, 'Ticklin' Toes', affirms Price's own belief that 'rhythm is of preeminent importance... it is a compelling, onward-sweeping force'.

Price: Adoration

Adoration most likely dates from the mid- to late-1940s and was originally scored for organ. Arrangements for solo instrument and piano, as well as for wind quintet, string quartet, and chamber orchestra attest to the work's appeal. Farrington's arrangement utilises the timbral homogeneity of the saxophone quartet to recreate the sonorities of the organ, adding to the reverence of the work.

Morton: Finger Buster

Recognised as one of the early exponents of jazz, Jelly Roll Morton synthesised elements of ragtime, blues, opera, and popular song. His activities as pianist, bandleader, and composer spanned the first half of the twentieth century. Providing an invaluable account of Morton in performance, his solo piano recordings, made between 1923 and 1939, demonstrate his idiosyncratic and virtuosic piano technique. Whilst the genesis of *Finger Buster* (also known as *Finger Breaker*) is unknown, the 1938 recording by Morton showcases his nimble keyboard navigation, including left-hand stride fluency and right-hand chromatic passagework. Farrington's arrangement capitalises on the sax quartet's ability to reflect the range of the piano, and a variety of detached articulatory colours recreates the flair of Morton's original.

Wiedoeft: Sax Serene

During the 1920s the USA was gripped by a cultural phenomenon known as 'the saxophone craze'. Amongst its chief protagonists was the saxophonist, composer, arranger, and teacher Rudy Wiedoeft. His entrepreneurial instincts emerged in his youth when Wiedoeft switched from clarinet to saxophone, recognising the potential of the latter's novelty. The saxophonist Jonathan Radford notes how a gift for composition and arrangement and a canny utilisation of commercial music greatly assisted Wiedoeft in the dissemination of his artistic output, then and now. 1926 was a busy year for Wiedoeft, including a landmark concert in New York's Aeolian Hall, which was broadcast on radio, helping to establish the

saxophone as a concert instrument, as well as a European tour. In London he recorded for the Columbia Gramophone Company, including *Sax Serene* with [Thomas] Percival Mackey's dance band. In a nod to Wiedoeft's recording as well as to the 1925 sheet music, Farrington's arrangement salutes Wiedoeft's considerable articulatory dexterity and melodic flair.

Gershwin: An American in Paris

By 1928 George Gershwin was a celebrated composer of songs and music for the stage with two major concert works under his belt – *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and the F major Piano Concerto (1925). His gifts for melodic invention, honed as a teenager during his Tin Pan Alley days, similarly infuse the tone poem *An American in Paris*, written in 1928. The work manifests what the writers Richard Crawford and Wayne J. Schneider describe as Gershwin's ability to capture 'the sensuous intimacy of popular music's appeal in melodies that could reach audience members and thrill them'. Distilling the work's essence into less than five minutes, Nigel Wood's arrangement opens with the American visitor enjoying the sights and sounds of the Champs-Élysées. Gershwin's orchestral score specifies four taxi car horns, timbres which are perfectly recreated by saxophones. Crossing the river Seine, our ambulant visitor settles in a café on the Left Bank. Thoughts of home are accompanied by a sultry blues. The mood lifts with an ebullient Charleston, a highly fashionable dance which came to symbolise the Roaring Twenties. The arrangement finishes with references to the blues and the opening cityscape, confirming that, as Gershwin himself wrote, 'the homesick American... once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life'.

Weill: Music from 'The Threepenny Opera'

Premièred in Berlin on 31 August 1928, *The Threepenny Opera* (*Die Dreigroschenoper*) is the most celebrated of Kurt Weill's collaborations with the playwright and poet Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956). Its success secured Weill's reputation as the Weimar Republic's preeminent composer for the theatre. Drawing on John Gay's 1728 London ballad opera, Brecht's play is set in Victorian London and stands as a monument to the epic theatre movement which sought to cultivate audiences as critical observers. Weill's score features seven players who take on twenty-three instrumental parts, mixing orchestral and popular sonorities, including all four saxophones. John Harle's arrangement features six numbers from the work's three acts, referencing Weill's own

use of saxophone whilst also exploiting its chameleon-like ability to imitate other timbres.

The 'Overture' is arresting and sinister, including a particularly sardonic fugue. The 'Tango', or 'Ballad of the Pimp Macheath', is an ironic juxtaposition of music and lyrics, in which the gangster Macheath and Ginny Jenny, a prostitute, recount their manipulative relationship. Polly Peachum expresses the cruel reality she endures as Macheath's long-suffering wife in 'Polly's Song', a gentle lyrical lullaby. In 'The Ballad of the Good Life', an up-tempo shimmy, Macheath celebrates his release from prison and his ruthless disregard for clean living. A brief quotation from the 'Song of the Futility of All Human Endeavour', sung by Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum who extorts London's beggars for a living, segues into the 'Ballad of Mack the Knife'. Whilst undoubtedly the work's most enduring number, this song is a dark tale of murderous intent. Weill's satirical use of tonality here heightens its dramatic impact. Harle's selection ends with the 'Chorale' from the finale of Act III, in which Macheath, Peachum, Polly, and the crowd reflect on the injustices of capitalism. Weill's music, mocking the Lutheran practice of congregational singing, wrenches the audience from the narrative, forcing them to confront the messages of Brecht's text.

A final number of *The Threepenny Opera* is the 'Cannon Song' (*Kanonen-Song*), arranged by Christoph Enzel. Sung by Macheath and Jackie 'Tiger' Brown, London's Chief of Police, this foxtrot uses a tale of three young soldiers to articulate the brutality of state-sponsored warfare.

Bernstein: Selections from 'West Side Story'

Pianist, composer, and conductor, Leonard Bernstein continues to be celebrated as one of the most versatile musicians of the twentieth century. The musical *West Side Story* is a monument to his collaborative synergy with the dancer / choreographer Jerome Robbins (1918 – 1998), playwright Arthur Laurents (1917 – 2011), and lyricist Stephen Sondheim (1930 – 2021). Premièred on 26 September 1957 in New York's Winter Garden Theatre, *West Side Story* tells the story of Maria and Tony, two young star-crossed lovers associated with rival New York gangs. James Boatman's arrangement starts in Act II with 'I Feel Pretty'. Bernstein's waltz captures Maria's innocence and excitement preparing to meet up with Tony, as well as the scepticism of Maria's friends about the suitability of falling for a member of the rival Jets gang. The music transitions into the 'Scherzo' in which Maria and Tony dance together. Syncopation and shifting

metres portray the carefree atmosphere. In 'Somewhere' Maria and Tony imagine their own utopia, where they can be together, free from prejudice. In 'Balcony Scene', we hear one of the musical's most defining songs, 'Maria', a powerful romantic ballad sung by a spell-bound Tony who reflects on the magic of his first encounter with Maria. The long languid melodic lines segue into 'Tonight', a love duet between Maria and Tony, which captures the rapture and intensity of their mutual attraction. From the Act I dance sequence at the gym, Boatman has chosen the 'Cha-Cha', which leads into the 'Promenade'. Bernstein's use of the 'Cha-Cha' to depict the very moment when Maria and Tony meet capitalises on the popularity of this Latin American dance. As the music slows, Maria and Tony exchange their first words. During the following 'Promenade' and 'Jump', dance becomes the physical manifestation of the rivalry between the two gangs, Jets and Sharks. When Tony visits Maria in the bridal shop where she works as a seamstress, they sing 'One Hand, One Heart'. The mannequins witness their vows to each other as if in marriage. Boatman's selection concludes with 'Gee, Officer Krupke' in which the Jets members A-Rab, Baby John, Snowboy, Action, and Diesel lampoon their interactions with law enforcement.

Conclusion

With this rich and representative selection of twentieth-century American music, *Stateside* affirms the versatility of the saxophone, positioning the instrument as the supreme sonic manifestation of American culture.

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One of Europe's leading ensembles of its kind, the **Ferio Saxophone Quartet** is consistently received with high enthusiasm by both audiences and critics, the latter having described the group variously as 'breathtaking' and a 'fabulous foursome', its playing demonstrating 'irresistible exuberance'. It was formed at the Royal College of Music in 2012, and has since developed an extraordinary breadth of repertoire, which allows the members to draw from an unusually wide range of musical styles and periods in their highly engaging concert programmes. Their four recordings for Chandos Records have all earned great acclaim in the press and demonstrate the broad range and flexibility of their instruments, repertoire, and collaborations. *Flux* (2017) traces the saxophone's history in a programme of original works for saxophone quartet, while *Revive* (2018) offers a set of magnificent baroque transcriptions. *Evoke*

(2021), with the pianist Timothy End, features première recordings of three brand new arrangements by Iain Farrington for saxophone quartet and piano, and *Revoiced* (2022), a collaboration with the Corvus Consort, explores the magical blend of saxophones and voices. Recent and forthcoming projects include collaborations with the BBC Singers, Crouch End Festival Chorus, and Dew Dance. Among many accolades and awards, the Quartet has received the Philharmonia / Martin Musical Ensemble Award and won the Royal Over-Seas League's Ensemble Competition, in addition to having been a Tunnell Trust Awardee and Park Lane Group Artist. Concert engagements have taken the ensemble to leading festivals (such as the Ryedale Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, Henley Festival, Chiltern Arts Festival, and Stour Music) and concert halls (among them Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and St John's Smith Square) across the UK and on tour to New Zealand, France, and Bermuda. It can frequently be heard on BBC Radio 3 and other national and international broadcasters. Other important strands in the work of the Ferio Saxophone Quartet include a range of educational activities in schools and conservatoires, and developing the repertoire for saxophone quartet through commissions from composers such as Laura Bowler, Simon Rowland-Jones, and Guillermo Lago. The members of the Quartet are Selmer performing artists. www.feriosax.co.uk

Also available



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Evoke
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Also available



Revive
CHAN 10999



Flux
CHAN 10987

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A & R administrator Karen Marchlik
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Ferio Saxophone Quartet

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