

GORDON FITZELL
MICHAEL MATTHEWS
SRUL IRVING GLICK
ROBERT LEMAY
DIANA MCINTOSH

METROPOLIS

Harrington/Loewen Duo

ALLEN HARRINGTON SAXOPHONE
LAURA LOEWEN PIANO



Photo by **Kyle Thomas**

Harrington/Loewen Duo

Canadian musicians Allen Harrington, saxophone and Laura Loewen, piano, established the Harrington/Loewen Duo in 2002. Praised for their musicality, tight ensemble, and virtuosic performances, the Harrington/Loewen Duo has performed throughout North America, and in Europe, Asia, and South America. Recipients of grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Manitoba Arts Council, they are committed to exploring the standard repertoire and actively commissioning new works. Allen is in high demand as a soloist, adjudicator, chamber and orchestra musician on both saxophone and bassoon. One of Canada's most expressive collaborative pianists, Laura performs with leading singers and instrumentalists across the country. Allen and Laura are professors at the University of Manitoba's Desautels Faculty of Music in Winnipeg, Canada.

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Metropolis (2007) Gordon Fitzell

Reflecting the composer's interest in how music is constructed, Gordon Fitzell's *Metropolis* can be seen as a synaesthetic experiment, probing the associational linkages among the senses, with performers and listeners acting as both subjects and investigators. While not notated conventionally, the work is more strongly determined than it appears, with each faithful performance a recognisable manifestation of the score (just not according to traditional criteria). The strictest delimiting element is that of timing: the initiation, duration and succession of musical events is fixed objectively in minutes and seconds. The events themselves depend on the performers' musical responses to various visual stimuli, including colours, images and glyphs, the latter possibly reminiscent of standard notation, possibly not. The performers are also called upon to make determinations of value, as the score demands that certain pitch intervals govern particular sections, but does not indicate how. Finally there is a perverse element, as certain quiet sounds are to be produced with maximal effort.

The Skin of Night (2006) Michael Matthews

In The Skin of Night, Michael Matthews shows his kinship with Brahms and Schoenberg, employing a net of interrelated motives to create a spellbinding world of manufactured memory and ersatz precognition. We are ushered through an alien terrain, on a journey made vivid as much by its adventures and episodes as by the monuments we may glimpse on the far horizon, or discover, fully-revealed, in the next moment. The geography and our experience of it are knowable, and subsequent visits are richly rewarded; the pacing is classical, but with a tantric coda, focusing on a single object, one musical word, uttered again and again, each time slightly different, as if responding to creeping changes in the speaker's viewpoint. Time stretches...

The distance that lies from here
To some star that never existed
Because God has not yet managed
To pull the skin of night that far!

—*Space Song*, Alfonso Cortés (1928)

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Sonata for saxophone and piano "Adio" (1992) Srul Irving Glick

Like its Toronto-born composer – who received the highest honours for service to both his nation and his faith – Srul Irving Glick's sonata inhabits two worlds at once, that is to say the Anglo and Hebraic. While its compositional technique is rooted in that of the New England Classicists (and in a cultural orientation which continued to yearn for imperial Europe long after it was gone), its vocabulary is drawn from the traditions of Jewish music: folk, popular and liturgical.

This hybridization is evident from the outset, as a 'motto' introduction (typical of the Anglo-American instrumental sonata circa 1900) is transformed into cantillation; the finale likewise weds klezmer and fugue. This combination of late Romantic procedures and Hebraic materials brings with it a natural sentimentality, which finds unabashed expression in the second movement, where a quasi-improvisando invocation in the saxophone leads into a simple song, accompanied in a style popularized by Barbra Streisand.

Oran (1998) Robert Lemay

According to the American saxophonist Aaron Durst, *Oran* was written in memory of all those killed by "men's madness and God's fanatics" in the Algerian Civil War of 1992-2002. The work is highly expressionist, employing gesture so intensely as to create a post-serialist *empfindsamer* stil, with every available compositional parameter in play independently. Among these intensity, duration and timbre are given particular attention (often with pitch being held constant). Extended techniques occur in both the piano (scraping the strings, pizzicati, harmonics, glissandi) and saxophone (flutter-tongue, multiphonics, singing into the instrument and 'bisbigliando' – trilling not between two pitches, but rather two timbres), and the timbre of a given pitch is often shared or even passed from one instrument to the other. In Lemay's hands, the saxophone's capabilities seem neatly coextensive with this style; it is unsurprising that the instrument is central to his catalogue.

Dance for Daedalus (1990) Diana McIntosh

The title of Diana McIntosh's *Dance for Daedalus* invites the listener to experience this piece programmatically, and to explore the cross-currents inherent in the ancient Greek myth of flight, with its competing stories of human relationships and technological endeavour. The work opens with a subtle bit of stage direction (the saxophonist turns his back on the audience to play 'into' the piano) which usurps the primacy of the relationship between performers and audience in favour of that between the two instruments, inclining our thoughts toward inventor and invention. The opening in the saxophone is also improvised (which is to say 'inspired'), and as a machine-age sonic vocabulary emerges, we are further tempted to consider the music as illustrating technological accomplishment (conception, fabrication and implementation), Daedalus the father extricating himself only too late from his work, as a cry of grief closes the piece.

Track 1 commissioned by the Harrington/Loewen Duo
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Track 2 commissioned by the Harrington/Loewen Duo
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Allen Harrington saxophone
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