

intangible classics

Ebonit Saxophone
Quartet

Troubled Waters



music by Kevin Malone / Richard Whalley



métier

Troubled Waters

Kevin Malone (b.1958)

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------|
| I | When the World's on Fire | 4:20 |
| II | The Water Protectors | 18:02 |
| III | The Housatonic near Sandy Hook | 15:50 |

Richard Whalley (b.1974)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-------|
| IV | When the World's on Fire | 3:52 |
| V | Iapetus Suture | 17:53 |
| VI | Refugees Welcome ♥ | 12:38 |

Total playing time:	73:16
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All world premiere recordings

Ebonit Saxophone Quartet

Troubled Waters

water land people fire

A body of water changes slowly. Its contents change rapidly: swirling, they challenge, they erode the restrictions of the boundaries. If the shoreline does not keep up with change, if it resists embracing the needs of what it holds, it will crumble. In 1966, Martin Luther King resolutely condemned rioting, but he identified that "a riot is the language of the unheard." A riot happens when a social system refuses to listen to its citizens. No system has ever changed via its own mechanism; only disruption can erode systems of inequalities, injustice and oppression.

Power to the people.

The first three pieces in this album celebrate how activists tackle resistance to change, the system's wilful deafness about planetary overheating, water pollution and gun control. Each work is based on folk music: spirituals, work songs, ballads, protest chants. My first water pollution saxophone quartet was written in 1990: *Window on the World*, with a central movement entitled "Acid Rain Dance". Today the activists and shorelines are 30 years older, met on a great battle-field, and testing who will endure. It is for us to be dedicated to the unfinished work, to the great task before us.

Wade in the water, children. God's gonna trouble the water.

Kevin Malone

We may count ourselves lucky to be alive now, at a time when we have amazing innovations in healthcare, and luxuries to take for granted that would have been inconceivable for previous generations of humans. Yet ours is an age of anxiety, with growing geopolitical tensions between world superpowers, countless instances of unbearable oppression of the powerless by the powerful, and the prospect of ecological catastrophe and mass extinctions if we don't find alternatives to current patterns of consumption.

Art and music cannot solve these problems, and in any case that is not their purpose. Yet, I find myself preoccupied with these problems, and it is natural that they find a way into my music, but I hope not in obvious ways. *Iapetus Suture* may seem more abstract in this sense, celebrating the wonder and timelessness of nature, expressing shapes caused by natural forces that date back millions of years to shape a particular landscape. By contrast, *Refugees Welcome* ♥ concerns itself with human geography of our present time, celebrating the humanity of those who are oppressed. Increasingly I find that anxiety and anger about the world's crises, combined with awe and inspiration (and deep concern for the future) of the natural world, fuel my work.

Richard Whalley



The Music

When the World's on Fire (Malone)

This is a four-minute set of variations on a folk song of the same name, although its original name was "Oh, My Loving Brother" composed in the 19th Century. In 1940, Woody Guthrie slightly reshaped the melody for his iconic folk song "This Land is Your Land". No matter which title comes to mind, the same sentiment prevails: the Earth and its natural resources are precious. The variations conjure up images of country & western bands, flowing rivers, fracking drills, solidarity singing, a funeral march and a giddily ecstatic revivalist choir. Ebonit Saxophone Quartet gave the premiere in an impromptu concert on 29 November 2019 in the disused, unheated meeting room of the Former Bridge St Church in Leeds, UK, a concert to thank the local Youth4Climate strike action group for their activism.

The Water Protectors

In 2016, I visited Standing Rock Reservation, North Dakota, USA, where thousands of Lakota people and their allies camped to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline being built across their ancient burial lands, a pipeline which had already burst, polluting millions of gallons of water. The following year, I visited Preston New Road, Blackpool, UK where over a hundred people had been protesting for years against Cuadrilla's fracking operations, operations which irreversibly pollute farm lands with radioactive water. I attended and recorded further public demonstrations by Extinction Rebellion, Youth4Climate and Fridays for Future in the USA and UK, transcribing the chants, songs and marching rhythms performed by ordinary citizens as they demanded a genuine voice in their lives, their health, their future, and for their children. This work is composed entirely from their exuberant, public music-making. It is dedicated to all of these people, and to the Ebonit Saxophone Quartet who are based in the beautiful, watery city of Amsterdam.



The Housatonic near Sandy Hook

This work takes its name from the Housatonic River which inspired numerous folk songs in the North East of the USA, and from the small village of Sandy Hook, Connecticut founded in the early 18th century. In December 2012, a shooting in its elementary school took the lives of 26 people. Twenty of the victims were children who would not grow up to know the songs and what the river had seen over many centuries. Three folk tunes from New England - "The River in the Pines", "Captain Kidd" and "Strawberry Lane" - infuse this quartet with boisterous schoolyard bravura as well as dirge-like laments. The displacement of the region's native people was also in mind; these tragedies are not confined to any particular time, place or people. The first performance was given by Ebonit Saxophone Quartet in the Selmer Concert Hall, Paris in April 2016, followed by performances in Amsterdam and Manchester.

For every war, every shooting and every death, lives of young people are lost, young people who will never learn these songs, lives which will never know the bittersweet pangs of love as expressed in "Strawberry Lane".



When the World's on Fire (Whalley)

This arrangement threads layers of material based on Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi" and the Yardbirds' "Shapes of Things" around repeating variants of a 19th century theme made famous when the Carter Family set words to it in their 1933 "When the World's on Fire". A variant of the theme was later used in Woody Guthrie's more famous "This Land is Your Land". I hope the message behind this interweaving of themes is clear.

Iapetus Suture

The Iapetus Suture is a major geological fault that lies deep below the Earth's surface, formed when the continents of Laurentia and Avalonia collided about 300 million years ago, squeezing out the ancient Iapetus Ocean to form the single super-continent Pangaea. Although the Iapetus Ocean was situated in the Southern Hemisphere, the continents have since shifted, and the current location of the Iapetus Suture coincides roughly with the English-Scottish border. This composition takes its structure from a geological cross-section going from Southern Scotland through the Lake District into Northern England. The suture can be heard as the emergence of breathy music from deep below the surface, which eventually rebuilds into music of greater intensity. Analogies are made between geological processes and the treatment of saxophone sound; meanwhile profiles of Lake District mountains and proportions found within the landscape have informed the shape and proportions of the music. This work is dedicated to my mother, Judith Whalley, who is a keen amateur geologist.



Refugees Welcome ♥

This work is my response to the political upheavals in the UK and US during 2016, during which time I was particularly disturbed by the scapegoating of immigrants and refugees by populist politicians and journalists. This piece is about empathy – imagining the plight of refugees on their journeys, and sympathising with the heartbreaking stories which caused them to leave their original homes, a decision which can never be taken lightly. The music weaves Arabic modes and West African rhythmic patterns in amongst my own musical materials with the aim of creating a kind of multi-layered emotional tapestry of sound that celebrates the joy and cultural richness that immigrants can bring to society. The title (including emoji) is taken from some graffiti on a bridge on a cycle path near my home in Manchester. Graffiti tends to be temporary, so my aim here was to preserve its message in the form of something more permanent: a musical composition. This work is dedicated to my wife, Jennifer Loconto, who has put a lot of energy into volunteering to help immigrant communities improve their English language skills.



The People



Kevin Malone (b. 1958) composes socially-aware works about communities, science, technology, media and theatre. Since 2002, he has composed seven works expressing community responses to the events of 9/11 which have been internationally performed, recorded, broadcast on television and radio and written about in major publications. His "A Day in the Life" project in 2019 comprised a violin concerto about inhumane child labour working conditions, an overture celebrating mill workers' protests in Manchester in 1819, and an electronic sound-sculpture fashioned from his recorded interviews with current and retired textile workers. *HerStories Unsung*, Vols. 1 & 2 (2016-20) for female pianist attacks women's social and political inequalities. In 2020, he was awarded a major Arts & Humanities Research Council grant to compose works based on communities' resilience to climate change.

Malone studied with Morton Feldman, Leslie Bassett and William Bolcom, and his music has been featured at the ISCM. His catalogue contains 70 works, with five solo and 14 compilation CDs, championed by Psappha, Ricochet, Riot Ensemble, PRISM Quartet, Ebonit Quartet, Quatuor Danel, Ensemble Archi, BBC Philharmonic, Dnipropetrovsk Symphony Orchestra, Radio State Orchestra Ukraine, Kiev Chamber Orchestra, The Orchestra of Opera North, Manchester Sinfonia, Fidelio Trio, New World Ensemble, Northern Chamber Orchestra, Joanne MacGregor, Hank Dutt of Kronos, Beth Levin and Adam Swayne. Public talks about his work emphasise music-making as a means of keeping humanity at the centre of art, and art at the centre of society. Malone lectures in composition at the University of Manchester. His music is published by Composers Edition.

www.opusmalone.com



Richard Whalley (b. 1974) is a composer and pianist living in Manchester, where he is a Senior Lecturer in Composition at the University of Manchester. His multi-layered music often engages with environmental themes, informed by a fascination in geological and geographical themes and processes, and a fear for the future. He studied at the University of York with Roger Marsh and Nicola Lefanu, then at Harvard University for a PhD in Composition with Mario Davidovsky and Joshua Fineberg.



As a pianist he has premiered new works by himself and numerous other composers. He teaches each year alongside Peter Swinnen on the composition masterclass at the ARAM-Poitou Summer School in France, where he is a regular contributor as pianist and composer to the Concerts en nos Villages series. As a composer he was finalist in BBC Young Musician of the Year 1992 and Gaudeamus 2001, and his music has been performed in the ISCM World Music Days in Flanders in 2012 and Milan Expo in 2015. His music has been performed in the US and throughout Europe by numerous outstanding soloists and ensembles, and in 2016 his work *Misplaced Time Refound* for solo flute was shortlisted for a BASCA British Composer Award.

His scores are published by Composers Edition at www.composersedition.com and information about CD recordings of his music can be found at www.richardwhalley.com.

Ebonit Saxophone Quartet is a sparkling and inspired ensemble founded in 2011 at the Conservatory of Amsterdam.



Featuring four musicians from Poland, the Netherlands and Spain, Ebonit quickly became a recognized name in the Netherlands and abroad, performing in major halls including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, De Singel in Antwerp, Musikverein in Vienna, Konzerthaus in Berlin and Liszt Academy Solti Hall in Budapest.

Ebonit's performances at international festivals include New Music North West Manchester, Emilia Romagna Festival Bologna, Verbier Festival Switzerland, Heidelberger Frühling, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Holland Festival, Wonderfeel Festival and Oranjewoud Festival in the Netherlands. Ebonit has been awarded first prize at international chamber music competitions at the Ottomani Competition, "Who's Next" International Chamber Music Competition, the Storioni Competition and the Orlando Competition. At the Salieri-Zinetti Chamber Music Competition in Verona, Italy, Ebonit was awarded the second prize.

The International Chamber Music Campus in Weikersheim, Germany recognised Ebonit as most convincing newcomer ensemble 2016, and Verbier Festival 2017 awarded Ebonit the APCAV Prize. In 2016/2017 they toured the Netherlands as laureate of the competition "Dutch Classical Talent". Ebonit regularly tours their children's music theater program "Het pleintje van Meneer Sax" produced by Stichting Oorkaan.

Ebonit studied together in the class of Arno Bornkamp in the Amsterdam University of the Arts, and finished its studies in the Masters program of the Netherlands String Quartet Academy with Marc Danel, Stefan Metz and Sven Arne Tepl, and masterclasses with Eberhard Feltz, Gerhard Schulz, Heime Müller, Luc-Marie Aguera, Peter Cropper, Albrecht Mayer, members of the Artemis Quartet, Belcea Quartet, Kronos Quartet, Quatuor Ebène, Cuarteto Casals, Jerusalem Quartet and Pavel Haas Quartet. Their debut CD "The Last Words of Christ" with music by Haydn, Webern, Sibelius and Shostakovich on CHALLENGE Classics was nominated for the prominent Dutch prize "Edison Klassiek 2016". In 2018 Ebonit's second CD "Arabesque" was released on 7 Mountain Records and is described as "pure magic" in Dutch newspaper "de Volkskrant".



Alberto Tárraga Alcañiz (b.1998, Xilxes, Spain). Coming from a family with a deep-seated musical tradition, Alberto started music lessons at the age of three, and began playing saxophone when he was six, at first taught by his father, and afterwards, studying at the music school of his hometown with Alberto Sáez Murillo. In 2016, Alberto was admitted in the class of Arno Bornkamp at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, where he is completing the Bachelor program. As part of his saxophone education, he has also been taught by Lars Mlekusch, Claude

Delangle and Nobuya Sugawa. His passion for chamber music has lead him to receive lessons from outstanding musicians, such as Güntler Pichler, Heime Müller, the Kuss Quartett, Quatuor Danel, Güntler Pichler, Luc Marie Aguera and Eberhard Feltz. Alberto has played in major concert halls in Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Spain, Austria, France and Italy, and has provided masterclasses at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice and the University of Manchester UK.

Dineke Nauta (b.1992, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands) started playing saxophone at the age of nine and was a student in the “Young Talent” program at the Prins Claus Conservatory in Groningen. She continued studying with Arno Bornkamp at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. In 2015 she completed her Bachelor studies, followed by her Masters degree in 2017. During her Masters she took part in an exchange with the CRR de Versailles, France, receiving lessons from Vincent David. In 2010, Dineke received first prize in the regional final of the Dutch competition “Prinses Christina Concours” and second prize and public award in the national finals. A year later she won first prize in the competition of the Dutch Foundation for Young Music Talent. In 2016 her participation in the Andorra International Saxophone Competition was awarded with a sixth prize. Besides performing with Ebonit Saxophone Quartet, Dineke is a member of the Dutch Saxophone Octet with whom she performs regularly in major concert halls and festivals in the Netherlands. From 2017 until 2019 Dineke was granted financial support from Kralings Muzieksfonds Stringendo which provided her masterclasses with Claude Delangle, Christian Wirth, Jean-Yves Fourmeau, Marcus Weiss, Jean-Marie Londeix, Timothy McAllister, Julien Petit and Otis Murphy.

Mateusz Pusiewicz (b.1994, Parczew, Poland) studied at the Conservatory of Amsterdam in the class of Arno Bornkamp and graduated with his Masters degree in Music in September 2019. Mateusz is a very versatile musician, with specialisms as a soloist and an affinity for chamber music. Since 2013 Mateusz has participated in many chamber music projects, including the Milonga Saxophone Quartet, where he plays baritone saxophone, touring Spain and Portugal, reaching the finalists stage in the Grachtenfestival Concours. In 2016

he won the saxophone position in Jong Nederlands Ensemble, where, together with 9 young musicians, he explores different style of music from baroque to jazz. He joined the Ebonit Saxophone Quartet in 2018.

Paulina Marta Kulesza (b.1990, Ostrów-Mazowiecka, Poland) started her musical studies at the age of 14 in her home country. She won both Third Prize and later the Distinction Prize at the National Saxophone Festival in Przeworsk, the Distinction Prize at the National Audition for Chamber Music Groups in Wrocław, and Third Prize at the III International Competition for woodwind instruments in Wrocław. Paulina is a two-time recipient of the Otwarta Filharmonia Agrafki Muzycznej scholarship for young and talented musicians. In 2010 Paulina began her studies the Conservatory of Amsterdam in the class of Arno Bornkamp. Since then she was First Prize winner at the ClariSax Competition in Valenciennes, France, won the audition for Orchestra 1813 in Italy and receive a scholarship Młoda Polska from the Polish Minister of Culture. During her Bachelor studies, Paulina undertook an exchange study at the Conservatory of Versailles with Vincent David. In 2016 Paulina graduated with a Masters Degree of Saxophone summa cum laude. Subsequently, she pursued the chamber music program full-time at the Netherlands String Quartet Academy with Ebonit Saxophone Quartet. Paulina has performed with major Dutch orchestras including the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Radio Philharmonisch Orkest. She has participated in many masterclasses including the 2010 and 2012 International Saxophone Weeks and the Contemporary Music Masterclass with Jean-Marie Londeix and Christian Lauba. Paulina has also received lessons from Christian Wirth, Claude Delangle, Jean-Yves Formeau, Jan Schulte-Bunert, Willem van Merwijk, Radek Knopp and Paweł Gusnar. She is a visiting saxophone coach at the I.J. Paderewski Music School of Białystok in Poland.



Production

CD booklet produced and designed by Kevin Malone

Tracks I - III produced by Kevin Malone

Tracks IV - VI produced by Richard Whalley

Recorded, edited and mastered by Phil Hardman

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Front cover: "Sloth" by Rukayah Gedal, 2010

Photos by Kevin Malone (pp 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 16, 19right), Oscar Whalley (p13), Richard Whalley (pp 9, 10, 19left), Mateusz Pusiewicz (p14).

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total duration 73:16

