

# ONYX SAXOPHONE QUARTET

The Onyx Saxophone Quartet is North-Central Florida's newest chamber music phenomenon, specializing in the presentation of music drawn from the substantial repertoire for four saxophones. An exciting chamber ensemble capable of tremendous variety, subtlety and power, the saxophone quartet is one of the most versatile musical ensembles active today.

Presenting a varied mix of concert music ideal for community concert series, schools, colleges and universities, the Onyx Saxophone Quartet (Jonathan Helton, soprano saxophone; Michael Bovenzi, alto saxophone; Joseph Tomasso, tenor saxophone; and Nicholas Reardon, baritone saxophone) will debut in concerto and chamber performances in Fall 2010.

Members of the group have over 40 years of collective professional solo and chamber music experience. Individually they have performed in over 10 countries and throughout the United States. Their current collaboration has resulted in chamber music experiences of unparalleled musical sensitivity, characterized by a deep, rich tone, and lively audience interactions.

## **JONATHAN HELTON, SOPRANO SAXOPHONE**

Concert saxophonist Jonathan Helton has been heard in performance throughout the United States, Canada, in Europe and the Far East, appearing with orchestras and wind ensembles, in recital, and in numerous chamber concerts. He has performed in Chicago, Montreal, Paris, London, Beijing, Singapore, Bangkok, Taipei, Washington, D.C., Miami, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal, Minneapolis, and New York City's Lincoln Center. His performance credits include concerto appearances with the New Philharmonia of Riverside in New York City, the Winston-Salem (NC) Symphony, the Northwestern University Symphonic Wind Ensemble, the Center for New Music (Iowa), the North Carolina School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra, the University of Florida Wind Symphony, the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, the Harper Symphony Orchestra, the United States Air Force Tactical Air Command Band, and the Twelfth and Fifteenth World Saxophone Congress Wind Orchestras. His orchestral experience includes performances with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, the Grant Park Symphony, the Lake Forest Symphony, the Charleston Symphony, the Savannah Symphony Orchestra, and many others. Helton is featured in solo and chamber music performances on compact discs from Centaur, Elf, Innova, Mark Records, and Music from Northwestern labels.

Dr. Helton holds degrees from the North Carolina School of the Arts and Northwestern University. His teachers include James Houlik, Frederick Hemke, Daniel Deffayet, and Jean-Marie Londeix. From 1992 to 1999 he served on the faculty at Northwestern University teaching saxophone and chamber music, and held an administrative position Coordinating the Wind and Percussion Programs. Helton is currently on the faculty of the University of Florida where he teaches saxophone, chamber music and conducts the New Music Ensemble. Helton is a Selmer Artist-Clinician, and a Past-President of the North American Saxophone Alliance.

## **MICHAEL BOVENZI, ALTO SAXOPHONE**

Michael Bovenzi currently teaches saxophone at the University of North Florida and serves as an instructor in music theory, computer music applications, woodwind courses and chamber music. He holds the positions of Assistant Professor and Music Theory coordinator.

As a performer, Dr. Bovenzi is an active soloist of contemporary music and has performed and premiered numerous works at national meetings of the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) and

the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS). His studio recording of Ed Martin's Apparitions appears on the compact disc Wavefields, a compilation of music from the Experimental Music Studios of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Bovenzi has also appeared as a soloist with the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, University of Florida and University of Illinois Jazz Bands, and University of North Florida Wind Ensemble. He will be featured on an upcoming album by composer Gary Smart, consisting of jazz-influenced chamber music. Recently Dr. Bovenzi returned from a trip to Bangkok, Thailand, where he performed at Mahidol University for the 15th meeting of the World Saxophone Congress.

Dr. Bovenzi has held teaching positions at the University of Illinois and the University of Florida, where he taught saxophone, woodwind techniques, and coached chamber groups. He has maintained successful private teaching studios in Florida and Illinois and his students frequently receive recognition at the county and state level. His teachers have included Debra Richtmeyer, Jonathan Helton, and Joe Lulloff. Dr. Bovenzi holds the Doctorate in Performance and Literature from the University of Illinois, with a minor in music theory. He earned his undergraduate degrees in performance and composition, and a Masters degree in performance from the University of Florida.

### **JOSEPH TOMASSO, TENOR SAXOPHONE**

Joseph Michael Tomasso is a woodwind specialist living in the central florida area. He holds bachelor of performance degrees in both saxophone and clarinet, as well as a master degree in woodwind pedagogy with an emphasis on oboe performance. Outside of his involvement with Onyx, Joseph performs with pianist Amy Blackwood in the chamber duo Flight of the Woodchords and as part of the woodwind duo Ether with clarinetist Garrett L. Matlock. Joseph formerly held the principal saxophone position of the Wheaton Municipal Band (1999-2002) and was a state finalist in the MTNA chamber music competition (2005 IL, 2006 IL, 2008 NC). Joseph currently holds the 2nd clarinet position with the Gainesville Chamber Orchestra as well as auxiliary saxophone. He has also performed with the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra (Oboe/English horn) and remains an active freelancer for other orchestras throughout the country.

Joseph holds degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and University of North Carolina Greensboro. His former saxophone teachers include Roger Birkeland, Debra Richtmeyer, Susan Fancher, and Steven Stusek. He previously held a graduate teaching assistantship at the University of North Carolina where was responsible for undergraduate woodwind methods courses. He is currently the advanced woodwinds instructor and double reed specialist at Great Southern Music in Gainesville Florida.

### **NICHOLAS REARDON, BARITONE SAXOPHONE**

Nick Reardon is an active music educator and performer in Central Florida. He holds degrees for Music Education from Kent State University and Saxophone Performance from the University of Florida. Nick is currently the band director at Belleview High School and is on the faculty at the College of Central Florida where he teaches saxophone. Nick has performed with the Gainesville Chamber Orchestra, Ocala Symphony, and the Sarasota Orchestra. He has also performed at North American Saxophone Alliance conferences and as a soloist with the Kent State Orchestra. His former teachers include Thomas Doggett, Greg Banaszak, and Jonathan Helton.