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Guest Artist Recital: New Century Saxophone Quartet

New Century Saxophone Quartet

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"It is my plan to build a school of music second to none."

—William Grant Egbert (1867–1928) Founder, Ithaca Conservatory of Music

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NEW CENTURY SAXOPHONE QUARTET

Michael Stephenson, soprano saxophone
James Boatman, alto saxophone
Stephen Pollack, tenor saxophone
Brad Hubbard, baritone saxophone

Sinfonia for Saxophone Quartet (1992)

Quick and Vibrant
Lyric
Presto

Saxophone Quartet No. 2 (1995)

Moderato
Largo
Allegro

INTERMISSION

Three Short Pieces (1994)

Toccata
Arioso
Fughetta

The Old Folk’s Quadrilles

Alley Dance (1996)

Sherwood Shaffer
(b. 1934)

Lenny Pickett
(b. 1954)

Arthur Frackenpohl
(b. 1924)

Steven Foster
(1826-1864)
arranged by James Boatman

Benjamin Boone
(b. 1963)

Ford Hall Auditorium
Tuesday, March 31, 1998
8:15 p.m.

The New Century Saxophone Quartet is represented by
Concert Artists Guild
850 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019
Channel Classics Records
NEW CENTURY SAXOPHONE QUARTET

As the only ensemble of its kind ever to win First Prize of the Concert Artists Guild Competition, the New Century Saxophone Quartet is a pioneering and versatile group winning new-found enthusiasm for the saxophone quartet and its diverse repertory, ranging from the Baroque to innovative contemporary works. The recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and Chamber Music America, New Century has been heard in major concert venues in Los Angeles, New York and Amsterdam; on radio and television in the United States, Europe, and Central America, including its own radio series in North Carolina; in recordings for the Channel Classics label; and in unusual performance settings, ranging from a Command Performance for President Clinton in the White House to a concerto performance with the United States Navy Band.

New Century’s 1993 New York debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall earned the group praise for their “virtuosic display of dexterity and keen ensemble work,” in which the “players handled all the music with panache” (New York Post). Upon becoming the first saxophone quartet presented at the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Times heralded the quartet’s West Coast debut: “Tackling brave new territory in the conservative-leaning realm of classical music takes a unique blend of conviction, refined talent, and a bit of damn-the-torpedoes ambition. Those qualities are amply in evidence with the New Century Saxophone Quartet, not to mention a finely honed musicality deserving wider acceptance.”

Other engagements include Chicago’s Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, Atlanta’s Spivey Concert Hall, Boston’s Symphony Hall and Gardner Museum, New York’s Merkin Concert Hall and the Kosciuszko Foundation Townhouse, Washington D.C.’s Strathmore Hall, and the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival in Alaska. New Century was also the first saxophone quartet to be presented at La Huaca del Complejo Atlapa in Panama City.

The New Century Saxophone Quartet has appeared on television and radio across the United States in features on National Public Radio’s Performance Today, the Voice of America, and North Carolina Public television. In 1995 the group was in residence at WUNC in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, as part of Concert Artists Guild’s Artists-in-Radio project which featured the ensemble in broadcasts called “On A-i-R.” In 1996 the Artists-in-Radio project placed New Century in residence at WHQR in Wilmington, North Carolina.
United States, Panamanian television aired a documentary and a live performance, and in the Netherlands, Dutch radio presented a live broadcast from the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

New Century’s first recording, *Drastic Measures*, released in 1994 by Channel Classics, won critical acclaim from *Fanfare Magazine*: “They combine great technique and elegant musicianship with a wonderful sense of chamber music. They have put together a compact disc with the same logic and thoughtfulness usually reserved for a concert or recital, always conscious of how each piece works within the context of the whole.” New Century’s second recording, *Main Street USA*, including NCSQ’s arrangements of music by Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, and Morton Gould, was released in 1996.

Moving beyond the traditional repertory for four saxophones, New Century performs works covering composers from Mozart to Caryl Florio, a turn-of-the-century American composer who was one of the first composers for saxophone quartet, and genres from Classical works to contemporary works with funk and jazz influences. The Quartet premiered a work written for them by Sherwood Shaffer in 1993. This season features works written for New Century, including a commission from Benjamin Boone and a piece from Arthur Frackenpohl. A commission by Concert Artists Guild from Lenny Pickett, band leader and lead saxophonist of the *Saturday Night Live* band, had its premiere in April 1997 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City.

The New Century Saxophone Quartet is based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where its members attended the North Carolina School for the Arts.