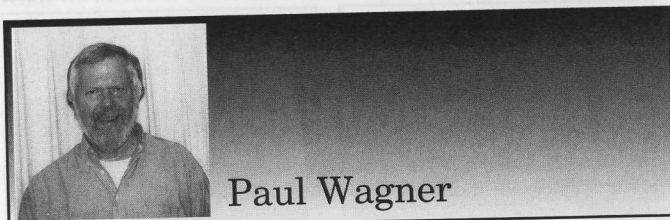




Recommended Recordings



Paul Wagner



IN FRIENDSHIP
James Romain
Centaur CRC 2916

TANGLED LOOPS
Nathan Nabb
Winston Choi Piano

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In Friendship brings to us more masterpieces for the saxophone repertoire, performed by saxophonist James Romain, and accompanied by pianist Kevin Chase. James Romain currently serves as Associate Professor of Saxophone and Assistant Director of Jazz studies at Drake University. He received the Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree in Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As a student of Professor Debra Richtmeyer James Romain is the first saxophonist to be awarded the D.M.A. degree from that University. While there he was awarded the Cooke Fellowship and served as a teaching for the saxophone studio. He also co-founded the Red Onion Saxophone Quartet which has won awards in regional North American Saxophone Alliance competitions. The quartet was awarded a silver medal at the 2001 Fiscoff National Chamber Music competition. He has performed with the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. He also holds prior degrees from the University Of North Texas where he studied with James Riggs, and also served as a teaching Fellow. In the jazz field he has performed with Clark Terry, Ron Miles, Eric Gunnison and the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

James Romain is superb performer on saxophone with a bright, clear, and resonant sound that is not often heard. His articulation is crisp and uncluttered with every single note occupying precisely it's own space in time. His use of vibrato is excellent, while always remaining an enhancement to his sound, rather than trying to dominate the sound. His fingers are amazingly quick with blinding precision. His interpretive skills are the equal of his saxophone technique giving the listener a rare treat

of a consummate performer. Every aspect of his playing is to be greatly applauded.

The opening selection is *Mai* for solo saxophone by Ryo Nodo, and is beautifully performed. Listening to this piece now it is hard to remember that when the piece was first published, it was considered very avant-garde. Only a mere 34 years later it is almost standard repertoire. We have to applaud the effort and control it takes to perform this level because when hearing James Romain performance *Mai* he makes it sound so beautiful and easy.

The second selection is also considered standard repertoire today but in its conceptual year it was a wee bit progressive. The selection is *Prelude, Caprice, et Finale* by Alfred Desenclos. The lovely timbre of Romain's alto saxophone exudes as its exquisite lines undulate through a swirling mist trying to ascend to the surface of the piece, while carrying you ears with it. The piano saxophone duo on this piece is superb. They immediately capture the passion of this piece and carry our imaginations through to the climax of *Prelude, Caprice, et Finale*.

The next selection is Paul Bonneau's *Caprice en Forme de Valse*. Another definitive performance is presented by James Romain for this unaccompanied masterpiece of music.

Once again Romain's saxophone cuts through the technical difficulties on the *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, by Robert Muczynski, as if they were nonexistent. This *Sonata* rejoices in their outstanding team work. This truly is an inspired performance.

The next composition, by Karlheinz Stockhausen, is titled *In Freundschaft* and was composed for, in this case, solo soprano and strangely enough it really sounds like a trio even though there is only one musical instrument playing. James Romain demonstrates an incredible amount of artistry in the performance of this piece.

The duo is reunited again for the Edison Denisov *Sonate*, also utilizes the more contemporary techniques. Especially the second movement, that is very different for the saxophone. James Romain plays the Denisov *Sonate* so well everything sounds effortless and free. That is very difficult to do. This is a superb performance of an exciting piece of music.

James Romain is a saxophonist that you have to hear to believe. He is an outstanding soloist, saxophonist, and artist. He will add much to the world of the saxophone. This is a must hear CD. §

TANGLED LOOPS
Nathan Nabb
Winston Choi Piano

Tangled Loops features saxophonist Nathan Nabb and pianist Winston Choi. This excellent CD contains the music of Jason Eckardt, Luciano Berio, Philippe Hurel and Milton Babbitt.

Nathan Nabb serves on the faculty at Morehead State University where he has been the Assistant Professor of Saxophone since 2005. He received his Doctorate of Music in 2008, and Master of Music in 2003, both in saxophone performance from Northwestern University where he studied with Dr. Frederick Hemke.