

James Romain Professional Bio 2015

Dr. James Romain serves as Professor of Saxophone and Associate Director of Jazz Studies at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. Active regionally, nationally, and internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, recitalist, clinician, and jazz/commercial performer, he embraces diverse genres of music. Dr. Romain actively contributes to the growing body of compositions and pedagogical literature for the instrument through his pursuit of commissions, recording projects, and published articles.

As an orchestral saxophonist, James Romain performs regularly with the Minnesota Orchestra, including a performance of Alban Berg's *Violin Concerto* in August of 2010 at London's Royal Albert Hall on the BBC Proms series, and performances of Darius Milhaud's *La Creation du Monde* in 2011. Dr. Romain is also the first-call saxophonist of the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he has performed with the Wyoming Symphony, the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, as well as with the Champaign-Urbana and U of I Orchestras.

Dr. Romain has been an invited performer at the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th World Saxophone Congresses, where he has presented premieres of solo and chamber works. In 2012, at the 16th World Saxophone Congress in St. Andrews, Scotland, Romain presented European Premiere performances of Will Campbell's *One for Four* and Tyler Gilmore's *Homage to Bela Bartok* with The New Third Stream, and gave a performance of Dvořák's "American" Quartet No. 12, Op. 96, with Oasis Quartet. At the 15th World Saxophone Congress, held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2009, Dr. Romain presented the Asian premiere of Eric McIntyre's *Secondary Impressions for Baritone Saxophone and Piano*, and presented two works for jazz saxophone quartet as a member of The New Third Stream. In 2006, at the 14th World Saxophone Congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia, he gave the European premieres of Mark Engebretson's *SaxMax*, and of Bill Dougherty's *Howl*. In July of 2003, Dr. Romain premiered a new sonata by Chinese composer Jian-Jun He at the 13th World Saxophone Congress.

In May and June of 2014, Romain traveled to Beijing and Chongqing, China, for ten days of teaching, observing, and performing at Minzu and Chongqing Normal Universities. In May of 2007, he joined his Drake colleagues in Mexico City as Artist in Residence at the *1a Academia de Música 2007*. They presented daily master classes at the *Escuela de Musica Vida Y Movimiento* at the *Centro Cultural Ollin Yoliztli*, and

participated in daily rehearsals at the *Instituto de Humanidades Y Ciencias (INHUMYC)*.

Dr. Romain has appeared as a performer or clinician at Iowa Bandmaster's Association, College Band Directors National Association North Central Division, and Texas Music Educator's Association conferences.

James Romain is an active chamber musician. He is currently the baritone saxophonist with the Oasis Quartet, also featuring Dr. Nathan Nabb from Stephen F. Austin State University, Dr. James Bunte from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and Dr. David Camwell from Simpson College. (www.oasisquartet.com)

As a jazz saxophonist, Romain is the lead alto saxophonist of the Des Moines Big Band, and the baritone saxophonist with the New Third Stream Quartet. He has also performed with Clark Terry, Ron Miles, Eric Gunnison, and at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. Dr. Romain is active as a jazz performer and educator, appearing regularly with the Des Moines Big Band, Turner Center Jazz Orchestra, and with a variety of jazz small groups. As an in-demand doubler (saxophones, flutes, clarinets), he regularly perform in pit orchestras for touring productions at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines, and with entertainers such as Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, and Ben Folds at venues including Minneapolis's Orchestra Hall. Romain is a member of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 75.

Dr. Romain's artistic mission focuses on fostering the establishment of the saxophone as a medium of serious musical expression, and actively contributing to the establishment of a substantial body of serious music for the instrument, through individual commissioning of composers, consortium commission projects, and the presentation of these works to the public through recitals, concerto performances, and recording projects.

Commissions, Premieres, and Dedications:

- *Quartet after Schumann* for saxophone quartet by David Canfield (2013)
- *Pictures of the Floating World* for saxophone quartet and percussion quartet by James David (2013)

- *Concerto for Saxophone Quartet & Wind Ensemble* by David Maslanka (2013)
- *Super Glue* for saxophone quartet by Mark Engebretson (2013)
- *Pure* for jazz saxophone quartet by Brent Gallaher (2012)
- *One for Four* for jazz saxophone quartet by Will Campbell (2012)
- *Homage to Béla Bartók* for jazz saxophone quartet by Tyler Gilmore (2012)
- *Compression* for saxophone quartet and percussion ensemble by Mark Engebretson (2011)
- *Mount Rainier Search and Rescue* for saxophone quartet and percussion ensemble by Steve Lias (2011)
- *Carnival of the Animals* for saxophone quartet, piano, celesta, and percussion ensemble by Michael Dougherty (2011)
- *Compass* for saxophone quartet by David Rakowski (2011)
- *Mad Scene* for saxophone quartet by Eric L. McIntyre (2010)
- *Huaihai* for jazz saxophone quartet by Dan Martinez (2009)
- *Three Lyriclés* for jazz saxophone quartet by Will Swindler (2009)
- *Vernal Falls* for jazz saxophone quartet by Kim Pensyl (2009)
- Co-commissioned a wind ensemble transcription of Jacob ter Veldhius's *Tallahatchie Concerto* for alto saxophone and wind ensemble (2009)
- *The Rivers* for solo alto saxophone and wind ensemble by John Fitz Rogers (2007)
- *Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra* by Lewis Spratlan (2007)
- *SaxMax* for soprano saxophone, computer, and computer operator by Dr. Mark Engebretson (2006)

- *Howl* for alto saxophone and tone generator by Dr. William Dougherty (2006)
- *Contact* (Asx/Pno) by James Matheson (2005)
- *Not Yet* (Asx/Pno) by Roscoe Mitchell (2004)
- *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* by Jianjun He (2003)

Discography:

- New Third Stream Quartet – *One for Four* (Teal Creek Music)
- Drake University Wind Symphony—*Mosaic* featuring Mark Engebretson's *Duo Concertante* (Mark Custom 50781-MCD)
- David Camwell—*Timescape* (Teal Creek Music)
- *Howl* (Innova Records 811)
- Oasis Quartet—*Glass/Goatkovsky/Escaich* (Innova Records 744)
- David Camwell—*Bach-Centric* (Teal Creek Music)
- Drake University Wind Symphony—*Collage* featuring John Fitz Rogers' *The Rivers* for solo alto saxophone and wind ensemble (Mark Custom 8658-MCD)
- The Des Moines Big Band—*Landmark* (Neon Blue Records)
- *In Friendship* (Centaur Records 2916)
- David Camwell—*Aeterna*: Duo performance of J.S. Bach *Double Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1043* (Teal Creek Music TC 2012)
- *Reminiscence: A Special Collection of Works by Jianjun He* (Chinese import)

Saxophone Symposium 2012: "Romain has produced a recording of genuine artistic merit and musical interest." (*Howl* Reviewed by Tom Liley)

Saxophone Journal Vol. 34/No 3 (Jan/Feb 2010): "James Romain is a 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 its own space in time. His use of vibrato is excellent, while always remaining an enhancement to the 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." (*In Friendship* Reviewed by Paul Wagner)

Saxophone Symposium 2009: "*In Friendship* is a terrifically played collection of some of the saxophones most important compositions and a must-have for classical saxophonists." (Reviewed by Steve Stusek)

American Record Guide, Nov/Dec 2008: "Both performers are excellent, winding their way through very difficult repertoire with great ease. Romain appears to be in complete control; his sound is beautifully sculpted and his technique is effortless. He is particularly skillful in the *a cappella* selection—Noda's *Mai* and Stockhausen's *In Friendship*—where he jumps between registers without thought or trepidation. He also brings a wide dynamic range and appropriate phrasing to each piece; the Noda is often shocking on the ears, as it should be, and the Desenclos Prelude, Cadence et Finale and the Bonneau *Caprice en Forme de Valse* are rendered with perfect French grace and whimsy." (*In Friendship* reviewed by Patrick Hanudel)

Publications:

- Masterclass CD/Article. *Walter Hartley's Sonata for Baritone Saxophone and Piano*. *Saxophone Journal* vol. 34, no. 6 (July/August 2010).
- "A Lesson with James Romain." *Saxophone Journal* vol. 34, no. 2 (November/December 2009): 32-35.
- Masterclass CD/Article. *Howl for Alto Saxophone and Sound Modules*. *Saxophone Journal* vol. 32, no. 6 (July/August 2008): 54-64.
- "Processes of Expansion and Contraction in Mark Engebretson's *Energy Drink I* for Solo Alto Saxophone." *The Saxophone Symposium*, vol. 29 (2004): 73-112.

He was the first saxophonist to be awarded the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Performance and Literature from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he was a student of Professor Debra Richtmeyer. While at UIUC, he was awarded the Cooke Fellowship, served as teaching assistant for the saxophone studio, and won the woodwind concerto competition. At UIUC, Dr. Romain co-founded the Red Onion Saxophone Quartet, an ensemble that has taken prizes in regional North American Saxophone Alliance competitions and was awarded the silver medal at the 2001 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition.

Dr. Romain holds prior degrees from the University of North Texas, where he was a teaching fellow and a student of Professor James Riggs.

James Romain is a Conn-Selmer Artist, and performs exclusively on Selmer Paris saxophones. As a Rico Artist, he also performs on Rico Reserve, Reserve Classic, and Select Jazz Reeds. Dr. Romain serves as Membership Director for the North American Saxophone Alliance.
(www.saxalliance.org)