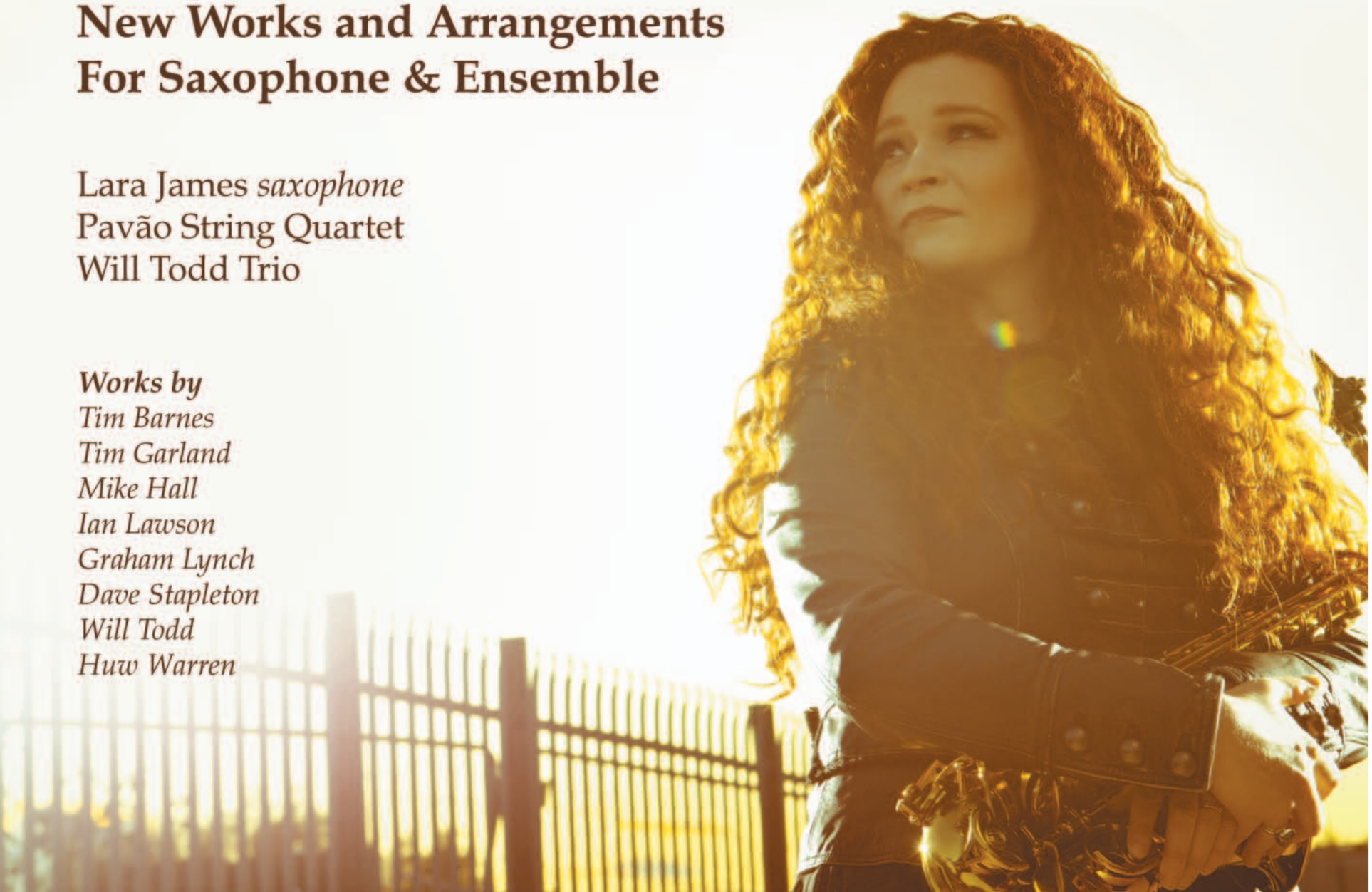
signum CLASSICS

THE GLITTERING PLAIN

New Works and Arrangements For Saxophone & Ensemble

Lara James *saxophone*
Pavão String Quartet
Will Todd Trio

Works by
Tim Barnes
Tim Garland
Mike Hall
Ian Lawson
Graham Lynch
Dave Stapleton
Will Todd
Huw Warren



THE GLITTERING PLAIN

1	**The Sparkling Heavens**	Will Todd (b.1970)	[9.04]
2	**Milonga Azure**	Graham Lynch (b.1957)	[5.55]
3	**Winding Wind**	Tim Garland (b.1966)	[5.34]
4	**The Moon For Her**	Tim Garland	[5.29]
	The Glittering Plain	Ian Lawson (b.1955)	
5	Movement 1		[5.12]
6	Movement 2		[6.16]
7	Movement 3		[4.26]
8	**Evensong**	Mike Hall (b.1957)	[4.19]
9	**No More Sorrow**	Tim Barnes (b.1990)	[2.42]
10	**A View Through an Open Door**	Dave Stapleton (b.1979)	[7.43]
11	**Is It August Yet?**	Huw Warren (b.1962)	[5.11]
	Total timings:		[61.48]

LARA JAMES SAXOPHONES
PAVÃO STRING QUARTET
WILL TODD TRIO

www.signumrecords.com

ARTIST'S NOTE

This CD is quite different from my previous disc for Signum Classics, in that I have commissioned British composers active in the field of jazz but also working with classical music (or vice versa) so the project is a classical crossover of sorts. I wondered what would happen if I asked composers to write (or arrange) something that was essentially drawing on classical form or style but borrowing jazz harmonies, inflections and improvisatory influences. This CD is the exciting result of that concept and features some stylistically varied, beautifully melodious and rhythmically vital new works. It has been a pleasure to work with the Pavão String Quartet and the Will Todd Trio in recording these pieces.

Lara James, 2012

NOTES ON THE WORKS

1 **The Sparkling Heavens**
Will Todd

"Commissioned specially for this album, *The Sparkling Heavens* is a long winding melody for soprano saxophone with constantly shifting textures in the strings and percussion. The piano has a minimalist figure which repeats throughout the track, with pedal notes adding to the texture as the piece ebbs and flows. It is an evocation of the imagined timelessness of heaven, the beauty and the strength of eternity."

Will Todd

Will Todd's music includes works for choir, stage and orchestra, and has been performed worldwide. Will's flagship work is his electrifying jazz work *Mass in Blue*, which has been performed almost 100 times since its 2003 premiere.
For more information see **www.willtodd.com**

2 **Milonga Azure**
Graham Lynch

"*Milonga Azure* captures the ambience of a beach café at St Ives on a lazy summer's lunchtime - the title suggestive of the intense blue of the sea and sky. But the music also evokes other moods including a sense of melancholy and sadness, because the enjoyable moments in life are only ephemeral."

Graham Lynch

Graham created a new arrangement of *Milonga Azure* for this project, scored for alto saxophone, string quartet, piano and double bass. His music has been recorded and broadcast by leading orchestras and ensembles in over 30 countries, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of Opera North, and the BBC Singers. His works have been played in venues as diverse as the South Bank, Wigmore Hall, Merkin Hall, New York, Paris Conservatoire, Palace of Monaco, and from the Freiberg Jazz Club to a cake shop in Japan and everything in between. **www.grahamlynch.eu**

3 **Winding Wind**
4 **The Moon For Her**
Tim Garland

I have long admired the playing and writing of Tim Garland, and the way in which his works interweave different sound worlds, genres and influences. I first heard *Winding Wind* on a CD he recorded with his fantastic group *Lammas*, and was caught by its energy and folk-inspired rhythmic vitality. In asking Tim to create a new arrangement for saxophone, string quartet, piano, bass and drums/percussion, I wondered in which ways it might differ from the original. The result was no percussion in this arrangement, plenty for the strings to do, and the inclusion of a written solo for the saxophonist with the option of following changes (or a combination of both).

The second piece is quite different in character. As Tim provided both alto and tenor parts, I play alto saxophone instead of tenor, for which it was originally conceived. This piece too, uses no drums or percussion.

The composer writes; "I wrote *The Moon For Her* when my daughter was very young and regularly watched a classic cartoon about a father who catches the moon for his daughter. For the most part it is an embellished two-part invention."
Lara James

Tim Garland, composer, Grammy-winning arranger, virtuoso saxophone and bass clarinet player is one of the UKs most prolific creative musicians. First forging an international reputation working with Chick Corea, Bill Bruford and Storms/ Nocturnes, his diverse musical skills are now evident in a growing repertoire of orchestral compositions which fuse the approaches of jazz and contemporary composition. He is based in London and is a Fellow of the Royal Northern College of Music. **www.timgarland.com**

5 **The Glittering Plain**
Ian Lawson

"*The Glittering Plain* (for alto saxophone, string quartet, and jazz piano trio) is the fourth piece in a series of works that are, in all but name, multi-movement sonatas. So far, each piece has been written for a different, often unusual, combination of instruments. If this reminds anyone of the series of works Debussy was working on at the end of life I wouldn't be entirely surprised, particularly as the first piece in the series is scored for flute, viola and harp! This latest work, commissioned by Lara James, is different from the others in that it is also an attempt to write a genuine jazz/classical crossover work.

The title is derived from the novel 'The Story of the Glittering Plain' published by William Morris in 1891. The novel itself has elements of 'crossover' combining fantasy and the supernatural with the progressive social ideas that interested Morris.

I'm aware that the term 'crossover' is problematic: When associated with classical music its meaning is usually synonymous with 'dumbing down' – Mozart with a disco beat or operatic singers recording 'lowbrow' pop and show tunes. This, of course, is a limited view. I wonder, for example, how many works in the core classical repertoire don't combine elements from different musical spheres – the essential process in any form of crossover?

When combing elements of Classical and Jazz, however, there are specific problems. Jazz is essentially a groove-based music; the rhythmic syncopation typically found in jazz is heard against the backdrop of a clear pulse. It is this groove that makes the syncopation workable and meaningful, and also leads to a performance practice in which rhythmic precision is a central requirement. Harmonic rhythm (i.e. the rate at which the harmonies change) on the other hand tends to be relatively straight forward in jazz. In 'classical' music harmonic rhythms tend to be more varied, and there is also a greater tradition of development during which rhythmic patterns are often subverted in a way that would not 'groove' in a jazz sense.

It would be pointless of me to try and explain in detail how I came to cope with these issues because the results can be more meaningfully heard in the music. But as a starting point perhaps it's worth pointing out that the structure

and development are essentially 'classical'. There is no improvisation. Although there are moments when the music might sound as if it has reached the start of a jazz solo, these moments are then developed in a more classical way by re-routing the harmony in different directions rather than presenting improvised melodic variations over a fixed harmonic form."

Ian Lawson

The Glittering Plain was composed between November 2010 and February 2011 and is dedicated to Lara James.

Ian Lawson was born in Liverpool in 1955 and brought up in Wrexham, North Wales. He is, however, of mixed Scottish and Welsh descent and, on his Welsh side, is related to the Welsh composer Grace Williams.

After studying music and composition with Alun Hoddinott at Cardiff University, Ian has had a varied career writing much music for film and television as well as concert music and pop music.

8 **Evensong**
Mike Hall

The composer writes: "*Evensong* started as an exercise in moving a particular chord shape around and writing a really simple melody over the top. The resultant, almost hymnal, effect lent itself perfectly to a string quartet, a format which I have been working with for a number of years now."

Mike Hall is a jazz saxophonist and educator. He plays with the Echoes of Ellington Orchestra, Sax Assault and with his own jazz quartet as well as freelancing with the North West's professional orchestras. Mike is Head of Jazz Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music and directs various jazz courses around the UK and in France. He is a consultant to the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. **www.mikehall.co.uk**

9 **No More Sorrow**
Tim Barnes

No More Sorrow is a short piece for tenor saxophone and piano.

Tim Barnes was born in York on September 26th

1990, the fourth and last child in his family. Only five months old, Tim was rushed into hospital after suffering from numerous fits. He was diagnosed with encephalitis, meningitis & pneumonia. Tim recovered, but shortly afterward was registered as partially sighted and diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome & dyspraxia. Even at a young age it was clear Tim would more than compensate for his conditions with his incredible ear for sounds and music in particular. By secondary school Tim had either developed or discovered his perfect pitch. He points out that: "Every sound has a pitch. Fridges, car engines, footsteps and voices are made up of several frequencies that I like to pick out. People don't realise how much of the world can sound like music."

Almost unsurprisingly, given his aural development, Tim has synaesthesia, linking colours to musical pitches. "It's like this," he explains, "I hear a Bb and I think of pink. I hear an Eb and I think of purple, etc. In a piece of music, I'll know what key it is in and then I'll hear individual notes that I decide to focus on and depending on how it's used, then the colour of that note would be a deeper or lighter shade. The way my mind works has had a massive impact on my composing."

10 **A View Through an Open Door**
Dave Stapleton

Dave composed this piece at my request especially for this CD, scored for soprano saxophone and string quartet, piano, bass and drum kit. It has a spacious, atmospheric quality to it, and includes an improvised section for the saxophonist. The composer explains; "In writing this piece, I wanted the silence and space to be as important as the music itself. From the beginning there's a recurring theme that appears in conversation between the string quartet and the saxophone, piano, bass and drums that has a sense of mystery about it, an improvisatory quality in search of something. Finally, an ostinato enters giving a sense of release and arrival like a view suddenly becoming visible through clearing fog."

Since graduating in classical piano from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2002, Dave Stapleton has become an important figure on the UK jazz scene as a jazz pianist of unusual abilities, as a composer of beautiful, lyrical tunes and film scores, as a record producer, and as co-founder of Edition records.

As a composer, Stapleton draws on his deep exploration of jazz, classical and world styles, transforming these raw materials into something richly personal. He performs throughout the UK as jazz pianist with the Dave Stapleton Quartet.
www.davestapleton.com

11 **Is It August Yet?**
Huw Warren

"Is It August Yet? is a new arrangement of an old piece. The title comes from something my eldest son said when he was very young. His birthday is in August so every month he would ask, 'Is it August yet?'. This seemed quite a Zen-like statement in the deep of winter! In the original I tried to combine the lyricism of a lush summer with a childlike happy groove influenced by South African music. In this new arrangement the piece has grown up, but hopefully without losing any of these qualities."
Huw Warren

Welsh pianist and composer Huw Warren is known as one of the UK's most individual and versatile creative forces with work crossing the divides between Jazz, Contemporary music and World music. He never ceases to amaze as an intriguing and thrilling performer and composer. Winner of the highly coveted BBC Jazz Award for Innovation in 2005, Huw is known to many as co-founder of cult British jazz group Perfect Houseplants, and is a regular arranger/musical director for contemporary folk singer June Tabor (including their most recent project Quercus with saxophonist Iain Ballamy). He has recently established an international presence with his ongoing work with Austrian bassist Peter Herbert and American improvising violinist Mark Feldman.

Huw is well known in the field of jazz education and as an active composer and jazz musician on the international stage, with recent projects including his collaboration with Maria Pia de Vito, which has included recording with guitarist Ralph Towner and Carnatic singer R.A. Ramamani.

"One of the UK's truly independent spirits."
The Guardian

http://onesheet.com/huwwarren

BIOGRAPHIES

LARA JAMES

© Siân Trenberth

Lara James is a Welsh saxophonist based in the UK, known for her work as a collaborative musician and soloist. She has established herself as a musician with a busy and varied portfolio career ranging from recital, chamber, orchestral and band performances to lecturing, and performs across a variety of musical genres from contemporary classical to alternative.

She has performed as a concerto soloist and recitalist throughout the UK, while her freelance recording work includes sessions for radio, BBC TV and major label CD release. She has made numerous appearances with orchestras, ensembles and opera companies including the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC NOW, Opera North, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Cape Town National Opera, Welsh National Opera and various others.

As a soloist Lara has been broadcast around the world; including in the UK (BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, Ireland's RTE Lyric FM), the USA

(NPR) and Australia (ABC Classic FM). Lara's debut CD 'Façades' on Signum Classics with pianist Jeremy Young was 'Presenter's Choice' in Classic FM Magazine, May 2009, which stated; *"The saxophone is in, and there's no better performer than Lara James. From shades of jazz to thrilling expressionism, this recital earns your attention."* Fanfare Magazine wrote; *"Lara James is an estimable, if not sensational, proponent of all these works … a sensitive collaborator … A well-known performer and teacher in her native Wales, she possesses a solid technique and sensitivity to the jazz idiom that allows her to create a sense of improvisation."*

A keen interest in the saxophone in chamber music contexts prompted Lara to found Triquetra, a saxophone, cello and piano trio with Kathryn Price and Rachel Ramos; and in summer 2010, she co-founded the saxophone quartet Resonance.

Lara teaches saxophone at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, where she also coaches chamber music and directs the saxophone ensemble. She also teaches saxophone at the RWCMD Department of Junior Music and Access Studies and is in demand as an adjudicator for national youth music competitions and college auditions and as a coach for national youth music organisations.

Born in Pembrokeshire, west Wales, Lara studied at the Royal Northern College of Music where she gained a degree and professional performance diploma. Lara then won a scholarship to the Manhattan School of Music where she studied with to the esteemed performer, musicologist and saxophone historian Dr. Paul Cohen. Following a period of study in the USA Lara went on to complete her Masters degree in musicology at the University of Manchester, where her specialist research area was 'The Saxophone in Britain, c. 1860 – 1960'.

Lara James endorses Gonzalez Reeds and is a Gonzalez performing artist, and gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Arts Council of Wales in assisting with the recording of this CD.

On this recording, Lara performed on saxophones made by Selmer and Yanagisawa. Mouthpieces by Selmer and Caravan. **www.larasax.com**

PAVÃO STRING QUARTET

Kerenza Peacock
Jenny Sacha
Natália Gomes
Bryony James

© John Oakley

Not many classical string quartets can claim to have played live on the Radio 1 Chart Show the day after performing Ravel in the Wigmore Hall. This versatile ensemble is not only highly-regarded in classical concert venues, but has enjoyed collaborations with renowned rock, pop and jazz artists, as well as a contemporary dance company.

The Pavão formed 13 years ago at the Royal Academy of Music, where they won many prizes individually and as an ensemble, culminating in their appointment as Chamber Music Fellows for two years. Classical recitals delightfully increased their knowledge of the highways and byways of the British Isles, besides taking them to the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Symphony Hall in Birmingham, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, Gateshead's Sage and Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall. In addition, they have performed internationally in Europe, the USA, the Middle East and in China.

A CD of encore repertoire, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, launched their increasingly successful recording career, broadcast on Classic FM, Radio 3 and Radio 2, as well as on Michael Parkinson's show and 'Friday Night is Music Night'. Their disc of quartets by Bax and Elgar was welcomed as *"a real winner"* from *"an ensemble of real depth and musical distinction"* (Classic FM Magazine), with *"plenty of energy, precision and clarity"* (BBC Music Magazine) and *"an intoxicating warmth and emotional spontaneity"* (The Strad Magazine). Music Web International christened it disc of the month, *"an unqualified success – a real must-have!"* Their

Christmas Collection for Breakthrough Breast Cancer also became the soundtrack of Christmas for many people, on disc and radio. Although the great canon of music for string quartet is at the heart of their being, they enjoy exploring other worlds – through working with the award-winning Henri Oguike Dance Company, collaborating with jazz saxophonist Iain Ballamy, and performing with singers as diverse as Sir Willard White, Andrew Kennedy, Hayley Westenra and Victoria Hart, as well as recording for film, television and theatre.

Kerenza and Natalia are very grateful to Jonathan Sparey for the loan of their instruments. Kerenza is playing on a Rugeri violin (1680), Jenny on a Balistrieri (1720), and Natalia on a Vuillaume viola. Bryony thanks the Royal Academy of Music for the loan of a Joseph Hill cello.
www.pavaoquartet.com

WILL TODD TRIO

The Will Todd Trio was formed in 1999 and has performed around the UK and abroad, as well as featuring on several recordings and undertaking a variety of workshop and eduction projects.

WILL TODD

Will Todd has been playing the piano since he was three and composing since he was seven years old. His output includes works for choir, stage works and orchestral works, and his music has been performed throughout the UK, the USA and Europe.

Will's flagship work is the 2003 jazz mass setting *Mass in Blue*, which has been performed almost 100 times around the world since its

© Gareth Huw Davies

premiere, on most occasions with the Will Todd Trio. The larger Will Todd … Ensemble has also recorded *Mass in Blue* with the Vasari Singers for Signum Records.

Other notable works include the opera *The Blackened Man* which won second prize in the International Verdi Opera Competition 2002 and was subsequently staged at the Buxton Festival; the oratorio *Saint Cuthbert* which has been performed many times and recorded by the Hallé Orchestra; music theatre work *The Screams of Kitty Genovese*, produced most recently by Tête á Tête Opera in London and Edinburgh; a cantata about the Jarrow March – *The Burning Road*.

Recent premieres have included Will's *Requiem* for choir, soprano and electric guitar, commissioned and premiered by the Fairhaven Singers in 2009; *Te Deum* for the Vivace Chorus under Jeremy Backhouse; *Jazz Concerto for Clarinet* – a new clarinet concerto for Emma Johnson. Future plans include a setting of *Keats' Ode to a Nightingale* for Hertfordshire Chorus; and the New York premiere of *Mass in Blue* at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

On this recording, Will performed using Fieldgate Studios' Fazioli F228 7'6" Concert Grand Pianoforte.

GARETH HUW DAVIES

Gareth Huw Davies is a London based double and electric bass player. He also works professionally as a recording engineer, producer, and music theatre keyboard programmer.

He has performed all over the world with artists such as Sir Willard White, Graham Coxon, the Will Todd Trio/Ensemble, The Ian Macmillan Orchestra, Charlie Dore, Mark Eitzel, The Orchestra

© Andy Holdsworth

of the Royal Opera House, Molly Nyman, and The Syd Lawrence Orchestra, and is frequently in the West End working on musicals including the *Lion King, Legally Blonde* and *Billy Elliot*. Recent session work includes four series of *Noson Lawen* (S4C) and numerous BBC radio broadcasts, the soundtracks of *Shifty, Stephen Fry in America,* and *Michael Palin (New Europe)*.

His production work is focussed on an ongoing series of discs with Will Todd, but also features numerous other musicians and projects including four years running a commercial studio and designing studio systems for schools and colleagues. Programming work includes *Evita, Cabaret, Scrooge* and other national tours for Bill Kenwright Limited, *South Pacific* and Associate Programmer on the *Legally Blonde* UK Tour for ATG plus various other shows.

He does corporate, INSET and workshop education, including for the Wigmore Hall, and is Assistant Director of the Canford (now Sherborne) Summer School of Music.

Gareth performed on the recording using the following equipment: Musicman Stingray 5, Yamaha JM2 (6 string), Fender Marcus Miller Signature 5 String electric basses. 5 string double – German mid-19th century: EBS microbass II preamp. **www.garethhuwdavies.co.uk**

JIM FLEEMAN

Jim studied Jazz at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has since led a varied and extensive career, working with artists such as Martha Reeves & The Vandellas, Mark Eitzel, Kenny Wheeler, Omar, Damon Albarn, Sir Willard White, Mike Figgis and the Hallé Orchestra. He

© Jo Luke

has played for series on BBC 1 & 2 and Sky Television in addition to numerous TV and radio broadcasts and has worked on productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre.

Jim has been working with Will Todd since 1999. He has played on the recordings of Will's *Mass In Blue, Te Deum* and *Jazz Evensong* and performed those works extensively around the UK in venues such as the Barbican, Durham Cathedral, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Romsey Abbey, Sheffield Cathedral, Guildford Cathedral, Snape Maltings and on BBC Radio. Jim has also played on UK productions of Will's opera *The Screams of Kitty Genovese*. As the Will todd Trio they have performed around the world.

Jim performed on this CD using a Gretsch USA Custom Jazz kit. Cymbals by Zildjian.

Lara James gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Arts Council of Wales for making the recording of this CD possible.

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Thanks to:
Ian Lawson, Will Todd, Gareth Huw Davies, Andrew Lawson, Jim Fleeman, Kerenza Peacock, Bryony James, Jenny Sacha, Natalia Gomes, Fiona Lawson.

Recorded at Fieldgate Studios, Penarth, July 2011
Producers - Ian Lawson and Lara James
(except track 1 - Ian Lawson, Will Todd and Lara James)
Recording Engineer - Andrew Lawson
Mixed - Ian Lawson
Mastered - Raphaël Mouterde, Floating Earth

Cover Image - © Alex Mills **www.alxmls.co.uk**
Design and Artwork - Woven Design **www.wovendesign.co.uk**
www.signumrecords.com

℗ 2012 The copyright in this recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd.
© 2012 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd.

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK. +44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: info@signumrecords.com