

ZZCD 9824

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daniel smith ludwig afonso john sullivan martin bejerano

the swingin' bassoon

daniel smith



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martin bejerano
john sullivan
ludwig afonso



DIGITAL



Guild GmbH
Switzerland

THE BASSOON AND JAZZ

Jazz on the bassoon? How does one attempt to play jazz, to improvise, on the bassoon? While this CD is not the first recording to showcase the bassoon in a jazz setting, it nevertheless remains a most daunting challenge for anyone to do in a convincing manner. The bassoon is a very difficult instrument, perhaps the hardest of all in the woodwind family. Even if one masters the skills involved in playing the bassoon on a professional level, very few of these skills will be of much help when first learning how to improvise. A jazz phrase, whether written out or improvised is much more difficult to execute on a bassoon than for instance on a saxophone. And then there is the issue of a style, just who do you copy? Saxophone players can study and learn from such greats as Charlie Parker, Stan Getz and John Coltrane and trumpet players from masters such as Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Louis Armstrong. But who does an aspiring jazz bassoonist copy or learn from? And then where and how would you learn to do this..... and then get the chance to try out your attempts at perfecting such a very unusual and difficult skill?

I believe that the main reason for jazz on the bassoon being such a rarity lies in the very nature of the instrument. Not only is it difficult to master, as most woodwind players would readily acknowledge, but in addition one would have to shed all preconceived notions as to how to successfully play jazz on the instrument. Assuming someone is already an accomplished player, in essence they would have to wear two 'hats', that is to keep a legitimate or conservatory trained concept in place when performing in an orchestra or ensemble, and then switching over to another way of thinking and playing when entering the world of jazz.

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A ZAH ZAH DIGITAL RECORDING

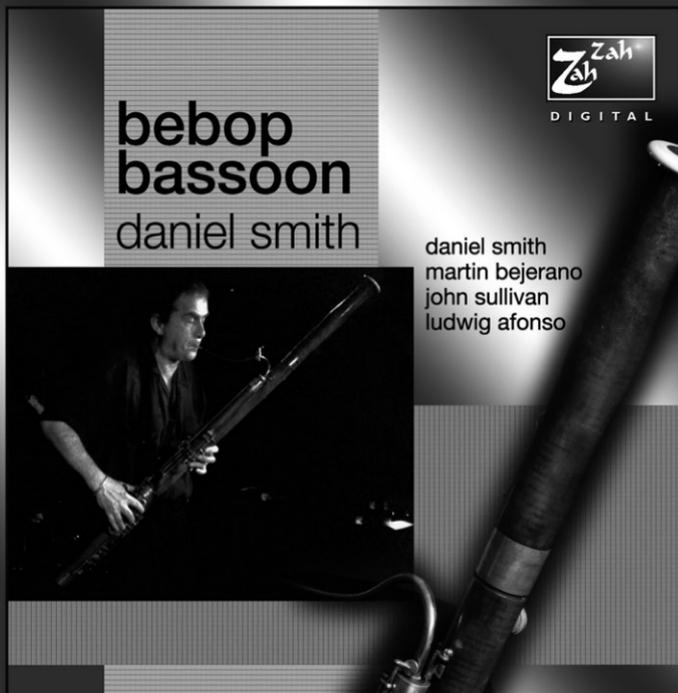
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- Creative consultant, Assistant Engineer: Andy Leonard
- Recording Engineer: Michael Brorby
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Toby 'Big Dog', creative consultant Andy Leonard and producer Robert Smith in the studio in Tennessee.....

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ZZCD 9820

THE MUSIC

1. I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU (George Bassman 1914-1997)

'The Swingin' Bassoon' gets off to a 'swingin' start with the memorable theme song of legendary trombonist and band leader Tommy Dorsey. We hear first the final eight measures played rubato by the bassoon with piano accompaniment, followed by a brief pause. The bassoon then states the opening measure of his famous theme, joined by the ensemble in the following measure, a pattern repeated throughout whenever the theme appears. A two measure break at the end of the melody leads into solo choruses by bassoon, bass and piano. The final playing of the melody leads to a ritard in the last six measures. Drums and bass then drop out, leaving the bassoon and piano to play the final measures rubato, ending the piece the same way it began.

2. HAY BURNER (Sammy Nestico b. 1924)

Written for the Count Basie band, this swinging medium tempo tune creates a big band feel in a quartet setting while also giving the bassoon the opportunity to utilize glissandos and bending notes to wonderful effect. After a one bar break at the end of the melody, one solo chorus each is played by the bassoon and piano. The melody is then restated and the piece ends with a traditional 'plink, plunk' Basie ending, just as the Count himself would have done.!

3. WELL YOU NEEDN'T (Thelonious Monk 1917-1982)

This delightful and whimsical tune by Thelonious Monk is guaranteed to bring a smile to any listener. The first section of the tune is repeated twice by the bassoon and piano along with the ensemble. The middle section features a pattern built on a series of eight chromatic descending dominant 7th chords, a technical workout for the bassoon as demanding as a virtuoso passage in a Vivaldi bassoon concerto. The first section is then stated one more time and then followed with two choruses each by the bassoon and piano followed by one on bass. Alternating F and Gb major chords for the main sections of the piece gives everyone the opportunity to create solos in the unusual style of this great jazz composer. A slightly faster tempo for the final rendition of the

melody leads to the final two measures being repeated three times and then once more an octave higher for an exciting ending.

4. MOOD INDIGO (Duke Ellington 1899-1974)

One of the more evocative and well known of the prodigious works of Duke Ellington, this piece gives the bassoon the opportunity to display its mournful qualities throughout the haunting melody. The bassoon then plays one full solo chorus and continues improvising into the first half of the piece before returning to the melodic material of the second section. The ending has the last two measures slowing down leading to the final chord. A most beautiful composition by the one of the great American composers of the 20th Century.

5. SUMMER SAMBA (Marcos Valle b. 1943)

The wonderful rhythms of Marcos Valle's 'Summer Samba' etc. (also known as 'How Nice') highlight the bassoon in the idiom of latin music. With a fast paced and rhythmical melody, the music flows onto two solo choruses featuring the bassoon, then one on bass, and then two more on piano before returning to the final melody. The piece ends with the final four measures repeated several times before fading away.

6. SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE (Charlie Parker 1920-1955)

The introduction used by Charlie Parker on his legendary recording gets this piece off to a rousing start. Taken at a brisk tempo, this bebop classic features two choruses each on bassoon and piano before an exchange of 'fours' taking place between the bassoon, drums and piano. The melody is then played a final time and ends with a solid ending of the melody by the ensemble.

7. OUT OF NOWHERE (Edward Heyman 1907-1981) (Johnny Green 1908-1989)

Another great standard well suited for the bassoon in the jazz idiom. An eight measure introduction utilizing the last four measures of the piece is played on piano followed by the melody on bassoon with ensemble. After a short break, there are two solo choruses on bassoon-the first backed by

MARTIN BEJERANO piano

Currently member of the Roy Haynes band. Performed with: Russell Malone, James Moody, Ira Sullivan, Marcus Printup and many others. Major jazz festivals including those of Playboy, Montreal, Aspen, Ravinia, Sedona, Big Sur, Lincoln Center, Bahia, Charlie Parker. Jazz clubs appearances include: Birdland, The Blue Note, Jazz Gallery, Sunset Club (Paris), Jazz Showcase, Dakota. Recordings on various labels.

JOHN SULLIVAN bass

Currently member of the Roy Haynes band. Performed with Joe Lovano, Roy Hargrove, Mike Manieri, Louis Hayes, David Sanchez, Bill Stewart. Jazz club venues and festivals include: The Jazz Gallery, Village Vanguard, The Blue Note, The Knitting Factory, Smalls, Lincoln Center. Recordings on various labels.

LUDWIG AFONSO drums

One of New York's premier jazz drummers, currently with Spiro Gyra. Featured with Bob Berg, Ira Sullivan, Nestor Torres, Sammy Figueroa, Eddie Rivera, Hector Martianon, Donny McCaslin. Ensembles include CJB Concert Jazz Band and the Bop Brothers. Recordings on various labels.

and popular standards. In Britain, the BBC's Radio 3 used one of his recordings as their signature tune for several months to begin their broadcast day. Recent recordings made with his acclaimed jazz quartet 'Bassoon and Beyond' - 'Bebop Bassoon' and 'The Swinging Bassoon' - have brought the bassoon into the world of jazz. Other recordings of his are available on Vox, MHS, Crystal, KemDisc, Pearl, Spectrum, Cambria, Forum, and Regis.

In 2005, legendary composer/arranger Robert Farnon dedicated his final composition to Daniel Smith. A three movement bassoon concerto entitled 'Romancing the Phoenix', the piece is written in a jazz style for solo bassoon, rhythm section and symphony orchestra. The title page of the score, published by Warner Chappell, includes Robert Farnon's dedication to 'The American virtuoso Daniel Smith'. Premieres are scheduled to take place world-wide 2007 and beyond.

His performances have included many firsts: the U.S. West Coast premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Gunther Schuller's 'Concerto for Contrabassoon & Orchestra'; the world premiere of Steve Gray's 'Jazz Suite For Bassoon' with the Welsh Chamber Orchestra; solo concerts at New York's Lincoln Center and the Tivoli Concert Hall in Copenhagen and engagements at London's 'Pizza On the Park' with his jazz quartet. Other appearances include those at Carnegie Recital Hall and, in London, St. John's (Smith Square), the Wigmore Hall and the BBC Concert Hall. His many recordings are heard throughout the world on classical and jazz radio, National Public Radio in the USA, major airlines for in-flight listening and featured with leading book and record clubs. In 2003, Daniel Smith was designated as 'Ambassador for the Bassoon' by Youth Music in the UK.

www.danielsmithbassoon.com

bass and then a second with the full quartet. The piano follows with two solo choruses and then back to the melody. The piece ends with the melodic fragment heard in the piano introduction played three times by the quartet.

8. ST.THOMAS (Sonny Rollins b. 1930)

A perennial favourite, St. Thomas is one of the most frequently played pieces in the jazz repertoire. This version begins with two introductory measures in a calypso style by drummer Ludwig Afonso. Instead of leading into the melody however, the bassoon then the bassoon starts off by improvising one chorus above the calypso rhythm before the tune is repeated twice by the ensemble and then onto bassoon and piano solos. Instead of stating the melody as expected, the bassoon then improvises one chorus above the calypso rhythm before the theme is played by the quartet. Following are solos on bassoon and piano leading to Ludwig Afonso displaying his percussion skills with a dazzling drum solo. The theme is then played by the quartet and the piece ends with the last four measures repeated three times.

9. I REMEMBER YOU (Johnny Mercer 1909-1976) (Victor Schertzinger 1890-1941)

One of the many classic melodies from the pen of Johnny Mercer (with the collaboration of Victor Schertzinger) in an up tempo version of this great standard. An eight bar introduction on piano is followed by the melody on bassoon with full ensemble. The first solo chorus showcases a hard-driving bass solo by John Sullivan. Further solos are then heard on bassoon and piano. The melody is played once again and the arrangement ends with a short melodic segment transposed upwards before the final chord.

10. HOME AT LAST (Hank Mobley 1930-1986)

Hank Mobley was one of the most under-rated saxophone soloists and composers in jazz. His medium tempo bossa nova heard here weaves a magic spell with its beautiful and haunting melody. After a four measure drum introduction. Also the bassoon sings out the melody, showing once again its ability to produce lyrical effects to great effect. The piece was written with an added four

measures over a Bb minor chord at the end, after which the bassoon soars upwards to begin the first of three solo choruses featuring members of the quartet. John Sullivan then demonstrates his mastery with a bowed improvisation on bass followed by Martin Bejerano on piano. The melody is played again leading to the ending of the composition, fading away over the repeated final four measures.

11. A NIGHT IN TUNISIA (Dizzy Gillespie 1917-1973)

One of the all-time bebop classics. It begins with the traditional piano vamp joined by the bass and then into the melody. The break at the end of the 'Interlude' section is deftly handled by pianist Martin Bejerano, followed by two exciting and creative piano solo choruses. The bassoon then takes over for its own two solo choruses before we return to the melody. At the end of the 'Interlude' section, where there is normally a four measure break, the piece ends abruptly with the full ensemble. An exciting and 'swingin' piece to end the album.

THE PLAYERS

DANIEL SMITH bassoon



A musical pioneer of the bassoon with his many award-winning recordings and live performances throughout the world. The world's most recorded bassoon soloist with a repertoire ranging from baroque concerti to contemporary music, including jazz, ragtime and crossover. He is the only bassoonist performing and recording in both the classical and jazz fields. His unique career has been profiled in Gramophone, the New York Times, Fanfare, Classical Music, Musical Heritage Review, Music And Musicians, American Record Guide, Classic CD and leading British newspapers including The Times. His solo performances include classical recitals, jazz concerts with his quartet, concertos with orchestra and highly popular programmes divided between classical and jazz, with music that ranges from Vivaldi, Elgar, Mozart and Verdi to Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Described as a 'phenomenon', he has been called the 'Gerry Mulligan of the Bassoon' in the world of jazz and the 'Galway' and 'Rampal of the Bassoon' in the world of classical music, bringing his unique sound and style to concert series, festivals and jazz clubs.

His historic and unprecedented recording for ASV of the entire 37 Vivaldi bassoon concertos was chosen as 'Best Concerto Recording Of The Year' by the Music Industry Association and awarded the Penguin Guide's coveted *** rosette rating as well as inclusion in Fanfare's annual 'Want List'. These concertos, recorded with the English Chamber Orchestra and I Solisti di Zagreb, firmly established Daniel Smith as a leading soloist on his instrument. His recordings with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Caravaggio Ensemble for the ASV White Line label produced innovative crossover music, with unique renditions of ragtime pieces, opera excerpts,