

PRISM Quartet | biography

The PRISM Quartet has been acclaimed internationally for their accomplished and widely varied performances encompassing recitals, orchestral engagements, and intriguing collaborations with both jazz and concert artists. The ensemble has twice been awarded the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, and has been chosen by Musical America as "Outstanding Young Artists." Most recently, PRISM commissioned William Bolcom to write a concerto grosso which they have performed with 14 orchestras including the Cleveland, Detroit, and Dallas Symphony Orchestras. Recipients of commissioning grants from Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, and The Pew Charitable Trusts and multiple chamber music residency grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and CMA, PRISM presents the saxophone as a serious concert instrument while embracing its rich history in jazz and popular music.

PRISM's most recent seasons have been highlighted by engagements which reflect the Quartet's versatility, including appearances in Alice Tully Hall with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, on "Entertainment Tonight," and with the famed Chilean rock group Inti-Illimani in Santiago. PRISM has recently toured Latin America under the auspices of the U.S. State Department with programs of contemporary American music. The tour included extensive radio and television appearances. Since 1994, PRISM has maintained a comprehensive residency program in Philadelphia, presenting over 150 outreach performances at Settlement Music School, The Free Library of Philadelphia, and The Kardon Institute. In 1997, PRISM initiated its own concert series in both New York City and Philadelphia, presenting the newest compositions created for their ensemble by both classical and jazz composers from around the world.

Founded in 1984, PRISM has established itself as one of the nation's most active proponents of new music, developing both literature and a presence for its medium. The first saxophone quartet ever presented by Lincoln Center, PRISM gave the New York premiere of "Fantasy Quartet" by Michael Rusczyński, winner of the Charles Ives Award and ASCAP's Rudolf Nissim Prize. Additional engagements have included performances at the Chautauqua Institution, the Eastman School of Music, the University of Utah, a tour of Hawaii, a ten day residency at the Pabst Theater in Milwaukee, a performance with the Nassau Symphony premiering "Serenata Gioconda" by Chicago composer Larry Rapchak and with the Macon Symphony in Samuel Adler's "Concerto for Saxophone Quartet." PRISM has also appeared as guest artists with the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra and the New York Consort of Viols, presenting works by Morton Gould and David Loeb, respectively.

Highlights of other past seasons include performances at New York's Merkin Hall and Carnegie Weill Recital Hall, the Orange County Philharmonic Society, Los Angeles' Chamber Music in Historic Sites, the University of Illinois' Krannert Center, Ann Arbor's University Musical Society, Purdue University Convocations, Dartmouth College, Ithaca College, Michigan State University, Brigham Young University, the University of Vermont, Georgia Southern University and a two week residency with the acclaimed Visiting Artists Series in Davenport, Iowa. PRISM has made orchestral appearances with the Anchorage, Missouri, and Regina Symphonies and has toured extensively with the Chester String Quartet performing Michael Sahl's "Storms" for saxophones and strings.

PRISM has presented recitals and master classes at notable institutions, including the Curtis Institute of Music, the Oberlin Conservatory, Purdue University, the Universities of Michigan, Illinois, and Southern California, and the Interlochen Arts Academy. PRISM has been heard on numerous radio broadcasts, including New York City's WQXR, National Public Radio's "Performance Today," Detroit's WQRS, Voice of America, and the Dame Myra Hess Series broadcast nationally by WFMT in Chicago.

PRISM draws its repertoire from traditional and contemporary classical compositions and jazz, having commissioned or presented the premieres of over sixty works. Representative composers whose music PRISM features include William Albright, Elliott Carter, Chick Corea, Philip Glass, Alexander Glazunov, Sofia Gubaidulina, Jennifer Higdon, Steve Reich, Thelonious Monk, Michael Torke, John Cage, and Charles Wuorinen. PRISM also actively presents works by emerging American composers, including Chia-Yu Hsu, Stella Sung, and Zack Browning. The Quartet has recently established two annual commissioning awards: one for composition students matriculating in Greater Philadelphia, the other at the Walden School for Young Composers in Dublin, New Hampshire.

The PRISM Quartet also maintains an active recording schedule. In early 2000, the Quartet released *Real Standard Time*, a compact disc of modern jazz by Matt Levy and Tim Ries (Innova Recordings), and in 2003 will release a CD of concert music by William Albright (CRI). PRISM made its recording debut on the Koch International Classics label, receiving rave reviews from *Classical Magazine* and *United Press International*. The Quartet may also be heard on the soundtrack of the film *Two Plus One*, the feature film debut of writer/director and Emmy nominee Eugene Martin, scored by PRISM member Matthew Levy. The film was premiered at the Festival of World Cinema, has since received multiple broadcasts on Showtime's Sundance Channel.

Members of PRISM are Matthew Levy, Timothy McAllister, Taimur Sullivan, and Michael Whitcombe. The PRISM Quartet serves as artists/clinicians for the Selmer Company and performs exclusively on Selmer saxophones.

Please visit the PRISM Quartet's website at www.prismquartet.com.

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