A photograph of a window with ornate curtains and a small table with a fern in the foreground. The window is multi-paned and has a decorative metal handle. The curtains are light-colored with a patterned border and tassels. The table is dark wood with floral inlay and holds a large green fern. The background shows a view of a city skyline through the window.

PRISM Quartet The Curtis Project

**Music for Saxophones
from the Curtis Institute**

PRISM Quartet The Curtis Project

Short Stories (1996) by Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

- 1 **Summer's Eve** 4:50
- 2 **Chase** 3:25
- 3 **Coyote Nights** 5:03
- 4 **Splashing the Canvas** 2:51
- 5 **Lullaby** 4:07
- 6 **Stomp & Dance** 3:58

Josquin Microludes (2012) by David Ludwig (b. 1974)

- 7 **Milles regretz de vous abandonner...** 1:59
- 8 **et d'eslonger vostre fache amoureuse...** 2:18
- 9 **jay si grand dueil et paine doloureuse...** 1:37
- 10 **quon me verra brief mes jours definer...** 1:45
- 11 **...brief mes jours definer...** 3:11

12 **The Dniester Flow** 4:52

Composed in 2012 by Kat Souponetsky (b. 1988)

13 **Blossoming** 7:05

Composed in 2012 by Daniel Temkin (b. 1986)

14 **Spring/Neap** 6:47

Composed in 2012 by Gabriella Smith (b. 1991)

15 **Toccata** 3:53

Composed in 2012 by Thomas Oltarzewski (b. 1988)

Four Miniatures

Composed in 2012 by Tim Woos (b. 1992)

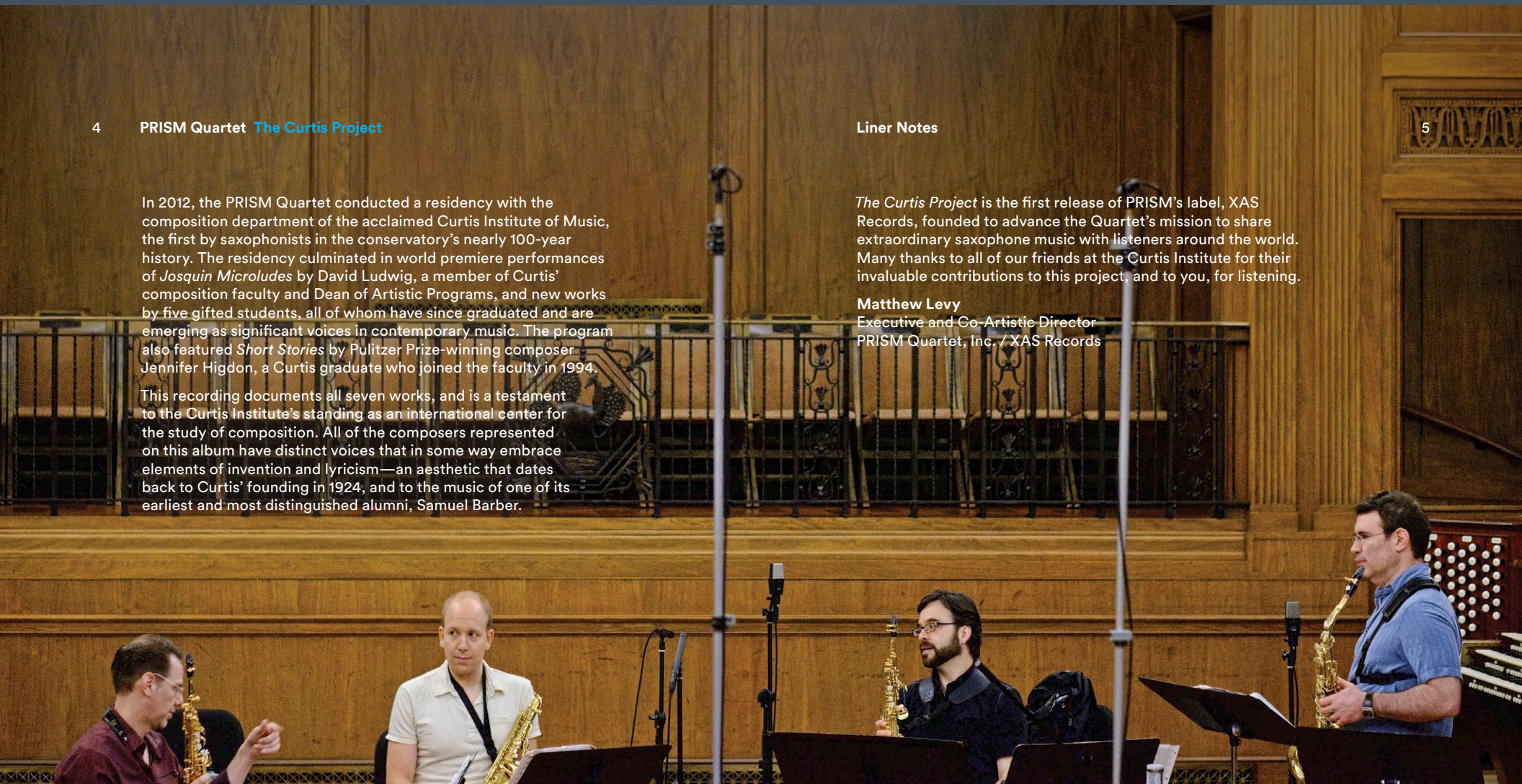
- 16 **I.** 1:22
- 17 **II.** 1:41
- 18 **III.** 1:01
- 19 **IV.** 0:42

In 2012, the PRISM Quartet conducted a residency with the composition department of the acclaimed Curtis Institute of Music, the first by saxophonists in the conservatory's nearly 100-year history. The residency culminated in world premiere performances of *Josquin Microludes* by David Ludwig, a member of Curtis' composition faculty and Dean of Artistic Programs, and new works by five gifted students, all of whom have since graduated and are emerging as significant voices in contemporary music. The program also featured *Short Stories* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon, a Curtis graduate who joined the faculty in 1994.

This recording documents all seven works, and is a testament to the Curtis Institute's standing as an international center for the study of composition. All of the composers represented on this album have distinct voices that in some way embrace elements of invention and lyricism—an aesthetic that dates back to Curtis' founding in 1924, and to the music of one of its earliest and most distinguished alumni, Samuel Barber.

The Curtis Project is the first release of PRISM's label, XAS Records, founded to advance the Quartet's mission to share extraordinary saxophone music with listeners around the world. Many thanks to all of our friends at the Curtis Institute for their invaluable contributions to this project, and to you, for listening.

Matthew Levy
Executive and Co-Artistic Director
PRISM Quartet, Inc. / XAS Records



Jennifer Higdon's *Short Stories* is a collection of six movements, flexible in both the order and number in which they can be performed. When she was composer-in-residence with the PRISM Quartet in the mid-1990s, Higdon wrote, "I had the chance to see how the demands for repertoire change greatly from concert to concert, from school programs with young students to college-age classical musicians to formal recitals. I wanted a work with as much diversity in the characters of the movements as possible, and I wanted the groups to have freedom in their choices of movements. As a result, there are six movements, and each one tells a different story," from a children's song ("Lullaby") to a Southern hoedown ("Stomp & Dance"). "Coyote Nights" captures the peaceful cry of wild animals Higdon heard while camping at Arches National Park, in Utah, while "Chase" portrays the "rough and tumble of pursuers and prey." "Splashing the Canvas" is a nod to Jackson Pollack, whose approach to painting included a technique of throwing paint at the canvas. Higdon followed suit, with musical materials building into thick, overlapping, and complex layers. [jenniferhigdon.com](#)

David Ludwig writes, "I am so often inspired by great music of the past, and much of my composing these days involves taking the materials from an older piece and reworking it into my own new musical sculpture. **Josquin *Microludes*** is a set of miniatures that incorporate Josquin des Prez's 'Mille Regretz' into its compositional language. Each miniature features Josquin's ancient chanson framed by some variation or transformation of it. The piece is played continuously, as if channel-surfing on a magic TV between Josquin

and my own more recent sounds. The medium of the saxophone quartet is fitting for a piece based on a choral work as a choir of voices itself, sustained by breath and line." [davidludwigmusic.com](#)

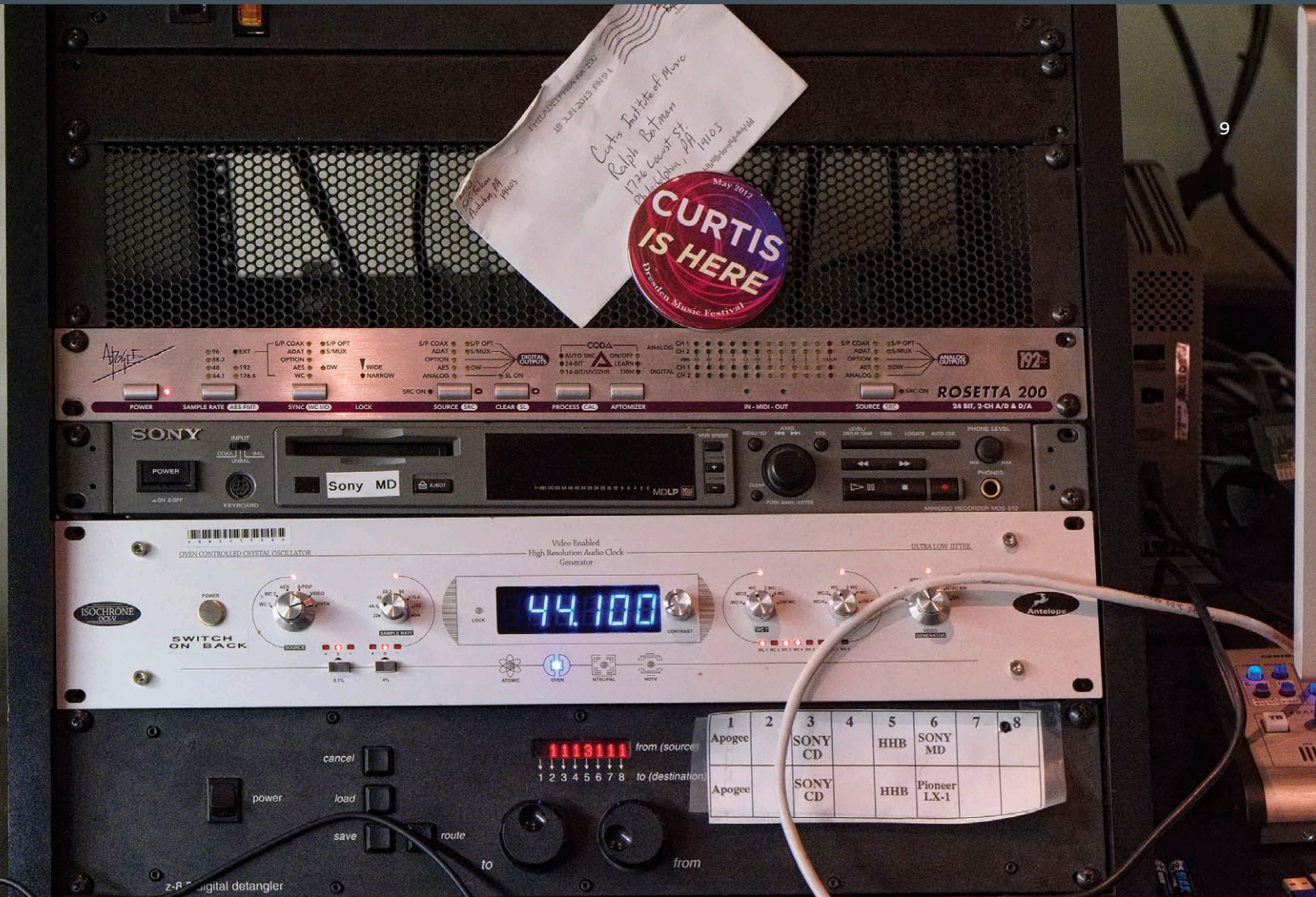
Kat Souponetsky named *The Dniester Flow* after the river she remembers from her childhood in Moldova. Souponetsky writes, "The piece is inspired by the Dniester River's fast-flowing energy and by a distant feeling of nostalgia." [katerinakramarchuk.com](#)

In describing *Blossoming*, **Daniel Temkin** wrote, "I was interested in exploring the saxophone's softer side. I imagined a piece that would start from pure sounds of blowing air, and then gradually add pitch and rhythm, as if in a journey from something amorphous towards something more concrete and defined. As the piece developed, the title *Blossoming* seemed to reflect not only the swells of sounds and colors coming to life during the piece, but also the larger musical form – an evolution of connected ideas, moving from soft, to loud, back to soft." [danieltemkincomposer.com](#)

Gabriella Smith's *Spring/Neap* is inspired by water, specifically the tidal cycle after which the work is named. Smith explains, "Spring tides occur when the gravitational effects of the sun and moon combine, resulting in extremities of tidal ranges: high high tides and low low tides. A week later, when the sun and moon are at right angles to each other, neap tides occur, resulting in a less dramatic tidal range. The structure and gestures of this piece evoke these tidal movements." [gabriellasmith.com](#)

Thomas Oltarzewski composed *Toccata* as a short overture inspired by the style of many twentieth-century toccatas for wind ensemble. According to Oltarzewski, "It begins with a high-energy introduction that explores different accent patterns in compound and mixed meters. A more relaxed section featuring sustained music follows, before a return to the opening ideas." thomasoltarzewski.com

Tim Woos's *Four Miniatures* are "constantly rising and falling, augmenting and diminishing." Woos continues, "The piece starts very agitated but soon moves to the simple glass-like sounds of the second miniature. The third movement is full of large glissandos that cover the entire instruments' ranges. This leads without pause into the fourth movement, an increasingly angry polka."



10 **PRISM Quartet**

Intriguing programs of great beauty and breadth have distinguished the PRISM Quartet as one of America's foremost chamber ensembles. Two-time winners of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, PRISM has been presented by Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and as soloists with the Detroit Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra. Champions of new music, PRISM has commissioned over 200 works, many by Pulitzer Prize-winning composers, including Julia Wolfe, William Bolcom, Jennifer Higdon, Zhou Long, and Bernard Rands. PRISM has collaborated with an eclectic range of artists, including BMOP, Ethel, Talujon, So Percussion, Partch, Music From China, Inti-Illimani, The Crossing, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Miro Dance Theatre, and top jazz artists, including Jason Moran, Miguel Zenon, Steve Lehman, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Tim Ries, Greg Osby, Dave Liebman, Ben Monder, Jay Anderson, Bill Stewart, Gerald Cleaver, and John Riley. PRISM's discography includes fifteen recordings for the Albany, ECM, Innova, Koch, Naxos, New Dynamic, and New Focus labels. PRISM may also be heard on the soundtrack of the film *Two Plus One* and has been featured in the theme music to the weekly news magazine *NOW* on PBS.

The PRISM Quartet performs exclusively on Selmer saxophones.



Keep in Touch. Visit PRISM online at prismquartet.com, and on Facebook, Twitter, Soundcloud, and YouTube.



Clockwise, from top right: Taimur Sullivan, Zachary Shemon, Timothy McAllister, Matthew Levy



Credits

Executive Producer: Matthew Levy

Producer: PRISM Quartet

Co-Producers (for their own compositions): Kat Souponetsky,
Daniel Temkin, Gabriella Smith, Thomas Oltarzewski, Tim Woos

Session Engineer: Drew Schlegel

Editing, Mixing, and Mastering: Matthew Levy

Photography, Design, and Layout: fluxism.com

Recorded at the Curtis Institute of Music, Field Concert Hall

Tracks 1–11 recorded July 5–7, 2014

Tracks 12–19 Recorded May 7–8, 2012

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Alice M. Ditson **The Aaron Copland Fund for Music**