

North Carolina State University Arts Studies Program  
NC State Music Department, the Interdisciplinary Studies unit - College of Humanities and Social  
Sciences, and Arts NC State

Present the

## Arts NOW Series



# Red Clay Saxophone Quartet

Susan Fancher, Robert Faub, Steve Stusek, Mark Engebretson

Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 7:00PM Kennedy-McIlwee Studio Theatre North Carolina State University

### Hedera (2021)

saxophone quartet

James Paul Sain (1959)

- I. Needlepoint Ivy
- II. English Ivy
- III. Poison Ivy

### Kolyosa (1970)

"tape"

Pril Smiley (1943)

### Mouthpiece (2021)

poetry by Emilia Phillips

Mark Engebretson (1964)

Susan Fancher, soprano sax; Mark Engebretson, baritone sax; Rodney Waschka II, speaker, and  
electronic playback

### Not Alone (2014)

saxophone quartet

Chen Yi (1953)

### From A Harmonic Algorithm (1980)

"tape"

Laurie Spiegel (1945)

### Luminous (2016)

Mark Engebretson

Steve Stusek, tenor saxophone and audience cell phones ("When invited to do so, please direct your  
browser to [mixlr.com/digcomp344](http://mixlr.com/digcomp344) and press the red triangle. Turn up the volume on your device. The  
music will start shortly. Enjoy!")

### Bagatelling with Mr. TW (2012 rev. 2013, 2014) (preview performance) Rodney Waschka II (1963)

saxophone quartet

No recording devices of any type permitted. No photographs. If you have a phone with you please turn it off  
until piece the piece *Luminous*. Thank you. Admission is charged for all Arts NOW Series events. Special  
thanks to Rich Holly, Arts NC State Executive Director.



## **Performers:**

The **Red Clay Saxophone Quartet** was formed in 2003 in North Carolina when the fates conspired to bring four internationally recognized saxophonists (Susan Fancher, Robert Faub, Steven Stusek, and Mark Engebretson) together in Greensboro. The RCSQ takes its name from the area's luscious red soil.

**Susan Fancher** is an internationally recognized classical saxophonist known for her expressive tone and poetic musical interpretations. She has inspired and premiered over 100 new compositions and continues to collaborate with composers both young and more established to create new, vibrant repertoire for the saxophone. Audiences and critics praise her ability to fill even the most complex notation with life, a trademark of her work as a champion of new music. Born and raised in Albion, New York, Susan Fancher earned undergraduate degrees in both saxophone performance and mathematics, as well as her Doctor of Music, from Northwestern University, where she was a student of Dr. Frederick Hemke. She was awarded the Médaille d'Or (Gold Medal) from the conservatory in Bordeaux, France, where she studied with Monsieur Jean-Marie Londeix. Susan Fancher teaches saxophone and coaches chamber music at Duke University, and is an artist clinician for the Vandoren/DANSR and Selmer companies.

**Robert Faub** is an accomplished musical artist and life-long educator. As an artist, Robert was a founding member of the Red Clay Saxophone Quartet and recorded and toured with the New Century Saxophone Quartet. A frequent member of the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra and the Winston-Salem Symphony, he is currently the director of the Jazz Ensemble and Instructor of Saxophone and Composition at High Point University. Robert has previously taught at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music, UNC Greensboro, Radford University, UNC Chapel Hill and Guilford College. As former Director of Instrumental Music at Caldwell Academy he built and sustained a grade 4-12 band program and composed over 50 works for band. He holds the DMA and MM in saxophone performance from UNC Greensboro and a BM in Music Education from SUNY Potsdam. Dr. Faub is also the Academy Director at Holly Ridge Golf Links in Archdale, NC. For over 20 years he has brought his expertise as an artist and educator to the world of golf instruction for both youth and adults. Robert lives in Kernersville with his wife Paula and daughter Eleanor.

Artist-professor of music at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, **Steven Stusek** has built an international reputation with regular concerts and master classes throughout France, Holland, Germany, Canada, China, and the US. He regularly performs with the renowned Red Clay Saxophone Quartet, the Eastwind Ensemble (a reed quintet consisting of saxophone, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet and bassoon) and as an orchestral soloist. In addition to being a clinician for Dansr/Vandoren and Yamaha he is Past-President of the North American Saxophone Alliance.

**Mark Engebretson** is Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As a saxophonist, he was a member of the Vienna Saxophone Quartet in the 1990's, and has been a member of the Red Clay Quartet since 2003. He is baritone saxophonist, computer wizard, and keyboardist with the anti-meta band, The Difficulties. At UNCG, he recently spearheaded a push to establish an undergraduate degree in Popular Music and Technology. He studied saxophone at the University of Minnesota with Ruben Haugen, the Conservatoire de Bordeaux with Jean-Marie Londeix, and Northwestern University, with Frederick L. Hemke.

## Program Notes

**Hedera**, hed'er-a, n. genus of Old World woody vines (family Araliaceae) usually having palmate leaves but in adult form often becoming shrubby with unlobed leaves. The genus name *Hedera* is the Classical Latin word for ivy, which is cognate with Ancient Greek χανδάνω (*khandánō*, 'to get, grasp'), both deriving from Proto-Indo-European \*g<sup>h</sup>ed- ('to seize, grasp, take'). *Hedera* may thus be translated as 'the clinging (plant)'. -JPS **James Paul Sain** is Professor of Music at the University of Florida where he teaches electroacoustic and acoustic music composition, theory, and technology. He founded and directed the internationally acclaimed Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival for 17 years. His compositional oeuvre spans all major acoustic ensembles, instrumental and vocal soloists, and embraces electroacoustic music. His works have been featured at major national and international societal events. He has presented his music in concert and given lectures in Asia, Europe, South America and North America. Dr. Sain is President Emeritus of the Society of Composers Inc. He previously served for several terms on American Composers Alliance Board of Governors. His music is available in print from Brazinmusikanta and American Composers Editions and on CD on the Capstone, Centaur, Electronic Music Foundation, Innova, New Ariel, University of Lanús, Mark Masters, Albany and NACUSA labels.

**Kolyosa**, says Smiley, is the Russian word for wheels revolving in space. (Anonymous). **Pril Smiley** (born 1943 Mohonk Lake, New York) began her apprenticeship with Ussachevsky and her long association with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in 1963...From 1966 to 1982 Smiley composed more than forty electronic music works for major theater, film, and dance productions. She was associate director of the Center until 1995. (Anonymous notes, CD *Pioneers of Electronic Music*).

In Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the narrator Offred is disciplined and restrained, both internally as a matter of her own personal practice, and externally, by the forces that be. She is observant, and observed. Cautious, cautioned. Reduced, constrained. The music for **Mouthpiece** is designed to be faithful to these positions and attitudes. Underneath it all is a dark sense of anxiety, fear, tension. The original scoring is for soprano voice, Bb clarinet, bass clarinet, and electronic playback track. The singer, through the poetry of Emilia Phillips, voices the handmaid's thoughts, stringing words together in layers of multiple meanings and threads. The clarinets might represent the ever-present Eye, the human beings, the people, who have created and sustain this post-apocalyptic society. The Eye sees all, and controls everything, even if it doesn't directly participate in an obvious way. The synthesizer sounds might be taken to embody the societal apparatus, the machine, the physical, mental and emotional oppression, that prevails. Emilia Phillips's poem reflects specifically on Chapter 23, in which Offred is invited to the Commander's den for a game of Scrabble, and maybe an illicit, and unwanted, kiss. Outwardly, Offred meets this circumstance with characteristic reserve, while her mind explodes with questioning, fear, and trepidation as she considers how she should respond, what she should say. -ME **Mark Engbretson** is Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the recipient of the 2011 North Carolina Artist Fellowship in Composition, and has received commissions from the Barlow Endowment, Harvard University's Fromm Music Foundation and the Thomas S. Kenan Center for the Arts. He studied at the University of Minnesota (graduating Summa cum Laude), the Conservatoire de Bordeaux (as a Fulbright Scholar), and Northwestern University, where he received the Doctor of Music degree. At Northwestern he studied composition with M. William Karlins, Pauline Oliveros, Marta Ptaszynska, Michael Pisaro, Stephen Syverud and Jay Alan Yim and saxophone with Frederick Hemke. His teachers in France were composer Michel Fuste-Lambezat and saxophonist Jean-Marie Londeix.

**Not Alone** (2014) was composed by Chen Yi as an interdisciplinary work for the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NYC Season, but it also stands alone in a chamber music setting. It is inspired by the ancient Chinese poet Li Bai's poem "Drinking Alone under the Moon with the Shadow." The work spans a stunning range of textures, from introspective solos for each of the four saxophones to majestic hyper-active gestures. In his liner notes for the recording by the Prism Quartet, WNYC's John Schaefer writes, "As with much of her music, Chen employs percussive effects and glissandi; in Chinese music these are not considered 'extended techniques' or special effects, but an important part of the performer's arsenal. Here, they help create the twilight mood of the opening moments. The piece soon becomes more dramatic, suggesting the arrival of the drinker's companions (real or imagined) and his or her increasingly garrulous outbursts. Passages of consonance and discord can easily be heard as companionable singing and bouts of drunken argument. The piece bustles along on a kind of restless energy, until, finally, that restlessness subsides, giving way to a gently humorous ending where a short falling phrase signals the drinker falling asleep." -SF **Chen Yi** is a Chinese-American violinist and composer. She was the first Chinese woman to receive a Master of Arts in music composition from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Chen was a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Music for her composition *Si Ji* (Four Seasons), and has received awards from the Koussevitsky Music Foundation and American Academy of Arts and Letters (Lieberson Award), as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim

Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2019. Chen lived for many years in New York City, and studied composition with Chou Wen-chung and Mario Davidovsky at Columbia University, earning a DMA with distinction. Her husband is the composer Zhou Long. As of 2006, both Chen and Zhou are professors of composition at the University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. Alongside a great number of orchestral works, Chen has also made many contributions to the choral and chamber music repertoire including works written for traditional Chinese instruments.

**A Harmonic Algorithm** is a compositional procedure I first coded on my 48k Apple II computer around 1980. I envisioned a tiny computer sitting all alone, playing its little silicon heart out, making the most beautiful and expressive music it could create unable to know if anyone could ever hear it. (Is this different from other composers?) This is an excerpt from an infinite piece, which goes on composing itself as long as the program is allowed to run... LS **Laurie Spiegel** (born September 20, 1945) is an American composer. She has worked at Bell Laboratories in computer graphics and is known primarily for electronic-music compositions and her algorithmic composition software, *Music Mouse*. She also plays guitar and lute. Spiegel was seen by some as a pioneer of the New York new-music scene. She withdrew from this scene in the early 1980s, believing that its focus had shifted from artistic process to product. While she continues to support herself through software development, Spiegel aims to use technology in music as a means of furthering her art rather than as an end in itself. In her words, "I automate whatever can be automated to be freer to focus on those aspects of music that can't be automated. The challenge is to figure out which is which." Spiegel's realization of Johannes Kepler's "Harmonices Mundi" was chosen for the opening track on the "Sounds of Earth" section of the golden record placed on board the Voyager spacecraft in 1977. Another work, titled "Sediment", was included in the 2012 film, *The Hunger Games*. -- Wikipedia

Inspired by visual artists like Ólafur Elíasson, whose many projects investigating light are ever-beautiful essays in rich, luxurious, pulsating, and richly colorful environments, I have sought in several compositions to capture a soundscape that imagines sound as a kind of light-filled musical object. Some examples are *Acrylic Waves* and *Oceans of Brightly Colored Glass (Glittering Like Diamonds in the Tropical Sun)* and the present work, **Luminous**. This piece, for solo tenor saxophone and electronic sounds that are disseminated through audience members' own smart phones or devices, is perhaps the most successful, at least in the attempt to create a light-filled musical environment. In three sections, the related first and third parts push a gently shimmering progression of chords through what becomes an immersive, multi-channel diffusion of amplification devices. The performer sends fragments of the overlaying melody out through the devices, creating what becomes, in effect, a spatialized digital delay effect, with sounds appearing at different times in changing locations. In the middle section, the saxophonist plays alone, sending all of the instrumental part to the audience's devices. The colorful harmonic palette is enriched by quarter tones and gentle multiphonics, which overlap with each other and interact with the live saxophone. *Luminous* was created for Steve Stusek, with the support of a UNCG Faculty Grant. -ME

**Bagatelling with Mr. TW**, composed in 2012, is dedicated to Tom Waits. A bagatelle is, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "a trifle", "a short literary or musical piece in a light style." Tom Waits, popular music composer, performer, and actor (*Licorice Pizza*, *Ironweed*, *Down by Law*) frequently uses older pop styles, genres, and forms. His early work regularly featured saxes in prominent parts. Influenced by Kerouac, Partch, Beethoven, and others, his lyrics often tell stories. The title plays with these ideas. When making the piece, I came across a funny story about Mr. Waits and began playing with motifs similar to those found in his music. The work also includes some tricky hocketing and a couple of jokes. Tonight's performance is a special preview; the work has not been performed before now. -RWII

**Rodney Waschka II** is probably best known for his algorithmic compositions and his unusual operas such as *Saint Ambrose* and *Sappho's Breath*. His music has been called "astonishing" and "strikingly charismatic" by *Paris Transatlantic Magazine*, "a milestone in the repertoire" by *Computer Music Journal*, "fluent and entertaining" by *Musical Opinion* of London, and "oddly moving" by *Journal Seamus*. Waschka's music is regularly performed and broadcast throughout the world. Upcoming performances in 2022 are scheduled for Electronic Music Midwest (Chicago, April) and the International Computer Music Conference (Limerick, Ireland, July). Two-dozen recordings of his compositions and performances appear on record labels based in the USA, Canada, Portugal, England, Poland, and Australia. Waschka studied at Brooklyn College, The Royal Conservatory of The Netherlands (Sonology Certificate), and earned his undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees at the University of North Texas. His teachers include Larry Austin, Robert Ashley, Paul Berg, Clarence Barlow, Konrad Boehmer, Thomas Clark, Charles Dodge, and George Lewis. Dr. Waschka is Director and Professor of Arts Studies at North Carolina State University.