

THE PRISM QUARTET

Saxophone and Midi Ensemble

Reginald Borik, Soprano Saxophone
Michael Whitcombe, Alto Saxophone

Matthew Levy, Tenor Saxophone
Timothy Miller, Baritone Saxophone

THE CHESTER STRING QUARTET

Fritz Gearhart, Violinist
Kathryn Votapek, Violinist

Ronald Gorevic, Violist
Thomas Rosenberg, Cellist

Wednesday Evening, November 14, 1990, at 8:00
Rackham Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

- Badinerie (from Suite No. 2 in B minor) J. S. Bach
 - Quartet Matthew Levy
 - Adagio
 - Scherzo
 - Lament Levy
 - Aeolian Song Warren Benson
 - Tooka-ood Zash Bradford Ellis
 - Drastic Measures Russell Peck
- The Prism Quartet

INTERMISSION

- String Quartet No. 3 Quincy Porter
- Allegro
- Andante
- Allegro moderato
- String Quartet, Op. 11 Samuel Barber
- Molto allegro e appassionato
- Molto adagio, molto allegro (come prima)
- The Chester Quartet
- Storms Michael Sahl
- The Prism and Chester Quartets



Badinerie

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

The saxophone has been in existence for nearly 150 years, and there have been ensembles of saxophonists for nearly all that time. Yet, the repertoire for saxophone quartet is surprisingly small. Apart from a few pieces written for that combination, such as the very first saxophone quartet by the Belgian composer Jean-Baptiste Singelée (1812-1875) and some French Conservatory classics, saxophone ensemble performers are obliged to enlarge their repertoire in other ways — the most common being the transcription of works written for other instruments.

The Prism Quartet carries in its repertoire several such transcriptions that include arrangements of works by Bach, Debussy, Satie, Poulenc, Ravel, Ibert, and Mussorgsky. The ensemble begins tonight's program with this *Badinerie* from Bach's *Orchestral Suite No. 2* in B minor.

Quartet (1985)

MATTHEW LEVY (b. 1963)

Mostly, The Prism Quartet plays contemporary twentieth-century music, much of it written specially for the ensemble. In this regard, Prism has a built-in advantage, in that two of the players are composers — Matthew Levy and Reginald Borik.

Quartet, by Prism member Matthew Levy, is distinguished by the integration of traditional compositional techniques and a non-traditional, intuitive treatment of pitch.

The first movement, a somber *Adagio*, involves a single through-composed, developmental arch. The instruments enter in a staggered fashion with similar thematic material. The gradual thickening of texture culminates in a climatic tenor saxophone solo. The movement closes with reference to the opening phrase in the alto saxophone.

In contrast, the *Scherzo*, essentially in a fast 6/8, is very rhythmic and dancelike. Compositionally, it explores several motives in a succession of contrasting textural forma-

tions. As the various motives change shape, the mood of the movement shifts from playful to jazzy to ethereal and expressive. The *Scherzo* concludes rather violently, with a loose recapitulation of the opening section.

Lament (1986)

MATTHEW LEVY

Lament, written in memory of the composer's father, Philadelphia artist Julian Levy, received its première at a retrospective of Julian Levy's prints and oil paintings in Ann Arbor in the fall of 1986. In *Lament*, Levy has sought to express both the grief of loss and the sentiment of despair conveyed in his father's art. (Julian Levy's graphic art was particularly influenced by the German Expressionist movement.)

Compositionally, *Lament* involves a two-voice ostinato accompaniment derived from an oscillating augmented chord. A sad and beautiful melody weaves its way over and under the ostinato, moving from instrument to instrument and climaxing in a duet between the alto and baritone saxophones.

Aeolian Song (1960)

WARREN BENSON (b. 1928)

Few composers can capture one's heart as can Warren Benson. While in Greece in 1960, Benson witnessed the poverty and hardship that the people living along the Aeolian Sea endured. Originally scored for wind ensemble and solo alto saxophone and recently rearranged by Prism, *Aeolian Song* is a lament to those for whom Benson felt such anguish.

Warren Benson is a versatile musician who received his undergraduate training at the University of Michigan School of Music. Now widely known as a composer and pedagogue, he serves as professor of composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Tooka-ood Zasz (1990)

BRADFORD ELLIS (b. 1963)

Brad Ellis is one of America's finest young electronic performance artists and multi-media composers. His 1990 work, *Tooka-ood Zasz*, places The Prism Quartet in contrast with a digital audio tape of ethnic percussion textures. The work highlights the versatility of the quartet and is designed to illustrate the ease with which the players can move between acoustic and electronic instruments.

A single movement work in four sections, *Tooka-ood Zasz* begins with an African hand drum, metal and wood percussion pattern reminiscent of the massive "jam sessions" held in parks near the San Francisco Bay area. Yamaha wind controllers interject comical vocal samples over this texture. The second section is tongue-in-cheek, intentionally dated "funk" music. In the composer's words, "I'm not ashamed to admit that I wanted to hear this music for awhile. It was only in my adulthood that I really discovered this kind of music. God help me!"

The work's third section utilizes modulated piano samples to suggest Indian gamelan music. *Tooka-ood Zasz* closes with a soothing African rhythmic undercurrent featuring a tenor saxophone solo over a vocal, choralelike background.

Drastic Measures (1979)

RUSSELL PECK (b. 1945)

Russell Peck's *Drastic Measures* is a work best described as witty, sentimental, and red hot. The first movement, *Suicide Notes* (from the tomb of the unknown composer), opens in a distant, clustery haze. As phrases begin to undulate and sonorities thicken, the movement takes on a form of musical melodrama in which neo-romantic gestures gradually dominate the texture.

The second movement, *Low Blow*, suggests an element of, if not vulgarity, then perhaps the unrestrained, unrefined passion of free-blowing jazz. Marked by a great deal of interplay and spontaneity, the movement exploits myriad performance techniques common to the jazz saxophone, including wild "falls," percussive slap-tonguing, and growling. The compositional style is one that

effectively combines "blues" harmonic patterns, "funk" rhythms, "ragtime" accompanimental figures, and "rock and roll" melodic ideas.

String Quartet No. 3 (1930)

QUINCY PORTER (1897-1966)

From that time in American history, sometime in the nineteenth century, when Americans could first consider the possibility of working full time as composers, Europe was regarded as the place to go to obtain the necessary training. At first, Germany was the goal of these musicians, but later, in the early part of the twentieth century, France became the mecca, due to such outstanding teachers as Vincent d'Indy and Nadia Boulanger and the artistic ferment of various modern schools of composition. Many of these American composers, such as Howard Hanson and Roger Sessions, returned to teach in American universities that had incorporated professional training in this area, unlike European universities, which generally left such subjects to the conservatories. However European-trained Americans might feel about their national and cultural identity, they generally adapted it to a European aesthetic. The symphony, the sonata, and various kinds of chamber music were the vehicles of expression, even for such iconoclasts as Charles Ives. These observations are most true of those composers who came from New England, where roots were well established and a generally conservative view could be expected. It is this background from which Quincy Porter emerged.

Porter's career was typical of a distinguished member of the academic community. The son and grandson of Yale professors, he received his undergraduate degree at that institution in 1919, studying composition with Horatio Parker. After a year in Paris studying with Vincent d'Indy, he went to Cleveland to study with Ernst Bloch and play viola in a professional quartet. He served as a professor at Vassar College from 1932 to 1938, when he left to become dean and then director of the New England Conservatory of Music, a post he held until 1946. He then returned to Yale as a member of the faculty. During this period, he produced a substantial body of orchestral music but became best known for his chamber music, which, for the

most part, involved strings. In this latter category are nine string quartets.

Porter developed a personal style that had little overt reference to his American origins. The hallmarks of that style are sophistication and sensitivity, those qualities necessary to work out the interplay between four equally important instruments so that what emerges is a witty dialogue. In 1946, the critic Herbert Elwell characterized Porter's music as ranging "emotionally from a sort of nervous exuberance in the fast movements to a wistful, tender serenity in the slow movements." While working in a clearly twentieth-century language, it avoids the heavy use of dissonance, which was a major part of the music of his contemporaries. In his lifetime, he was named a Fellow of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, received several commissions from the Coolidge Foundation (Library of Congress), and enjoyed many prizes and awards, among them a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Pulitzer Prize.

In 1930, the Guggenheim Fellowship enabled him to live in Paris for three years and compose. The Third String Quartet was a product of the first year. The first movement emphasizes the "dual principle" of the sonata, an energetic first theme followed by a lyrical second theme. In the second movement, the violin sings above the other instruments that produce closely spaced, accompanimental chords in the middle register with rich effect. The last movement is characterized by a virtuoso brilliance. The viola is given a chance to lyricize here, and the upper strings are used to accompany the lower ones. The outer movements are given rhythmic drive by the use of ostinato patterns.

String Quartet, Op. 11 (1936)

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Samuel Barber showed signs of creative talent at an early age, writing his first compositions at the age of seven. When he was thirteen, he entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he studied piano with Isabelle Vangerova, singing with Emilio de Gogorza, and conducting with Fritz Reiner. But his main interest was composition, which he studied with Rosario Schalero. Barber's orchestral works were performed by all the major orchestras in the United States, the Vienna Philharmonic, orchestras in

Rome, Florence, and Milan, by Toscanini in South America, the British Broadcasting Company, and at the London Promenade Concerts. His body of work also includes chamber music, choral compositions, songs, and operas, and he was devoted to the art of the theater, composing several ballets for Martha Graham. His first opera, *Vanessa*, was produced by the Metropolitan Opera in 1958 and earned Barber his first of two Pulitzer Prizes; the second Pulitzer Prize came in 1962 for his Piano Concerto. The composer held three Guggenheim Fellowships, and in 1959 Harvard University conferred upon him an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree.

The String Quartet, Op. 11, was composed in 1936 and first performed by the Pro-Arte Quartet in Rome on December 1 of that year. Later, the composer arranged the second movement for string orchestra, and the *Adagio for Strings* was destined to become one of the most popular American works of serious music. (It also became a favorite selection at state funerals, forming the background music at President Roosevelt's commemorative service in 1945 and at the funeral of Princess Grace of Monaco in 1982.) The *Adagio* has become so popular that most audiences are not aware that it is part of the string quartet. It does, in fact, form the crux of the quartet, flanked on either side by two faster movements containing the same thematic material. The first movement is more extended than the last, the last acting as a sort of summary of everything contained in the first movement. These movements consist of broad sweeping lines alternating with quieter, more reflective sections. The *Adagio* is an extended choralelike song of extreme beauty, which, in its climax, seems to strain to the limits the sustaining power of the strings. It leads directly into the last movement, sometimes thought of as an extended coda based on material of the first movement.

To Better Serve Our Patrons

Visit the UMS/Encore Information Table in the lobby, where volunteers and staff members are on hand to provide a myriad of details about events, restaurants, etc., and register any concerns or suggestions. Open thirty minutes before each concert and during intermission.

Storms (1986)

MICHAEL SAHL (b. 1934)

Michael Sahl is a composer of classical music, popular music, and something in between. He has composed the operas *Civilization and Its Discontents*, which won the Prix Italia in 1980 (Nonesuch Records), and *Boxes* (American Public Radio, 1982). He received a National Endowment for the Arts commission for the piece *Storms* and was the winner of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant in 1986. He is also the arranger-pianist of the Tango Project, which made three best-selling classical LP's for Nonesuch, the latest of which is *Music from the Palm Court*. His recent instrumental work appears on the Musical Heritage album *Music from the Exiles' Cafe*.

The composer wrote the following note to accompany the 1986 première of *Storms*:

"The title *Storms* refers to storms of passion and anguish. The music is about the turmoil of inner life, as some music used to be a long time ago. The combined two groups are used, therefore, as a kind of "orchestra," and the similarities and blends of strings and saxophones are exploited, rather than their pure colors. The purpose of this is to create a dark, rich background, or 'gravy,' which is intended to be sometimes upsetting and sometimes blissful. I feel it is necessary for me to say, because of some 60 years of modernism, that this piece means just what it appears to mean. There isn't a hidden post-modern key, or an 'aesthetic distance,' or a 'confounding of traditional iconography.' The style of the music may seem eclectic, but it is deeply unified at the level of the harmonic language.

"There were ten years of my life (*circa* 1956-66) when I tried very hard not to write music like this, but ultimately there was no way of repressing it forever. I am now observing other composers who have lived through similar kinds of denial and who are rediscovering their pre-modern or post-modern selves. This is not a process unified around a 'basic sound,' but an effort to revive all the diverse pantheon of sources forbidden and extinguished in the name of modernism. There is a lot to do, and this is just a piece of it."

The birth of *Storms* is related in *Chamber Music* magazine by Stephen Rosenthal, a member of the Amherst Saxophone Quartet

that premiered the work with the Mendelssohn String Quartet in 1986:

"A saxophone quartet is, in many ways, similar to a string quartet. Both ensembles contain four voices of like timbre, with considerable control over a range of tone colors and dynamics, and a scope of many octaves (the cello and the baritone saxophone even share the same lowest note). The idea of finding composers to write for such an octet fit perfectly with the National Endowment for the Arts Consortium Commissioning Program. First, we had to find string quartets interested in the project. We had known Ira Weller of the Mendelssohn String Quartet and Tom Rosenberg of the Chester String Quartet through shared roots in Buffalo, New York. Both quartets decided to join us in the search for suitable composers. This turned out to be more difficult than we first imagined. Some composers thought there would be insurmountable balance problems, while others were already overcommitted. Further, we wanted to find three composers of contrasting styles whose works could be programmed together successfully for concert performances. We finally settled on Michael Sahl, Nils Vigeland, and Earle Brown (whose piece was completed in early 1989). *Storms* was premiered at the Kennedy Center on October 21, 1986, and Vigeland's *Classical Music* was premiered in Buffalo with the Chester Quartet on May 8, 1988.

"We approached the first rehearsals of the works with no lack of fear. Would the instrumental combinations work? Would the personal combinations work? Would we be able to bring all the music to performance level in the short time allowed by our busy concert schedules? The answer to the first two questions was a resounding yes. We encountered no balance problems (Michael Sahl even complained at one point of not hearing enough saxophones), and the opportunity to work as an octet was a joy. (In the early rehearsals, excitement for the music was surpassed only by an enthusiasm for lunch.) The problem of rehearsal time proved more difficult, so it was decided that the Mendelssohn/Amherst Octet would premiere the Sahl, and the Vigeland octet would be premiered with the Chester Quartet."



The Prism Quartet

Saxophone and Midi Ensemble

Voted among *Musical America's* "Outstanding Young Artists of 1989" and prize winners at the 1989 Fischeff National Chamber Music Competition, The Prism Quartet performs regularly throughout the United States. Their 1989-90 season included appearances on prestigious concert series in Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles, as well as concerts at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia and their New York debut on October 3, 1989, at Merkin Hall. Canada's Regina Symphony presented Prism in its orchestral debut in January 1990. Prism also gives recitals and masterclasses at a variety of institutions of higher learning, most recently at Hamilton, Ithaca, and Dartmouth Colleges, the University of Southern California, and the Interlochen Arts Academy.



In September 1989, Prism was heard on radio broadcasts from New York City's WQXR and on NPR's "Performance Today," and was featured in *Ovation* magazine's "Keep Your Eyes On" column. Most recently, listeners heard Prism on the Dame Myra Hess Series broadcast nationally by WFMT in Chicago.

In addition to performing as a traditional saxophone quartet, Prism features the most recent addition to the wind instrument family: the Yamaha WX-7 Breath Controller, more commonly known as the MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) Stick or EWI (Electronic Wind Instrument). The WX-7 enables traditional woodwind instrumentalists to access, with MIDI technology, all of the sound capabilities of synthesizers and digital samplers. Simply stated, the WX-7 expands the performer's repertoire of sound and expression to the very diverse, allowing Prism to assume the role of almost any imaginable chamber ensemble — a percussion ensemble, a baroque orchestra, a rock band, or a boys' choir. Even such abstract sounds as a helicopter hovering over a rain forest may be produced. As designated "Yamaha Artists," The Prism Quartet now represents Yamaha Digital Musical Instruments in their concert touring as well as in clinics and masterclasses.

Truly a "cross-over" group, Prism draws its repertoire from original compositions, classical transcriptions, jazz, electronic, and *avante-garde* twentieth-century works. In hopes of further expanding the body of music available for such an ensemble, Prism enjoys working with young notable composers. The Quartet recently premiered a work written by Michael Ruszczyński, 1989 winner of ASCAP's Rudolf Nissim Prize and the Charles Ives Award. BMI Award-winner Todd Levin has written two works for Prism including *Serenade Express*, the first concert work for the WX-7. Prism premiered Levin's work at the 1988 Chicago International Art Exposition and looks forward to future performances of the work scheduled for New York, Salzburg, and again in Chicago. This fall at Merkin Hall, Prism's tenor saxophonist Matthew Levy was featured in the New York premiere of *Aria Improvisations*, Nicholas C. K. Thorne's only solo work for saxophone. Other composers working with Prism include Kevin Maloney of London, England, composing a work for four WX-7s and four saxophones, and the Ann Arbor-based John Costa, who is writing a quartet for saxophones.

Prism is also collaborating with composer Gary Nelson of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Nelson is pioneering electronic music in which Macintosh computers generate timbre and pitch sequences in a manner dictated by the WX-7. Such experimental music is remarkably accessible despite its technological roots. In the fall of 1989, Prism premiered Nelson's work, *Refractions*, at the opening of Oberlin's Electronic Music Plus Festival.

Last month, Prism Quartet members were artists-in-residence for the first New Sounds Music Festival, presented by the University of Redlands (Los Angeles) with support from the Yamaha Corporation of America. They served as instructors, clinicians, and performers for this

first annual festival dedicated solely to the artistic development of the MIDI wind controller and the acoustic saxophone.

Currently making their debut in the recording field, The Prism Quartet has embarked on a multi-release recording project with Koch International Classics. Their first release presents a cross-section of the saxophone repertoire, including the early saxophone quartet by Jean-Baptiste Singelée and works by four contemporary composers. Projected releases will include an electro-acoustic sampling of transcriptions of music by Debussy, Satie, Poulenc, Ravel, Ibert, and Mussorgsky, and, of course, works of contemporary composers.

All four Prism members hold bachelor and master degrees from the University of Michigan School of Music, where three were awarded the prestigious Lawrence Teal Award for saxophone playing. All four are protégés of the world-renowned performer and pedagogue, Donald Sinta. The Quartet, formed in 1984, now gives its first performance under University Musical Society auspices.

Reginald Borik received his Medaille d'Or from the Conservatoire National de Région in Bordeaux, France, before coming to The University of Michigan. Winner of the national Young Artist Competition of Midland-Odessa, he has performed throughout Europe with the International Ensemble of Saxophones and is a frequent guest artist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Borik is currently chairman of the woodwind and percussion department of the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit and has served on the faculty of the Interlochen Arts Camp.

Matthew Levy, a native of Philadelphia, holds three degrees from The University of Michigan, where, in addition to saxophone, he studied composition with William Bolcom, Fred Lerdahl, and William Albright. An active composer, Mr. Levy has written numerous works, both electronic and acoustic, for Prism. In addition to being a regular guest artist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, he has performed throughout Europe and the United States, including appearances at Milan's La Scala Opera House and his recent New York première of Nicholas C. K. Thorne's *Aria Improvisations* for solo saxophone. He may be heard on the soon-to-be-released *Homeland* LP by new age keyboardist Michael Hoppe. A resident of Los Angeles, Mr. Levy is founder and director of the New Sounds Music Festival, presented annually by the University of Redlands, where he also serves as professor of saxophone.

Timothy Miller is heard on Opus One Records in a recording of *Breathless* by Glenn Gass. He is active in contemporary music performance and has worked abroad with Karlheinz Stockhausen in the critically acclaimed production and première of *Samstag aus Licht*, just released on Deutsche Grammophon Records. Recently, he performed the American première of Paul Cooper's Concerto for Saxophone. A native of Connecticut, Mr. Miller is on the faculty of Eastern Michigan University and the Center for Creative Studies, Institute of Music and Dance in Detroit.

Michael Whitcombe made his professional debut with the Rochester Philharmonic at the age of 17 as the First Prize Young Artist Concerto Soloist. He has also been a guest artist of the Tanglewood Music Center's Festival of Contemporary Music, where he performed Webern's Quartet Opus 22. In 1989, he gave the première performance of Michael Ruscynski's *Cafe at Night*, commissioned expressly for him. Mr. Whitcombe received training at the Eastman School of Music in both the Preparatory and Collegiate Divisions before studying at The University of Michigan. Founder and managing director of the New York Chamber Ensemble, with which he performs regularly, he teaches and resides in New York City.

The Prism Quartet is represented by Donna Zajonc Management, Ann Arbor. The Prism Quartet uses the Yamaha WX-7 and WX-11 Wind Controllers, TX81Z Synthesizers, and TX16W Stereo Samplers by special arrangement with Yamaha Corporation of America.

The Chester String Quartet

Recognized as one of America's most distinguished and sought-after young chamber ensembles, the Chester String Quartet is highly acclaimed for its performances of the standard repertoire and numerous contemporary and lesser-known works in the chamber music literature. In addition to its coast-to-coast concerts, the ensemble is constantly involved in a wide range of projects. Highlights of recent seasons have included performances in nearly all of New York's major recital halls, such as the recreation of Schoenberg's "Verein" concerts in a series at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and a concert with several noted jazz musicians at the Carnegie Recital Hall. The Quartet has performed the complete Beethoven quartet cycle, and it has served as quartet-in-residence of the innovative New York Chamber Ensemble. The ensemble has been heard numerous times on National Public Radio, the BBC, and German State Radio. Having previously recorded for the CRI, Stolat, and Pantheon labels, the players are now exclusive quartet artists for the Koch International Classics label, involved in numerous compact disc recording projects that are being distributed worldwide.

The Chester String Quartet is presently quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members on the staff of Indiana University at South Bend. During the summers, they maintain a busy teaching and performance schedule at such prestigious festivals as Aspen, Newport, Grand Tetons, and Music Mountain. The ensemble has performed with many internationally known solo artists, as well as with members of the Guarneri, Cleveland, and Muir Quartets.

Founded at the Eastman School of Music, the Chester Quartet was awarded first prize in the 1985 Discovery Competition and is the only American quartet with the distinction of winning top prizes at the international quartet competitions in both Munich, Germany, and Portsmouth, England.

Now performing in their Ann Arbor debut, the Chester Quartet members play on a beautifully matched set of instruments consisting of a violin and cello by the Cremonese maker Lorenzo Storioni (dated 1774 and 1794 respectively), a viola by his pupil Enrico Ceruti (c. 1879), and a violin by Michele Deconet (1754), made in Venice.



The Chester String Quartet is represented by Harry Beall Management, Inc., New Jersey. The Chester Quartet is supported by Arts Midwest members and friends in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.



Fritz Gearhart is among the third generation of professional musicians in his family. Originally from Buffalo, New York, he received his master's degree and performer's certificate from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Donald Weilerstein, formerly of the Cleveland Quartet. Earlier studies were at the Hartt School of Music, studying with Charles Treger and working closely with members of the Emerson Quartet. He is presently associate professor of violin at Indiana University at South Bend.

Kathryn Votapek, originally from East Lansing, Michigan, received her bachelor of music degree from Indiana University and her master's degree from The Juilliard School. Her major teachers have been Robert Mann, Franco Gulli, and Angel Reyes, and she has studied chamber music with members of the Juilliard, Vermeer, and Borodin Quartets. Ms. Votapek has participated in summer music festivals at Tanglewood, Ravinia, and the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, and is presently associate professor of violin at Indiana University.

Ronald Gorevic was born in London, where he studied with Eli Goren. In 1970, he came to the United States and studied with Zvi Zeitlin, Dorothy DeLay, and David Cerone. Performing extensively in this country as both a violist and violinist, he has been on the faculties of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Akron, and is currently associate professor of viola at Indiana University.

Thomas Rosenberg, originally from Buffalo, New York, is a graduate of Oberlin. He holds a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with and was teaching assistant to Paul Katz and Lawrence Lesser. His other major teachers include Richard Kapuscinski, Einar Holm, and Alan Harris. His studies of the string quartet literature have been with many noted chamber musicians, including members of the Budapest, Cleveland, Tokyo, and Juilliard Quartets. Mr. Rosenberg is presently associate professor of cello at Indiana University.



About the Yamaha WX-7 Wind Controller

In addition to playing the saxophone in its traditional quartet arrangement (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone), The Prism Quartet features the new Yamaha WX-7 Wind Controller. From a distance, the WX-7 looks like a rather cuboid-bodied clarinet. In many respects, it plays like an acoustic instrument. It is blown through and responds dynamically to air velocity (breath) and articulation. Its plastic reed responds to lip pressure, permitting the use of vibrato and portamento. And its fingering system is modeled after the saxophone, making the WX-7 easily accessible to woodwind instrumentalists.

The WX-7, however, is an entirely electronic instrument, producing sound through M.I.D.I (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology. It features an internal computer that analyzes all aspects of wind performance (*i.e.*, articulation, breath, lip pressure, note fingered) and instantaneously translates them into a series of numbers. These numbers are fed into a separate unit called a synthesizer. The synthesizer generates the actual sound in a manner dictated by the WX-7 through a series of microchips and oscillators. The synthesizer may be programmed to produce almost any sound imaginable — a jazz trombone, a helicopter, a concert violin, a drum set, an orchestral chord, a bird singing, and even a tropical storm. Synthesizers have existed for decades, but until recently, they have been accessed only through electronic keyboards capable of controlling just the attack and release of notes. The WX-7 permits much more sophisticated manipulation of the synthesizer, giving the performer total control of the sound.

The capability of shaping artificial sound with one's breath has elevated electronic music to a new artistic level, lending it an uncharacteristic expressivity and warmth. As such marvelous instruments as the WX-7 are invented, the aural spectrum encompassed by electronic music will undoubtedly continue to expand in every possible direction. And though no M.I.D.I instrument will ever replace its acoustic counterpart, there can be no question that the marriage of sound and technology will inspire composers, performers, and audiences for generations to come.

METROPOLITAN OPERA
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JAMES LEVINE

JESSYE NORMAN

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PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven — "Ah Perfido", Op. 65

Alban Berg — Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6

Intermission

Richard Strauss — *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* Suite, Op. 60

Richard Wagner — "Immolation" Scene from *Götterdämmerung*

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