Tim Wen, Saxophone

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TIM WEN
SAXOPHONE

FROM THE STUDIO OF
JASON SCOTT

PERKINSON RECITAL HALL
FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2023
7:30 PM

Department of Music
PROGRAM

*Rapsodie pour saxophone et orchestre*  
Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Sorrow is Meaningless  
Christopher Chak  
(b. 1977)

*Esperanza*  
Shimoda Kazuki  
(b. 1992)

Tim Wen, saxophone  
Dr. Joanne Kong, piano

Pause (5 minutes)

*Tableaux de Provence*  
Paule Maurice  
(1910-1967)

I. *Farandoulo di chatouno*  
II. *Cansoun per ma mio*  
III. *La boumiano*  
IV. *Dis Alyscamps l’amo souspire*

Tim Wen, saxophone  
Dr. Joanne Kong, piano

*Maple Leaf*  
Jay Chou  
(b. 1979)

A Dandelion’s Promise

Tim Wen, saxophone  
Ben Nguyen, piano

*Continued ...*
Rapsodie pour saxophone et orchestre was written by French composer Claude Debussy, for a commission by the amateur saxophonist Elisa Hall. At that time, the saxophone was still relatively new to composers, including Debussy. Although Mrs. Hall went to Paris to urge him on, it took Debussy seven years to compose the original version for saxophone and piano. After his death, one of his best friends, Jean Roger-Ducasse, orchestrated the piano part. The piece explores Asian-inspired sonorities, and the rhythm, melody, and structure are different from Debussy’s other works. The piece starts with a quiet saxophone solo, perhaps inspiring thoughts of an ancient caravan coming across the Middle East towards India. The dynamic contrast creates a mysterious and serious atmosphere. The emotion is flowing out and pushes to the climax gradually, and it gives the audience a wonderful and fantastical trip to the East. Rather than a saxophone solo with orchestra, the original version is more like “saxophone playing with orchestra.” The work is full of Debussy’s impressionistic style, but many melody lines are played by the orchestra, resulting in a relatively simple solo part. Later, many famous saxophonists chose to revise this piece based on their understanding, and the version I am playing has been revised by the world-famous saxophonist Vincent David. This version achieves a good balance between the technique and the melody. It creates certain technical challenges while still retaining Debussy’s distinct characteristics.
**Sorrow is Meaningless** is sung by one of the most famous Chinese popular singers, Eason Chan. The Chinese title literally translates to “Under Mount Fuji,” and is based on lyricist Albert Leung’s Mount Fuji theory: if you like a person, but they don’t like you, it is like Mount Fuji. You can see it, but you cannot move it. The only possible way is to walk over it. It is the same for love: just walk past it. The song won many prizes in China, including the 2007 Radio Television Hong Kong Top 10 Gold Songs Awards and it ranked among the top 20 Chinese songs in 2007.

**Esperanza** is a modern classical saxophone piece composed by Shimoda Kazuki, for a commission by Saori Ohnuma. The composer was inspired during his flight to Singapore for a ceremony. When he saw the sky above 33,000 feet, it reminded him of his first trip to Tokyo, to study composition, and the hope and worry that he was feeling. The whole piece is full of Japanese classical saxophone style, powerful and beautiful. It expresses the composer’s own wishes and hopes for a brighter future.

**Tableaux de Provence**, by the French composer Paule Maurice, is dedicated to her friend and countryman, the saxophone virtuoso Marcel Mule. This five-movement suite describes the scenery and culture of Provence, France, a favorite vacation spot of Maurice’s and Mule’s families. The first movement, “Farandoulo di chatouno” ("Dance of the Young Girls") describes young girls dancing the farandole, which is a kind of provençal dance. The main melody is made up of fast triplets, which creates a joyful and enjoyable listening experience for the audience. The second movement, “Cansoun per ma mio” ("Song for My Love"), is a serenade with accompaniment imitating the open strings of a guitar. This movement is slow with long and beautiful phases, which is a challenge for breath and sound control for the performer. It is followed by “La boumiano” ("The Bohemian Women"), which is powerful and full of syncopations and accents, giving the whole
movement a magnificent character. The fourth movement, “Dis Alyscamps l’amo souspire” (“A Sigh on the Souls for the Alyscamps”), has drastic dynamic changes, which creates a very horrific mood. “Lou cabridan,” the final movement, describes bees flying across Provence. This movement is quite challenging in terms of fingering and tonal techniques for the performer.

*Tableaux de Provence* is one of the most influential works in the saxophone repertoire. All of the saxophone’s timbre, basic techniques, rhythmic forms, and changeable tempo are presented in this piece. Almost every classical saxophonist has played and performed it. This evening I will perform the first four movements.

*Maple Leaf* was composed and sung by the most successful Chinese singer, Jay Chou. Chou, who is known as the “King of Mandopop,” has sold over 30 million records. This song talks about the lover’s failures and regrets after a breakup. The maple leaf is a metaphor for autumn, and in Chinese culture, autumn is melancholy and bleak, which fits the theme of the song.

*A Dandelion’s Promise* was also composed and sung by Jay Chou. It is based on his own experience with his first love in middle school and is described as one of the most representative examples of the Chinese school ballad.

*Three Jazz Vignettes* is a saxophone, piano, and flute trio composed by Sylvia E. Hazlerig in 1993, when she taught music in Laredo, Texas. The whole piece is written with jazz styles and rhythms but performed with classical instruments. One characteristic of this piece is the many contrasts among these three instruments. The first movement, “La-Re-Do,” represents the solfege syllables for the pitches a-d-c, and is also associated with Laredo, Texas. The second movement, “Lazy Evening,” creates a relaxed and peaceful mood. The third movement, “Sax-a-dance,” is a “conversation” between saxophone and flute. The differences in terms of the timbre of these two instruments make this movement sound enjoyable.