



# PRISM QUARTET **DEDICATION**

WITH GUEST ARTIST GREG OSBY



## PRISM Quartet **Dedication**

- 1 Roshanne Etezady** *Inkling* 1:09
- 2 Zack Browning** *Howler Back* 1:09
- 3 Tim Ries** *Lu* 2:36
- 4 Gregory Wanamaker** *speed metal organum blues* 1:14
- 5 Renée Favand-See** *isolation* 1:07
- 6 Libby Larsen** *Wait a Minute...* 1:09
- 7 Nick Didkovksy** *Talea (hoping to somehow "know")* 1:06
- 8 Nick Didkovksy** *Stink Up! (PolyPrism 1)* 1:06
- 9 Nick Didkovksy** *Stink Up! (PolyPrism 2)* 1:01
- 10 Greg Osby** *Prism #1 (Refraction)* 6:49  
Greg Osby, alto sax solo
- 11 Donnacha Dennehy** *Mild, Medium-Lasting, Artificial Happiness* 1:49
- 12 Ken Ueno** *July 23, from sunrise to sunset, the summer of the S.E.P.S.A. bus rides destra e sinistra around Ischia just to get tomorrow's scatolame* 1:20
- 13 Adam B. Silverman** *Just a Minute, Chopin* 2:21
- 14 William Bolcom** *Scherzino* 1:16
- Matthew Levy** *Three Miniatures*
- 15** *Diary* 2:05
- 16** *Meditation* 1:49
- 17** *Song without Words* 2:33

- 18 Jennifer Higdon** *Bop* 1:09
- 19 Dennis DeSantis** *Hive Mind* 1:06
- 20 Robert Capanna** *Moment of Refraction* 1:04
- 21 Keith Moore** *OneTwenty* 1:31
- 22 Jason Eckardt** *A Fractured Silence* 1:18
- Frank J. Oteri** *Fair and Balanced?*
- 23** *Remaining Neutral* 1:00
- 24** *Seeming Partial* 3:09
- 25** *Uncommon Ground* 1:00
- 26** *Incremental Change* 1:49
- 27 Perry Goldstein** *Out of Bounds* 1:24
- 28 Tim Berne** *Brooklyn* 0:57
- 29 Chen Yi** *Happy Birthday to PRISM* 1:24
- 30 James Primosch** *Straight Up* 1:24
- 31 Greg Osby** *Prism #1 (Refraction)* (alternate take) 6:49  
Greg Osby, alto sax solo
- TOTAL PLAYING TIME 57:53

All works composed and premiered in 2004 except *Three Miniatures*, composed/premiered in 2006.

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### PRISM Quartet

**Timothy McAllister** soprano saxophone

**Zachary Shemon** alto saxophone

**Matthew Levy** tenor saxophone

**Taimur Sullivan** baritone saxophone

**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 performed in Carnegie Hall on the Making Music Series, in Alice Tully Hall with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and throughout Latin America under the auspices of the United States Information Agency. PRISM has also been presented to critical acclaim as soloists with orchestras nationwide, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra, performing William Bolcom's *Concerto Grosso*, written especially for the Quartet. Champions of new music, PRISM has commissioned over 130 works, many by internationally celebrated composers such as William Albright, Martin Bresnick, Lee Hyla, Steven Mackey, Bernard Rands, and Zhou Long.

In 1997, PRISM initiated its own concert series in Philadelphia and New York City, presenting the newest repertoire created for their ensemble by composers from around the world. The series has featured an eclectic range of guest artists, including the string quartet ETHEL, the Talujon Percussion Quartet, Music From China, Miro Dance Theatre, Cantori New York, pianist Marilyn Nonken, saxophonist Donald Sinta, and many of New York's most progressive jazz artists, including guitarist Ben Monder, saxophonists Tim

Ries and Rick Margitza, and drummers Gerald Cleaver, John Riley, and Mark Ferber. PRISM has also joined forces with the New York Consort of Viols, the Chester String Quartet, Opera Colorado under the baton of Marin Alsop, and the Chilean rock band Inti-Illimani in touring engagements.

PRISM has recorded for Albany, innova, Koch International, Naxos, New Dynamic, and New Focus. PRISM may be heard in the theme music of the PBS series “Now” and on the soundtrack of the feature film “Two Plus One” in an original score by Quartet member Matthew Levy.

*The PRISM Quartet performs exclusively on Selmer saxophones.*





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**Sometime in the mid-1980s**, I received an album by a New England-based saxophone group. The press material accompanying it made an astonishing claim: there was more music written for saxophone quartet, the release said, than for string quartet. This struck me as patently ridiculous at the time, but now, thanks to the redoubtable PRISM Quartet, it seems entirely plausible. PRISM, after all, has spent more than a quarter-century commissioning and championing new works from gifted students at the Walden School in Dublin, New Hampshire to leading composers overseas.

Of course, string fans will point to the Kronos Quartet, who've been adding to the string quartet repertoire at a prodigious rate as well, but that's okay—PRISM and Kronos are like-minded groups. Like their string-infested colleagues, the PRISM musicians have wielded their instruments in a variety of styles and contexts, and they've done it with a gleeful disregard for the various “-isms” of the day. The saxophone is a versatile family of instruments, capable of great subtlety and emotion, but also perfectly good at producing a wailing wall of noise. And while PRISM has done yeoman work in reminding people that old Adolphe Sax intended his inventions to be classical instruments first, the quartet also has the good taste and the tasty chops needed to reflect the sax's great tradition in jazz and popular music.

This collection brings together almost two-dozen works written or arranged to mark PRISM's twentieth anniversary, back in 2004. The composers come from near (Matthew Levy, founding member of PRISM) and far (Donnacha Dennehy, a central figure on the Irish new music scene). They range from some of our most highly visible, award-winning figures (William Bolcom, Chen Yi, Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larsen) to emerging voices (Roshanne Etezady and Dennis DeSantis were both beginning their careers

in 2004). And of course, there are friends of the ensemble like sax player Greg Osby, who adds his alto to the mix, and one-time PRISM member Tim Ries, who left the quartet some years ago to go on tour with a rock band. (Only time will tell if that band, apparently called “The Rolling Stones,” will have the staying power of the PRISM Quartet.)

From the frantic, florid playing required by Gregory Wanamaker’s “speed metal organum blues” to the melancholy of Renée Favand-See’s “isolation,” this set of birthday dedications offers a kaleidoscopic portrait of one of the essential contemporary music groups of our time.

**John Schaefer**

Host of *Soundcheck* and *New Sounds* on WNYC

**PRISM Quartet Dedication****Roshanne Etezady** *Inkling*

The word “inkling” refers to the merest hint of an idea and, thus, seemed like the perfect title for this short vignette for PRISM. Through the clouds of sound, I hoped to showcase the flexibility and color the ensemble has cultivated over their first twenty years.

**Roshanne Etezady**'s (b. 1973) music has been described in *Fanfare Magazine* as “fresh, effusive, tonal, and immediately likeable,” and she has been hailed by the *Detroit Free Press* as “a promising and confident composer.” In addition to the PRISM Quartet, her works have been commissioned by the Albany Symphony, eighth blackbird, and Music at the Anthology. Ensembles including Relâche, Amadinda Percussion Ensemble, Ensemble De Ereprijs, and the Dogs of Desire have performed Etezady's music throughout the United States and Europe. Roshanne Etezady's music has earned recognition from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Korean Society of 21st Century Music, the Jacob K. Javits Foundation, Meet the Composer, and ASCAP. She currently resides in Tempe, Arizona.

roshanne.com



**Zack Browning** *Howler Back*

*Howler Back* was commissioned by PRISM for their twentieth anniversary concert and is a sonic salute to the ensemble's dedication to and promotion of contemporary music.

The music of **Zack Browning** (b. 1953) has been described as “way-cool in attitude...speed-demon music” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) and “propulsive, giddy, rocking...a rush of cyclic riffs and fractured meters” (*New York Times*). The *Irish Times* proclaimed him as “bringing together the procedures of high musical art with the taste of popular culture.” The CD *Banjaxed* on Capstone Records contains eight of his original compositions for voice, instruments, and computer-generated sounds and has been called “dramatic, exciting, rhythmic, high-energy music.” Browning's composition awards include an Illinois Arts Council Composer Fellowship and a Chamber Music America Commission. Performances include the Bonk Festival of New Music (Tampa), the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival (Miami), International Computer Music Conference (New Orleans), Spark Festival (Minneapolis), Gaudeamus Music Week (Amsterdam), Composers Choice Festival (Dublin), Sonorities Festival (Belfast), Skinneskatteberg Festival (Sweden), Asian Contemporary Music Festival (Seoul), National Chiang Kai Shek Recital Hall (Taipei), Nanjing Normal University (China), and Jilin University and Northeast Normal University (Changchun, China). Browning is an associate professor emeritus of the University of Illinois.

[zackbrowning.com](http://zackbrowning.com)

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### Tim Ries *Lu*

*Lu* was inspired by the artistry of my friend, the Brazilian vocalist and composer Luciana Souza, or “Lu.” When I adapted the work for PRISM, I sought to retain the color and expressive quality of her voice.

Saxophonist, composer, arranger, and producer **Tim Ries** (b. 1959) received degrees from the University of North Texas (BM) and the University of Michigan (MM). He has had a unique and varied career, which began in 1983 with the great Maynard Ferguson. His performing and recording credits include a who’s who of jazz, rock, and pop icons: the Rolling Stones (touring from 1999 to the present), Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, Donald Fagen, Michael Jackson, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Lyle Lovette, and jazz greats Red Garland, Donald Byrd, Hank Jones, Phil Woods, Tom Harrell, Chico Hamilton, Michael Brecker, Joe Henderson, Tony Bennett, Dave Liebman, Al Foster, John Patitucci, Danilo Perez, and Maria Schneider. Ries has released seven CDs as a leader. His last two discs, *The Rolling Stones Project* (Concord) and *Stones World* (Sunnyside), are his versions of Stones tunes arranged in the jazz and world music genres. Both CDs have drawn rave reviews across the globe. Ries is currently an assistant professor of jazz studies at the University of Toronto and divides his time between New York and Toronto.

[timries.com](http://timries.com)

Photo: Lourdes Delgado





**Gregory Wanamaker** *speed metal organum blues*

*speed metal organum blues* is exactly what the title suggests. “speed metal organum” refers to the fast-paced succession of open-fifth “power chords” found in speed metal music—and the strange notion that this music may have evolved from thirteenth-century organum composed by monks on speed. “blues” refers to the single 12-bar blues reference in the middle.

**Gregory Wanamaker**’s (b. 1968) music explores and extends the unique timbral qualities of instruments and voices while maintaining lyric and dramatic characteristics commonly associated with works of earlier eras and contemporary popular music. Recent reviews of his award-winning music in *Fanfare Magazine*, *American Record Guide*, and *Audiophile Audition* have described his music as “compelling,” “skillful,” “outstanding,” “cutting-edge,” and “a technical *tour de force*.” The recipient of numerous awards and commissions, Wanamaker’s music has been performed worldwide and can be heard on the innova, Albany, Summit, White Pine, Mark Custom, and KCM labels.

[gregorywanamaker.com](http://gregorywanamaker.com)



**Renée Favand-See** *isolation*

In *isolation* there is a simple, plaintive melody passing from voice to voice in the quartet. Saxophones possess a bright brilliance, but in this little piece I was drawn to their ability to blend, which can obscure who's speaking such that the ending of one phrase becomes the beginning of the next becomes the ending, and so on. This stanza from a poem by Corin See captures well the mood I was after:

*The way of light / at crusty snowbank bus stops / at empty power-houses / turbines gone / windows bricked up/humming beside the weedy flatrocked creek.*

**Renée Favand-See** was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1973, grew up in Baltimore, lived in New York City for over a decade (with a stint in Munich, Germany), and recently moved to Portland, Oregon. She earned her BM with high distinction at the Eastman School of Music, studying composition with Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler, Warren Benson, and David Liptak; with Mathias Spahlinger at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg; and then with Martin Bresnick, David Lang, and Jacob Druckman at the Yale School of Music. Her earliest compositional studies began at age twelve at The Walden School, a summer program for young musicians in Dublin, New Hampshire, where she now serves on the composition faculty. She also recently joined the theory faculty with Portland Youth Philharmonic and is currently working on a cycle of songs based on scientific texts for mezzo-soprano Hai-Ting Chinn.

**Libby Larsen** *Wait a Minute...*

*Wait a Minute...* is an abstract statement of Chopin's Minute Waltz. The listener should imagine looking at Chopin's piece through a prism. *Wait a Minute...* is a glint of light off one of the prism's sides.

**Libby Larsen** (b. 1950) is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 200 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral and choral scores. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. Sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory. As a leader in the generation of millennium thinkers, Larsen's music and ideas have refreshed the concert music tradition and the composer's role in it.

[libbylarsen.com](http://libbylarsen.com)



Photo: Ann Marsden



**Nick Didkovsky**

Photo: Zach Veilleux

*Talea* (hoping to somehow “know”)

*Stink Up!* (PolyPrism 1)

*Stink Up!* (PolyPrism 2)

All three pieces were composed using my computer music language JMSL ([www.algomusic.com](http://www.algomusic.com)). *Talea* plays with time-shifted rhythms and the anticipation of borders around a repeated phrase. I composed it by hand in JMSL’s score notation editor. Both *Stink Up!* pieces are based on rhythmic modulations and polyrhythms, where abrupt tempo transitions are linked together by one instrument whose absolute pulse stays constant from one tempo to the next. *Stink Up!* was composed algorithmically using custom software written in JMSL. The program was run repeatedly until two magic movements emerged and were selected for inclusion in this triptych for PRISM.

**Nick Didkovsky** (b. 1958) is a guitarist, composer, and software programmer. In 1983, he founded the rock octet Doctor Nerve. He is the author of the computer music language Java Music Specification Language (JMSL). He presently resides in New York City, where he composes for Doctor Nerve and other ensembles, creates music software, and teaches Java Music Systems at New York University. Besides his band Doctor Nerve, he has composed music for the Fred Frith Guitar Quartet (of which he was a member), Bang On A Can All-Stars, Meridian Arts Ensemble, ETHEL, loadbang, ARTE Quartett, and many others. His Black Sabbath Guitar Lessons on YouTube have been received with great enthusiasm by metal fans all over the world.

[didkovsky.com](http://didkovsky.com)

**Greg Osby** *Prism #1 (Refraction)*

*Refraction* was composed specifically for the PRISM Quartet. It is based on extractions of several improvisational fragments I made while playing along with the PRISM recording *Real Standard Time*.

Saxophonist, composer, recording artist, and educator **Greg Osby** (b. 1960) has recorded and toured with such diverse artists as Herbie Hancock, Dizzy Gillespie, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea, Freddie Hubbard, and Jim Hall. Osby is a four-time winner of the prestigious Jazz Journalists Award and a recent recipient of the Doris Duke Foundation award for composers. Osby was a Blue Note Records recording artist from 1989 to 2005 and currently records for the Inner Circle Music label. He has earned numerous awards and critical acclaim for his recorded works and exciting live performances.

[gregosby.com](http://gregosby.com)



Photo: Clay Patrick McBride

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**Donnacha Dennehy** *Mild, Medium-Lasting, Artificial Happiness*

*Mild, Medium-Lasting, Artificial Happiness* was written as a present for the PRISM Quartet on the occasion of their twentieth birthday. In my instructions I ask them to aim for an ethnic (or even industrial) kind of effect—along the lines of a four-man squeeze box—and suggest muting the saxophones with cloths so they produce a slightly suffocated, straight-jacketed sound. The fortissimos should really struggle against the physical limitations of the muted instruments.

The Irish composer **Donnacha Dennehy** (b. 1970) was hailed as “a star of Dublin’s active new music scene” by the *New Yorker*. He has received commissions from Dawn Upshaw, Kronos Quartet, Bang On A Can All-Stars, the BBC, the Percussion Group of the Hague, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, among many others. His recent piece for Dawn Upshaw, *That the Night Come*, was released on a Nonesuch portrait album of his music in 2011. *The Wire* Magazine, in its review of an earlier portrait CD released by London’s NMC, declared that “Donnacha Dennehy has a soundworld all his own.”

[donnachadennehy.com](http://donnachadennehy.com)

Photo: Sophine Dennehy





**Ken Ueno** *July 23, from sunrise to sunset, the summer of the S.E.P.S.A. bus rides destra e sinistra around Ischia just to get tomorrow's scatolame*

This one-minute piece was written for the PRISM Quartet's twentieth anniversary and contains references to two older pieces of mine (*WATT and whatWALL?*), also performed by members of PRISM. The title refers to the time and place at which the work was composed, and its length projects the possibility for a short piece to imply a larger structure. The island of Ischia is circumnavigated by two bus routes, one clockwise and the other counterclockwise; this made me question the concept of directionality, since going forward on one route would be the same as going backward on the other. Such is the case of an anniversary, an occasion to reflect back, the celebration of which gives hope to go forward.

A recipient of the Rome and Berlin Prizes, **Ken Ueno** (b. 1970) is a composer/vocalist and Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Ensembles and performers who have played Ueno's music include Kim Kashkashian, Robyn Schulkowsky, Mayumi Miyata, Teodoro Anzellotti, and BMOP. Ueno's piece for the Hilliard Ensemble, *Shiroi Ishi*, continues to be featured in their repertoire. Another work, *Pharmakon*, was performed dozens of times nationally by eighth blackbird during their 2001–2003 seasons. As a vocalist, Ueno has collaborated in improvisations with Joey Baron, Joan Jeanrenaud, Pascal Contet, and David Wessel, amongst others, and has ongoing performance collaborations with Tim Feeney, Matt Ingalls, and Du Yun.

[kenueno.com](http://kenueno.com)

**Adam Silverman** *Just a Minute, Chopin*

*Just a Minute, Chopin* was inspired by Frederic Chopin's *Prelude in E Minor* and composed by adapting its famously haunting chord progression, then freely imposing melodic phrases from the song "Happy Birthday" above the new chords. Happy twentieth birthday, PRISM!

Composer **Adam Silverman** (b. 1973) is a founding director of the Minimum Security Composers Collective and professor of music composition and theory at West Chester University. His compositions, which include two operas, chamber and solo music, music for orchestras, percussion ensembles, and cello choirs, have been performed by the New York City Opera, Real Time Opera, the Opera Company of Brooklyn, International Opera Theater, eighth blackbird, the Corigliano Quartet, the Amelia Piano Trio, and the percussion ensembles of The Juilliard School, Florida State University, University of Texas at Austin, Boston Conservatory, and many more. Many of his works are available on compact disk, including "Sturm: Compositions of Adam Silverman" (New Focus Records, 2009), "Amy Sue Barston: Memories and Souvenirs" (Calabaza Records, 2010), "Daniel Lippel: Sustenance" (New Focus Records, 2007), and "Florida State Percussion Ensemble, Vol. 1" (Florida State University, 2010).

Adam Silverman has composed two works for the PRISM Quartet's Timothy McAllister—*I echo you, we are repeated* (for saxophone ensemble in six parts) and *McAllister's Ceilidh* for soprano saxophone and piano—and is currently composing a concerto for alto saxophone with wind ensemble.

[adambsilverman.com](http://adambsilverman.com)

**William Bolcom** *Scherzino*

There seems to be a mini-rage for 60-second pieces right now. The Paris-based American pianist Guy Livingston recently put out a CD of minute-long pieces; I just brought out a collection of one-sentence-long mini-cabaret songs for my wife Joan Morris. Little pieces are fun to write and possibly more fun to listen to, hence the *Scherzino* for the elegant PRISM Quartet.

Named 2007 Composer of the Year by Musical America and honored with multiple Grammy Awards for his ground-breaking setting of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, **William Bolcom** (b. 1938) is a composer of cabaret songs, concertos, sonatas, operas, symphonies, and much more. He was awarded the 1988 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his *12 New Etudes* for piano. With his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris, he has performed in concert for 35 years throughout the United States, Canada, and abroad. In addition to performing, Bolcom and Morris have recorded two dozen albums together. Bolcom taught composition at the University of Michigan from 1973–2008. In 1994 the University of Michigan named him the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished University Professor of Composition. He has recorded for Advance, Jazzology, Musical Heritage, Nonesuch, Vox, and Omega, among others.

[williambolcom.com](http://williambolcom.com)



Photo: Peter Smith

**Matthew Levy** *Three Miniatures*

*Three Miniatures* is an adaptation of music that I composed for “Diary of a City Priest,” a film by Emmy nominee Eugene Martin. The film examines the life of Father MacNamee, a priest (played by David Morse) who serves in one of Philadelphia’s toughest neighborhoods, portraying his weary yet resolute faith in the face of gangs, poverty, drugs, and an often-pervasive feeling of hopelessness. The film was broadcast by PBS and featured at the Sundance Film Festival.

**Matthew Levy** (b. 1963) is a founding member of the PRISM Quartet and the recipient of two composition fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His music has been described as “gorgeous and ethereal” by *Classical Magazine* and “pulsing and wittily colored” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Levy’s works have been widely broadcast on NPR, Voice of America, and WFMT; featured on the soundtracks of several motion pictures; and recorded on the innova and Koch labels. PRISM’s acclaimed sophomore recording, *Real Standard Time*, features jazz compositions by Levy performed with drummers John Riley and Matt Wilson, pianist Franck Amsallem, guitarist Ben Monder, and saxophonist Tim Ries. Levy holds degrees from the University of Michigan, where he studied saxophone with Donald Sinta and composition with William Albright, William Bolcom, and Fred Lerdahl. Levy has served on the faculties of the Universities of Michigan, Toledo, and Redlands and currently directs the Philadelphia Music Project, an Artistic Initiative of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

Photo: Jacqueline Hanna

**Jennifer Higdon** *Bop*

*Bop* is a fun romp for four saxophones, written for the PRISM Quartet.

**Jennifer Higdon** (b. 1962 in Brooklyn, NY), winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize, is one of the most performed living American composers working today. She has been the recipient of a Grammy Award (for her *Percussion Concerto*), a Pew Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and two awards from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Recent commissions have come from the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, The President's Own Marine Band, the Tokyo String Quartet, the new music ensemble eighth blackbird, pianist Yuja Wang, and violinist Hilary Hahn. Her *Soprano Sax Concerto* was premiered by PRISM saxophonist Timothy McAllister. She makes her living from commissions and serves as composer-in-residence with various orchestras throughout the country. She holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

[jenniferhigdon.com](http://jenniferhigdon.com)



Photo: J.D. Scott



**Dennis DeSantis** *Hive Mind*

The term “hive mind” refers to a group of individuals who act and think as a single entity. The term is often used to describe the behavior of insect collectives such as beehives and ant colonies, although the related idea of “groupthink” is prevalent among human collectives as well. My piece treats the ensemble in exactly this way: the players remain locked in a strict and extremely complex rhythmic unison, with very little space to breathe (either literally or metaphorically). There is no room for expression or individuality here. There is only the task at hand....

**Dennis DeSantis** (b. 1973) is a composer, sound designer, and percussionist based in New York City. His electronic music appears on labels such as Ghostly, Global Underground, Cocoon, and Kanzleramt, and he has performed throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. Recent highlights include commissions from the Whitney Museum, the Staatsoper Stuttgart, and Carnegie Hall. DeSantis is the Head of Documentation for Ableton and previously worked as a sound designer for Native Instruments.

[dennisdesantis.com](http://dennisdesantis.com)

**Robert Capanna** *Moment of Refraction*

*Moment of Refraction* is a prismatic miniature, a brief study that reflects my admiration and affection for the members of the PRISM Quartet.

**Robert Capanna** (b. 1952) retired in 2009 from his 28-year tenure as Executive Director of Settlement Music School in Philadelphia. He is an active member of the music community in Philadelphia, where he serves as President of the Presser Foundation and a director of Prudent Management Associates, an investment advisory firm.



**Keith Moore** *OneTwenty*

A quick voyage from one to twenty, dedicated to the PRISM Quartet with admiration and affection on the occasion of their twentieth anniversary.

**Keith Moore's** (b. 1970) compositions have been commissioned for musikFabrik WDR (Cologne), Ensemble de l'itinéraire (Paris), the Manhattan Sinfonietta (NYC), the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival (USA), ISCM (Switzerland), Talujon Percussion (NYC), Aktive Musik (Essen), and organizations throughout the United States and Europe. Other notable performances have been arranged by Ensemble 21 (NYC), SEM Ensemble (NYC), CRASH ENSEMBLE (Ireland), Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Montréal), Timetable Percussion (NYC), Schlagquartett Köln (Germany), the Wet Ink Ensemble (NYC), and renowned soloists Mieko Kanno, violin (London), Taimur Sullivan, saxophone (New York), Tomas Bächli, piano (Berlin), Kevin Boyer, organ (London), Margaret Lancaster, flute (NYC), Kaiti Koulia, soprano (Athens), and Anton Lukoszevieve, cello (UK). Moore has been a fellow at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival (USA), Domaine Forget (Canada), Fondation Royaumont (Asnières-sur-Oise, France), a President's Fellow at Columbia University (NYC), an Artist Fellow of the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation (Athens), and an Artist-In-Residence at ZKM | Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe), where he is completing a multi-composition cycle for members of the International Ensemble Modern Academy and Ensemble Modern commissioned by ZKM and the Jerome Composers Commissioning Program at the American Composers Forum. Moore also performs contemporary music, live electronics, and jazz and has studied the microtonal idiom of Byzantine chant extensively with Lycourgos Angelopoulos. His teachers include Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Anthony Braxton, Fred Lerdahl, Alvin Lucier, and Tristan Murail.

**Jason Eckardt** *A Fractured Silence*

*A Fractured Silence* is a set of six brief vignettes that provide multiple perspectives on limited material. The work was commissioned by the PRISM Quartet for its twentieth anniversary and is dedicated to Nick Winter and Seong Chun in celebration of their marriage.

**Jason Eckardt** (b. 1971) played guitar in jazz and metal bands until, upon first hearing the music of Webern, he immediately devoted himself to composition. Since then, his music has been influenced by his interests in perceptual complexity, the kineticism of performance, and the natural world. He teaches composition at the City University of New York's Brooklyn College and Graduate Center and lives in the Catskill Mountains.



Photo: Florian Kleinfenn

**Frank J. Oteri** *Fair and Balanced?*

“Fair and Balanced” is the slogan of the conservative-leaning FOX News Network, but unlike them I took these words literally. *Fair and Balanced?* treats the ensemble equally (mostly—hence the question mark) and presents material in which all 24 quartertones carry equal weight. The title of each movement describes how the music was put together. “Remaining Neutral” refers to cycling the 24-tone scale with neutral triads (the thirds are halfway between major and minor). “Seeming Partial” exploits an interval exactly halfway between a perfect fourth and a tritone which is indistinguishable from the 11th partial in the overtone series. (This interval is so commonplace you can hear it when a refrigerator is humming.) “Uncommon Ground” is just that, a ground melody in the uncommon time of 5/4, harmonized as a chorale exclusively with stacks of intervals half the size of a perfect fourth. Finally, “Incremental Change” exploits a riff that slowly ascends by transposition up a quartertone. Here the baritone saxophone takes center stage, implying that change must start from the bottom before it can reach the top.

ASCAP Award-winning composer and music journalist **Frank J. Oteri's** (b. 1964) compositions include *MACHUNAS*, a “performance oratorio in four colors” created in collaboration with Lucio Pozzi and inspired by the life of Fluxus-founder George Maciunas, which received its world premiere in Vilnius, Lithuania. Oteri is also the Composer Advocate at the American Music Center and the Founding Editor of its web magazine, *NewMusicBox*.

Photo: Jeffrey Herman

**Perry Goldstein** *Out of Bounds*

*Out of Bounds* is a little barn-burner celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the PRISM Quartet. Fast, hard, and light-hearted, it takes advantage of the virtuoso capabilities of this remarkable ensemble, developing the opening four-note motive into a kind of discontinuous continuity through its slight, 80-second frame. In several places, the piece seems to be falling apart, recalcitrant individuals momentarily trying to go their separate ways but coming together again in unity of purpose. Toward the work's end, the motive expands into a playful little tune before driving to its conclusion.

**Perry Goldstein** (b. 1952 in New York City) has written extensively for saxophones; his oeuvre for the instrument includes over a dozen pieces, including five saxophone quartets and a saxophone quartet concerto, *The Abundant Air: Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Band*. The latter was premiered in 2004 by the West Point Quartet (with PRISM's Taimur Sullivan as guest) and the United States Military Academy Band at West Point. In addition, he has composed works for the Aurelia Quartet and saxophonists Arno Bornkamp, Joseph Lulloff, Ties Mellema, Kenneth Tse, and Cory Barnfield. His saxophone music is available on the Bridge, Challenge, Crystal, and Dutch Vanguard labels. Since 1992, Goldstein has served on the music faculty of Stony Brook University.



Photo: Michael Shane

**Tim Berne** *Brooklyn*

*Brooklyn* was derived from the introduction of a through-composed work of mine for piano and alto sax. It is meant to be played painfully slowly...like trying to get out of Brooklyn by car on a Friday afternoon. For this version I added tense harmonies to take full advantage of the sonority of the four saxophones.

Saxophonist/composer **Tim Berne** was born in Syracuse, NY, in 1954. A fan of R&B and Motown, he was not particularly interested in jazz until he heard saxophonist Julius Hemphill's album *Dogon A.D.* Immediately inspired by Hemphill's ability to project R&B soulfulness in a jazz context, Berne traveled to New York in 1974 and sought out the saxophonist. To this day, Berne, who has explored a singular and uncompromising musical path, cites Hemphill as a continuing influence.

In 1979, Berne founded the Empire label and released four albums over the next four years. Subsequently, he released recordings on Soul Note, Columbia, and JMT. In 1996 Berne founded his second label, Screwgun, on which he has released many more recordings. Berne has performed with groups led by David Torn, Michael Formanek, and Drew Gress. He has been commissioned and had works performed by the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Kronos Quartet, Copenhagen Art Ensemble, The Arte Quartet, and many others. Berne is currently recording and performing extensively with his newest ensemble, Totopos.

Photo: Robert Lewis



**Chen Yi** *Happy Birthday to PRISM*

My one-minute dedication to PRISM's birthday is a cheerful celebration, with the "Happy Birthday" tune hidden vertically in the parts of the quartet.

A prolific composer who blends Chinese and Western traditions, transcending cultural and musical boundaries, **Dr. Chen Yi** was born in 1953 in Guangzhou, China. She is Distinguished Professor at the Conservatory of Music and Dance of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and the recipient of the prestigious Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her music is published by Theodore Presser Company; has been commissioned and performed worldwide by such ensembles as the Cleveland Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Seattle, Pacific, and Singapore Symphonies, and the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden; recorded on Bis, New Albion, New World (with a Top 10 Classical Music Album Award from NPR in 2009), Teldec (with a Grammy Award for Chanticleer), Albany, Naxos, and many other major labels. Chen Yi has received bachelor and master degrees in music composition (1983 and 1986) from the Central Conservatory of Music (CCoM) in Beijing and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree (1993) from Columbia University. Major composition teachers have been Profs. Wu Zu-qiang, Chou Wen-chung, and Mario Davidovsky. She was inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2005 and appointed as the Cheung Kong Scholar Visiting Professor at the CCoM in 2006.

**James Primosch** *Straight Up*

*Straight Up* reworks musical material from a big band chart I wrote in my undergraduate days. The title is a phrase used by a musical colleague from that era—instead of “Are you kidding me?” he would say “Straight up?”

When honoring him with its Goddard Lieberon Fellowship, the American Academy of Arts & Letters noted that “A rare economy of means and a strain of religious mysticism distinguish the music of **James Primosch**.... through articulate, transparent textures, he creates a wide range of musical emotion.” A student of George Crumb and Mario Davidovsky, Primosch (b. 1956) has had works performed by such ensembles as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Collage, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the Twenty-First Century Consort. Dawn Upshaw included a song by Primosch in her Carnegie Hall recital debut. Commissioned works by Primosch have been premiered by the Chicago Symphony, Speculum Musicae, and pianist Lambert Orkis. He is currently at work on a commission for the Albany Symphony.

[jamesprimosch.com](http://jamesprimosch.com)



Photo: Deborah Boardman



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**PRISM Quartet**

Timothy McAllister, soprano saxophone

Zachary Shemon, alto saxophone

Matthew Levy, tenor saxophone

Taimur Sullivan, baritone saxophone

**Guest artist**

Greg Osby, alto saxophone

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