

NEW CENTURY SAXOPHONE QUARTET

For over 30 years, the New Century Saxophone Quartet has entertained audiences with a combination of skillful artistry and down-home fun. Founded in Winston-Salem, NC, the ensemble was the first of its kind to win the prestigious Concert Artist Guild competition in New York City in 1992. The quartet has toured throughout the United States and the World performing in major concert venues including Carnegie Hall, Chicago's Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, Atlanta's Spivey Concert Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, New York's Merkin Concert Hall and the Kosciuszko Foundation Townhouse, Washington, D.C's Strathmore Hall, the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, the Alaska's Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival, the Villa Schönberg in Zurich, Switzerland, the Conservatoire de Musique in Esch Luxembourg, the Macau International Music Festival and the Academy for the Performing Arts in Hong Kong, China. New Century was also the first saxophone quartet to perform at La Huaca del Complejo Atlapa in Panama City, Panama.

NCSQ has appeared on television and radio across the United States on National Public Radio's Performance Today, the Voice of America, and North Carolina Public TV. New Century has been the resident ensemble of two radio stations in North Carolina, WUNC in Chapel Hill and WHQR in Wilmington. Outside of the U.S., Panamanian TV aired a documentary and live performance, and in the Netherlands, Dutch radio presented a live broadcast from the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. In January 1998 the ensemble participated in a special performance for the Chinese New Year that was broadcast live to over 100 million people on television throughout the world. NCSQ has also appeared in unique concert settings including two command performances for President Clinton in the White House to a concerto performance with the United States Navy Band.

Beyond the concert stage, New Century has premiered numerous new works at international conferences and symposiums including most recently at the 2012 International Saxophone Congress in St. Andrews, Scotland, the 2012 North American Saxophone Alliance bi-annual conference in Tempe, AZ, and the 2015 US Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium in Winchester, VA.

The New Century Saxophone Quartet has dedicated its career to growing and developing the repertoire of the saxophone quartet, and to that end has commissioned numerous composers including Peter Schickele, Michael Torke, Sherwood Shaffer, Arthur Frackenpohl, David Ott, Ben Johnston, Barbara Kolb, David Lang, Benjamin Boone, Ken Valitsky, Thomas Massella, tenor saxophonist and Saturday Night Live Band leader Lenny Pickett, and well-known composer and jazz saxophonist Bob Mintzer. NCSQ has received commissioning grants from the National Endowment of the Arts, The Aaron Copland Recording Fund, Chamber Music America and the North Carolina Arts Council.

INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES:



Michael Stephenson, soprano saxophonist for **New Century Saxophone Quartet**, received his Bachelor of Music degree from the North Carolina School of the Arts where he was a student of James Houlik. He received his Master of Music Degree from Ithaca College where he was a student of Steven Mauk.

From 1988-92, Michael was a Visiting Artist at Randolph Community and Pitt Community Colleges. As a Visiting Artist, Michael performed over 400 concerts across North Carolina, as well as at the Kennedy Center for the

Performing Arts in Washington D.C. It was during this time that Michael discovered his passion for “Grass Roots” music making and founded two community Jazz Bands that are still performing today, the Randolph Jazz Band and the Emerald City Big Band. It was through this passion for community music making that Michael and his wife Cheryl founded the Music Academy of Eastern Carolina in his adopted hometown of Greenville, NC. MAEC is a nonprofit community music school that serves the Greenville area by offering performance opportunities; lessons on a variety of instruments; Music Therapy; and a rehearsal space for many community ensembles.

Michael has been the Coordinator of Music & Drama at Pitt Community College since 2012. As part of his duties he directs the Pitt Community College Symphony Orchestra, oversees the AFA Music program, performs solo concerts in the region, teaches music classes, and is responsible for all musical and drama activities on campus. Michael was awarded the Excellence in Leadership Faculty Member of the Year from Vance-Granville Community College in 2009, and was one of the top nine Community College Instructors in the State of North Carolina for the same year. As a member of the Vance-Granville Community College faculty, he started and directed the Vance-Granville Community Band. Michael has taught saxophone at Ithaca College, East Carolina University, NC A&T State University, Barton College, St. Augustine College, and Shaw University.

Michael performs in several different ensembles throughout North Carolina including the North Carolina, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Western Piedmont Symphonies. His performance settings also include several jazz ensembles across eastern North Carolina, and can be heard in chamber and solo recitals throughout the region. As a multiple instrumentalist (Saxophone, Flute, and Clarinet), Michael has played in the pit orchestras for many shows including *Annie*, *Cabaret*, *Joseph and the Amazing Dream Coat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Music Man*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *In the Heights*, *Nunsense*, *Miss Saigon*, *The King and I*, and others. Michael has been the musical director for productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Nunsense* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

When he is not performing the duties listed above, Michael can be seen watching his daughters (Milena and Natasha) become responsible adults, playing tennis on several recreational teams, singing in his church choir, walking his dog, and loving life with his beautiful wife, Cheryl.



Born in Florence, SC, **Chris Hemingway** grew up listening to the sounds of gospel, soul, R&B, and blues even though he and his friends weren't quite accepting of this “old people's” music. However, as a product of his own environment Chris eventually came full circle and would later pull from these early listening experiences to develop his overall approach to music today. Chris' natural fluency in both classical and jazz styles separates him from most musicians.

Chris is now in his thirteenth season with the New Century Saxophone Quartet, the first ensemble of its kind to win first prize at New York City's world famous Concert Artist Guild competition. With NCSQ Chris has performed throughout the world and in 48 of the 50 United States.

His performing career is complemented equally with an active freelance jazz career in NYC. He is a member of the Stan Rubin Orchestra, Valery Ponomarev big band (jazz trumpeter/music director formerly of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers) and George Burton's “Group 5.” Chris has performed and recorded with musicians all over the world including Azucar, Pittsburgh's premier salsa band, legendary jazz drummer Roger Humphries, funk and jazz bassist Dwayne Dolphin, legendary soul and R&B singer Patti LaBelle, jazz saxophonist Lew Tabackin, Azerbaijani jazz pianist Shahin Novrasli, master funk drummer Poogie Bell, legendary funk bassist

Victor Bailey, drummer/percussionist sensation Kahlil Kwame Bell, trombone/arranger Frank Lacey, legendary saxophonist and composer Benny Golson, bassist Tony Depaulis, and with jazz trumpeter Sean Jones.

Mr. Hemingway also leads his own group the "Chris Hemingway Quintet". The Quintet performs all over the country and throughout the world. This group features George Burton on Piano, Craig Magnano on guitar, Wayne Smith on Drums, and Ryan Berg on bass. These master vibe-creators don't merely walk the genre-crossing edge, but rather run it with rock-infused chords heavy with swing, groove, and mood. Their exchange of surprising harmonies, angular rhythms, pointed chords, use of space, and rhythmic elasticity bring deliverance from the traditional rules of engagement, breaking barriers between audience and musician, resulting in an organic harmonic symbiosis.

In 2007 Mr. Hemingway won an Emmy Award as a performer of WQED's (PBS affiliate station) "Live From Studio A." As a sophomore at Duquesne University, Chris won the School of Music's prestigious concerto competition. At the young age of 21, he was also a featured soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Chris has studied with James Houlik at the North Carolina School of the Arts and at Duquesne University.



Stephen Pollock is the tenor saxophonist and a founding member of the New Century Saxophone Quartet. He was born into a US military family in Wurtzburg, Germany and grew up in various cities in the United States and abroad.

He received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Concert Saxophonist, James Houlik.

While Steve has always felt most at home playing chamber music, he has also performed as principal Saxophonist with the Western Piedmont, Salisbury, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Charlotte, North Carolina, Charleston South Carolina, and the Tanglewood Massachusetts Festival Symphonies. As a solo recitalist Steve has been heard throughout the United States including performances at Wake Forest University, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, the University of Michigan, the University of South Carolina, Samford University in Birmingham, Louisiana State University, University of Memphis, Florida State University, University of Florida, and the Cleveland Institute of Music to name but a few. He has also appeared with entertainers such as Steve Allen, Helen Reddy, Marvin Hamlisch, Boots Randolph, and Natalie Cole.

Steve has been very committed to increasing the solo literature for the tenor saxophone and has commissioned several works from a number of composers, including Sherwood Shaffer, David Ott, Thomas Massella, Steven Jones, Glenn Haynes and Suzanne Polak.

Steve has released two solo recordings for Alanna Records entitled So Near, So Far and Songs of the Heart. Both CD's are recordings of love songs for tenor saxophone, piano and strings with several guest artist including the New Century Saxophone Quartet, concert saxophonist, James Houlik; Alanna records recording artist, Amanda Ford; former lead trumpet player for the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Sean Jones; the legendary saxophonist, Boots Randolph; Steve's long time colleague in the New Century Saxophone Quartet, Michael Stephenson; guitarist, producer and president of Alanna Records, Thomas Kikta; Pittsburgh jazz

pianist, Craig Davis; the baroque flutist and Steve's long time friend, Stephen Preston; the Alexander String Quartet; Pittsburgh bassist Jeff Grubbs; world renowned jazz bassist John Patitucci, saxophone giant Branford Marsalis; and Armenian pianist Vahan Sargsyan.

Steve served as the saxophone judge for the North Carolina Governor's School from 1994 to 1999, and was also asked to judge saxophones and chamber music for the 2004 MTNA Midwest College Level Competition at the Oberlin Conservatory in Oberlin, Ohio.

Teaching saxophone and chamber music has always been a passion of Steve's. He has served on the faculties of Davidson College, the Community Music School of the North Carolina School of the Arts, Catawba College, Salem College, Pitt Community College, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. In the summers, Mr. Pollock can be found in Little Switzerland, NC where he is the Coordinator for the James Houlik Saxophone Retreat at Wildacres.

Steve currently lives in Reidsville NC on Beaver Lodge Lake with his wife Kim and two little Dachshunds, Franko and Suzie.



Originally from rural southern Ohio, **Drew Hays** has toured throughout the US and in Europe as the baritone saxophonist in the New Century Saxophone Quartet, and can be heard on the group's 8th studio album, *Weekend Travelers*. He has performed with artists such as Lou Rawls, Natalie Cole, and Bernadette Peters and with ensembles including the Winston-Salem Symphony, the Charlotte Symphony, the Roanoke Symphony, the Eastern Music Festival Orchestra, the Red Clay Saxophone Quartet, and the Equinox Jazz Orchestra. Drew is currently the baritone saxophonist in the Piedmont Triad Jazz Orchestra and can be heard on jazz pianist Mark Freundt's upcoming debut release, *A Jazz Prayer*. Drew's own debut album, *Saxophone Premiere: The Saxophone Music of Sherwood Shaffer* was a joint project with renowned tenor saxophonist James Houlik and released in 2011.

Drew has given lectures or premiered new works at the Jazz Education Network national conference, the World Saxophone Congress, the U.S. Navy Band's International Saxophone Symposium, the North American Saxophone Alliance's Bi-annual and Regional conferences, and the Carolina Saxophone Symposium. Drew serves as an Assistant Professor of Music at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, where he teaches saxophone, theory, and jazz studies. He also serves on the faculty of the John Coltrane Jazz Workshop each summer in High Point, NC. He has previously served on the faculty of North Carolina A & T State University, Bucks County Community College, Duquesne University, and numerous community music schools in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Drew completed a DMA in saxophone at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He performed as soloist with orchestras at both schools as a winner of their respective concerto competitions. Drew currently resides in Greensboro, NC, with his wife Angie. When not teaching and playing, he is an avid cyclist and runner, and enjoys a good cup of coffee.