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Otis Murphy, Classical Saxophone



Contents:

- **Biography**
- **Discography**

Biography

Otis Murphy joined the faculty of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music at the age of 28, becoming one of the youngest faculty members in its history, and where he is currently Associate Professor of Music. He is in great demand as an international soloist and clinician, having gained wide recognition on four continents: North America (United States and Canada), Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom), Asia (Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan), and Australia, appearing with orchestras, bands, and chamber groups, and at special events, such as festivals, symposiums, and World Saxophone Congresses.

Mr. Murphy has received numerous awards including prizes in Belgium's Adolphe Sax International Saxophone Competition, the Jean-Marie Londeix International Saxophone Competition in France, and the Heida Hermanns International Woodwind Competition in the United States. His students also have won many awards and earned positions as teachers, soloists, chamber musicians, and members of top U.S. military bands. Mr. Murphy has released several recordings, and his latest solo compact disc, *Song*, has received critical acclaim. In addition, he has appeared in publications such as Saxophone Journal in the United States, Vandoren Magazine in France, Japan's Band Journal, Pipers and The Sax magazines, Clarinet and Saxophone Society Journal in the United Kingdom, and Dolomiten Magazin in Italy.

Mr. Murphy has enjoyed a close relationship with Japan, in particular, having been invited annually since 2001 to present master classes and concerts, and he has been a member of the artist/faculty of the *Hamamatsu International Wind Instrument Academy* since 2005. His 2009 Japan tour included performances in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sendai and Toyama, and a DVD was released from their sold-out concert in Tokyo's Casals Hall. Other notable appearances in Japan include performances in Tokyo's Opera City Concert Hall and the Isaac Stern Concert Hall in Miyazaki. In 2008, Mr. Murphy was awarded the S & R Foundation's *Washington Award* and its special *Ambassador Award* (which the S & R Foundation created especially for Mr. Murphy) in recognition of his contributions to Japanese and American understanding.

Mr. Murphy holds Doctor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, graduating with the Performer's Certificate, the highest honor given to a performer at this institution; and the Bachelor of Music Education degree, graduating Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Georgia. In addition, he pursued advanced studies in France under a Fulbright Fellowship for foreign study at the Conservatoire National Régional de Musique in Cergy-Pontoise, earning the *Prix de Perfectionnement* by a unanimous decision of the jury. His saxophone teachers include Jean-Yves Fourmeau, Eugene Rousseau, and Kenneth Fischer. Otis Murphy is a Yamaha Performing Artist and a Vandoren Performing Artist. He resides in Bloomington, Indiana with his wife, Haruko Murphy, and their four children.

Discography



"Fantasy"

Otis and Haruko Murphy

The authoritative Saxophone Journal has judged Otis Murphy's musicianship to represent "a hallmark of all the artistry and craftsmanship involved in saxophone performance." He has, says the publication, "a bright and rich sound that at times is pure emotion singing from the artist's very essence." His technique is termed "amazing and equally coordinated," capable of "easily switching gears" from "extremely tender and sensitive playing" to a style "as aggressive as the dictates of the composition."

Murphy's program on this compact disc exploits, in the most positive sense of that flexibly applied word, his prowess both as practitioner of the saxophone and as an artist fully attuned to the music he has chosen to play. He is a saxophonist obviously in love with his instrument; he is its partner and master, prepared to showcase the saxophone's tonal beauty and its ability, when in the right hands and under knowing guidance, to engender feelings, to evoke moods, and to express a musician's interpretative choices.

Collaborating on piano in this recorded recital is Murphy's talented wife Haruko, an accomplished solo artist herself, here weaving her keyboard talents into fused support of her husbands' intents. Their program blends music written for the saxophone with works written for other instruments, rearranged or transcribed.

Listen To Samples

Song Title	Length	Samples
1. Carmen Fantasy from the opera by G. Bizet (1900/1993) François Borne (arr. Roth/ Meylan)		Listen ♪
2. The Swan Camille Saint-Saëns (arr. Rousseau)		Listen ♪
3. Ballade (1939) Henri Tomasi		Listen ♪
4. Aria (after the Manual for the Fantasy in F of J.S. Bach) (1936) Eugène Bozza		Listen ♪
Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1988) David Maslanka		
5. Moderate		Listen ♪
6. Slow		Listen ♪
7. Very Fast		Listen ♪
Japanese Folk Song Traditional		
8. Hamabe no uta by Tamezo Narita		Listen ♪

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Bill of Fare

1 Carmen Fantasy from the opera by G. Bizet (1900/1993) François Borne (arr. Roth/ Meylan) (1840-1920)

The Carmen Fantasy by François Borne, based on major themes from Georges Bizet's operatic masterpiece, was originally scored for flute and orchestra. Borne himself was a professor of flute at the Toulouse Conservatory with an interest in fashioning repertoire for his instrument. Shaped as it was for flute, Borne's Fantasy featured a feast of embellishments. Those complex enrichments have been retained in this CD's arrangement for alto saxophone. So, too, has the high register of the flute, meaning that Murphy is required to handle with fluency notes well above the normal range of his instrument.

2 The Swan Camille Saint-Saëns (arr. Rousseau) (1835-1921)

The French master, Camille Saint-Saëns, wrote *The Carnival of the Animals* as a lark. The composer thought it so unimportant that he did not consider having it published or even performed during his lifetime. But once this infectious collection of zoological impressions came to light, it gained immediate favor with audiences. In original format, *Carnival* calls for two pianos and orchestra. Through the years, some performers added poetry to the work, though the music itself carries sufficient wit and suggestiveness to make its own point. One of its most popular pieces has been "The Swan" which, in cello format, served as inspiration for one of the legendary ballerina Anna Pavlova's most asked-for solo dances. Here, "The Swan" is brought to life by saxophone and piano.

3 Ballade (1939) Henri Tomasi (1901-1972)

Another Frenchman, Henri Tomasi, split his professional career between conducting and composing. In the latter role, he wrote a pair of operas, several ballet scores, and a generous amount of orchestral and instrumental music, often colored and harmonized in the style of contemporaries such as Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Artur Honegger, and yet with a distinctive voice of its own, too. The writing of Tomasi's *Ballade* was motivated by an old English melody

that fevered the composer's imagination. He reportedly envisioned a tall, somewhat emaciated clown along the banks of the Seine speaking to no one but the night: of a desire to shed his outlandish, oversized clothes and to escape even his flesh by being transformed into a saxophone and thereby become able to express joy and pain. The French saxophonist Marcel Mule, who first played the *Ballade*, interpreted the music as expressing that desire and an attending melancholy as, in despair, "the clown resigns himself to continue to make the public laugh."

Mule called the piece "a little drama," taking "the form of the blues, which was invented by black musicians, and at the end, it explodes... in a sonorous mass of loud noise, but harmonious, not like we hear these days."

4 Aria (after the Manual for the Fantasy in F of J.S. Bach) (1936) Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

Speaking of Marcel Mule, the Aria (after the Manuel for the Fantasy in F of J.S. Bach) was prepared for him by Eugene Bozza, a composer, conductor, and teacher whose list of accomplishments included conducting the orchestra of the Opera Comique in Paris and heading the Conservatoire in Valenciennes. Bozza's music was strong in fluent melody, elegance of structure, and reflected his keen sense for instrumental capabilities. In the lovely Bach aria, Bozza had the right source material to rouse his natural compositional instincts.

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1988) David Maslanka (born 1943)

5 Moderate

6 Slow

7 Very Fast

The highly regarded, Massachusetts born David Maslanka – trained at the New England and Oberlin Conservatories and at Michigan State University – lives and works in Missoula, Montana. Although Maslanka's output of compositions is broad in range, he is best known for his works for wind instruments and percussions. Among his most admired pieces is the Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, commissioned by the North American Saxophone Alliance. Much of the score, strongly influenced by minimalism, inhabits the high end of the saxophone's range and, thus, offers daunting challenges to the player. The Sonata often is carried along by patterned and propulsive rhythms, as exemplified in the repeated passages of the opening movement and in the reflective material of the second. The concluding Presto asks much of both the saxophonist and the pianist; it requires virtuosity and the ultimate in ensemble unity.

Japanese Folk Song Traditional

8 Hamabe no uta by Tamezo Narita

Japanese Folk Song based on beloved traditional folk songs...etc. - Program notes by Peter Jacobi.