



# Mercyhurst University

# The end

# Of beginnings



THE SENIOR RECITAL OF  
JONAH HARSHELL

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Featuring Jonah Harshell - Alto and Bari  
Saxophone

In collaboration with Dr. Sarah Kahl- Piano  
and The Mercyhurst Sax Quintet

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4  
May  
@7pm

# 2025

Walker Recital Hall

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Amazing Grace                      John Newton/arr. Gary Lanier (1943-2022)

## Lawson Lunde Sonata Lawson Lunde (1935-2019)

*I. Allegro*

## II. Andantino cantabile

Sicilienne Pierre Lantier (1910-1998)

Bagatellen Erwin Dressel (1909-1972)

## *I. Elegie*

### III. Aria

#### IV. Gigue

Fusion Suite Catherine McMichaels (b.1954)

## I. Fusion

# Intermission

October Eric Whitacre/arr. Tristan Yeagle (b.2004)

Lyrical Suite EUROPA

Kenichi Mitsuda (2012)

### 1. IZUMI (fountain)

## II. A Piece on Salad Days 1983

Sax Quintet:

Aidan Moore - Soprano

Tristan Yeagle - Alto

Juliana Cole - Alto and Tenor

Shannon Evans - Tenor

Jonah Harshell - Bari

**Gary Lanier**, born July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1943, is a composer, arranger, and orchestrator with more than 1,000 published works that include adult musicals, youth musicals, choral collections, solos, worship solos, and other instrumental music. His compositions have been used in over 170 countries around the world. Lanier received his education from the University of North Texas where he majored in Composition and Theory Pedagogy. Gary Lanier was located in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, where he lived and worked with his wife, Valleta. He passed away on January 25, 2022.

Amazing Grace is arguably the most well-known Christian hymn. This hymn is based on the poem written by John Newton in 1772 and describes the joy and peace of a soul uplifted through the gift of grace. The piece as a hymn first appears in the 1780s, when Newton, a former slave owner, joined the fight for abolition of slavery. Due to the climate of the times, Newton began to realize that slavery was wrong, ultimately leading to him fighting for the end of slavery in Britain.

This arrangement of Amazing Grace is very much like the original hymn. The ‘A’ section of this piece is a carbon copy of the original hymn and is in the key of G major. The ‘B’ section, however, is a variation of the hymn with embellishments. With a more frequent usage of 16<sup>th</sup> notes and added accidentals, this section builds up to the final return of the ‘A’ section. At this point, the main theme is modulated into the key of C major. This final section combines the original theme along with the 16<sup>th</sup> note embellishments until the end, at which point, the saxophone player crescendos on a 16<sup>th</sup> note run into an accented and strong G above the staff.

**Lawson Lunde** was born on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1935, in Chicago Illinois. He and made his home in Des Plaines, Illinois, until his death on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Lunde began playing piano by ear at the age of 4, and later, at age 14, appeared on stage as a pianist with the Chicago Symphony. He also appeared on the television program Quiz Kids under the name “Lonny.” After graduation from Maine High School, Lawson Lunde studied music at Chicago Musical College, where his composition teachers were Vittorio Rieti and Robert Delaney. Lunde also earned a degree in Psychology from Northwestern University in 1957, later using his degree to supervise intelligence exams while in the Army. Aside from his time in the Army, Lunde’s career and life revolved around music. While playing the piano was his main occupation, composing was where his interests peaked. He wrote most of his music for saxophone. His compositions include Sonata I and Sonata II for alto saxophone and piano. Alpine Sonata for soprano saxophone and piano, and Suite for Saxophone Quartet.

*Allegro* and *Andantino cantabile* are the first and second movements of this three-movement work entitled *The Lawson Lunde Sonata*, or *Sonata I*, composed in 1959. Movement one contains a more upbeat tone, fluent and melodic phrases, and an overall joy to its sound. Movement II, however, is slower, with a warmer tonal center for most of the piece, and a somber mood. This piece is considered to be “one of the most versatile pieces in the instrument's repertoire.” It has an “American-esque” quality and is filled with “energy, lovely melodies, and some jazz harmonies.”

Movement one has a joyous, almost celebratory feeling throughout. With quick, scalar runs, 32<sup>nd</sup> note embellishments, and a continuous pulse throughout, this movement screams “the 1950s!” Having multiple reprises, and constant callbacks to segments of its melodic material, this piece maintains an energetic character. The constant movement and bright tone leave the energy constantly driving until the end. Movement two, however, represents a longing and passionate expression of something that once was. The piece is sensitive and delicate, but still haunting with a sense of anxiety and, for the most part, uncertainty. The saxophone stays delicate until measure marking ‘A,’ where there is an

altissimo F being played at mf, but the excitement only lasts for a couple measures, as the saxophone returns to piano three measures after. Measure markings 'B' and 'C' are where the piece begins to feel uneasy, as if the saxophone and piano are unsure of each other, creating a sense of anxiety. The saxophonist plays the melody for the very first time at measure 51 and performs the rest of the piece in a legato style and a hushed volume, ending on a fourth line D while playing as quietly as possible.

**Pierre Lantier** was born on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1910, in Marseilles, France, and was married to the composer, Paule Maurice. Lantier was a composer and pianist affiliated with the Conservatoire de Paris. While he has many pieces for saxophone quartet, bass trombone, trumpet, and saxophone, he is best known for this composition, *Sicilienne* for alto saxophone and piano. Pierre Lantier died on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1998, in Ollioules, France.

The *Sicilienne* was published in 1944 and is a staple within the saxophone repertoire. The piece is for alto saxophone and piano. It relies heavily on the interactions between both performers. As the melodies are transferred back and forth, the players must have a similar performance style throughout, blending together seamlessly. With its elegant and flowing melodies, varying styles, and fluctuating tempos, this composition is very enjoyable for both player and listener alike.

This piece begins in 6/8, with a bouncy melodic theme and a somber overall tone. The main melody of the composition consists of an eighth note pick-up into a dotted rhythm, creating a waltz-like feeling throughout. This continues until around the middle of the piece, where the saxophone accelerates and crescendos to a forte altissimo 'E.' This note pushes us into the more intense portion of the work, only lasting a few measures. This portion features an eruption from the alto sax, slowing back down to the original tempo, and returning the piano to the original melody. There is a piano interlude the recapitulates the statement given by the alto sax, which then is handed back off to the sax for the final melodic statement.

**Erwin Dressel** was a composer, conductor, and pianist born on June 10th, 1909, in Berlin Germany. He died December 17th, 1972. On his return to Germany, from a British prisoner-of-war camp, he had been being forgotten as a composer. However, he stayed a freelance musician in Berlin until his passing. Before his death, Dressel had re-established himself, and had become known as an active pianist, theater conductor, arranger, and composer. His career started at only 14 years old with his first Opera based on Shakespeare's *Much ado about Nothing*. He studied at the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory with Klatte from 1919, and then in 1924, transferred to the College of Music, where he studied with Paul Juon. He began collaborating with the Dresden sculptor and author Arthur Zweiniger in 1928. Dressel is known for his operas, orchestral music, chamber music, as well as vocal choral music.

*Elegie*, *Aria*, and *Guige* are the first, third and fourth movements of Dressel's Bagatellen or Bagatelles for Alto Saxophone and Piano. This piece was written in 1938, and was dedicated to Sigurd Raschèr, along with his other saxophone works, including two saxophone concertos. Dressel's music is distinguished by its catchy but not trivial melodies and opulent yet bombastic harmonies.

The *Elegie* gives the performer the opportunity to be very expressive in the beginning with its slow, mournful feeling, and its moderately calm movement within the saxophone's part. The composition changes, however, to a more active presentation with a sense of aggravation. From start to finish, the

*Elegie* seems to move through the stages of grief that result from someone's death. The *Aria*, on the other hand, stays slow, and gives the player an opportunity to provide emotion in playing. Starting at pianissimo with an *espressivo molto*, the saxophonist has the opportunity to create hills and valleys throughout the low, warm melody. In the middle of the movement, the player is presented with a *forte ma dolce*, allowing for a substantial and sweet resolve before going back down to piano. The *Guige* finally concludes the piece with an upbeat and buoyant melody containing many different leaps and accidentals. This movement is in 9/8 and allows for the "triplet" feel to be expressed throughout most of the movement. During the middle of the movement, however, the melody changes to a more mellow feeling, pushing at sorrow with the use of trills, accidentals. An overall heavier feeling lingers until the movement reaches the D.C. *al Fine*, sending us back to the upbeat and buoyant melody and a strong melodic closure.

**Catherine McMichael** was born in 1954 and is a pianist, composer, and teacher, as well the founder of Camellia Music. McMichael received her degrees in piano performance and chamber music from the University of Michigan and now remains in Michigan to continue working on her music career. She is the pianist of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, and the Ann Arbor based River Raisin Ragtime Revue, as well the co-director of the Bay City based Bijou Theater Orchestra. While remaining active in her piano playing, McMichael also continues to compose works for voice, various instruments, and ensembles.

*Fusion* is the first movement to a three-work suite entitled *Fusion Suite*. This suite was commissioned by Mr. Lynn Klock, professor of saxophone at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The work is to be performed on the Baritone saxophone and piano, a rather out of the box sort of instrumentation for performance music. With this instrumentation, McMichael was able to utilize the lower registers of the Bari sax, going to the lowest note available (a written "A" below the staff), as well as venturing up into the higher range, with an "E" above the staff being the highest point. The piece allows the performer to showcase their technical abilities on the saxophone while also leaving space for melodic beauty throughout.

The composition is in the key of C Major throughout the entire work but also incorporates many accidentals within the running eighth note phrases. This movement is also rather fast when played at its written tempo at 90bpm. The tempo gives a constant feeling of being in a rush. With the addition of abundant syncopation, the listener should feel themselves leaning forward with the music while being kept on their toes for what is going to happen next. Additionally, the composition creates more tension as there is almost never a point when the saxophone comes in on the downbeat of a measure, rather entering on the "and" of one, or on three. The running eighth note melody heard at the beginning returns at the forefront of every phrase within the piece, giving the player and the listener an anchor to something they already know. Interwoven with the running eighth notes is a beautiful melody that takes a step back from the hastiness of the piece, this allows the saxophonist to be more expressive, even if it is only for a few measures at a time.

# Thank You...

**Dr. Kahl...** Thank you so much for being my accompanist these final two years. While I was bounced around at the beginning of my Mercyhurst career, I am so glad to have landed with you. Your constant joy and beautiful playing help me to stay calm and to perform with emotion. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I couldn't have done this with anyone else.

**Dr. Meier...** Thank you for everything these past four years. Your sense of humor and what seems like endless wisdom has always kept me going and steered me on track to becoming what I am today. While I am going to miss my lessons with you, I think you and I can both agree that its time to just breathe. We both deserve it.

**Becky...** I want to say thank you so much for everything you have done for me. You have installed upon me the drive and devotion to get me to where I am. Regardless if I am kicking and screaming, I am going to make it to this next finish line. Thank you for your countless stories and for the years of memories.

**Dr. Hess...** Thank you for always looking out for me. The countless times we have performed together has made such a lasting impact on me, and I am so grateful to have gotten the opportunity to share the stage with you on so many occasions.

**Sax Quintet...** THANK YOU. You all have been such amazing friends to me since we first started playing together, and I am so very thankful to have gotten to know each and every one of you. You all have made this day so special. Thank you.

**Sabrina...**To my best friend. I would not have been able to make it here had it not been for you. All of those late night Sheetz runs, locking-in sessions, and everything else I have had the privilege to do with you, you have helped me get here today. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to be in your life and for being the person I go to with everything. I can't wait to see the things you do.

**Mom and dad...**My biggest cheerleaders. My rocks. My best friends. Thank you for being the shoulders I go to when I need to cry, and thank you for being the reason I have a smile on my face. I would not be here if not for your constant support and love. Everything I do, I do to make you guys proud, and I hope to one day repay you for everything you have done for me. I love you guys to the moon and back.

**Genesis and Emily...**Thank you for being the best sisters a person could ever ask for. You guys mean so much to me, and I am so glad that I have the two of you in my life. Thank you for everything you do for me and for always supporting me. I love you guys so much.

**Pap...**Thank you for always being there when I need you. From rotating my tires to being here today, I know I can always count on you. Your constant support for my dreams has made such a lasting impact on who I am. PS. I hope you liked Amazing Grace. I have kept this a secret for almost a year. I love ya, Pap.

**Grandma...**Thank you for everything. You have always been there for my performances, and I am so happy you are here today. Your support means so much to me, and I am so thankful for everything you do for me. Thank you for always being there. I love you,  
Grandma

**To You...**Thank you so much for being here. There are so many people I wish I had the space to thank, but I want you to know that I am forever grateful for everyone here today. You have helped make this day so special. Thank you for lending me your time.