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CLASSIC SAXOPHONE

Liscio Recordings, Inc.

FRANK BONGIORNO

Liscio LCD-1001

This is Liscio Recordings first compact disc, featuring the solo debut of Frank Bongiorno. For those not familiar with saxophonist Bongiorno, he holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Ithaca College, a Master of Music degree from North Texas State University, and is currently completing a Doctorate program at Indiana University. Mr. Bongiorno has studied with such eminent teachers as Steven Mauk, James Riggs, Daniel Deffayet, and Eugene Rousseau. He has also performed at two World Saxophone Congresses, been a finalist in the third annual Young Performers Competition, and a semi-finalist in the Touring Artists Program of Concerts Atlantique. He is currently a member of the faculty at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, where he teaches saxophone and jazz studies. Frank Bongiorno is an up-and-coming artist whose abilities will sooner or later demand your attention. He deserves his share of accolades for a classical saxophonist. In some of the pieces on this CD Bongiorno shows signs of becoming a universal artist - not just a "classical" saxophonist.

Ida Gotkovsky's *Brilliance* leads the way here with a full rich sound, and a very full vibrato, from saxophonist Bongiorno. He is an aggressive player who balances successfully

the ensemble saxophone/piano duo sound. The third movement of *Brilliance* is magnificently performed by this saxophonist! His inner (natural) musical ability almost eclipses the music. The fourth movement may be somewhat forced musically, however, it in no way detracts from Bongiorno's presentation of Ida Gotkovsky's music. It just proves that he is indeed human!

Malcom Lewis' *Elegy for a Hollow Man* starts the saxophonist off in the low register, gradually rising through ascending passages. Ultimately Bongiorno enters the altissimo register and exhibits superb control. *Elegy* is a passionate piece which matches the passionate playing of this outstanding saxophonist.

Third is a *Concerto in C Minor* by composer Alessandro Marcello (1684-1750). Originally written as an oboe composition and thought to have been written by Vivaldi, then Benedetto Marcello, until around 1717 when this *Concerto* was found in a collection of twelve concerti published by Jeanne Roger. Published in its original key and scoring, Alessandro Marcello's name was clearly notated as the true composer. The entire piece is performed on alto, and the *Adagio* is particularly attractive.

Hector Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) *Aria* (also named *Cantilena* from the nine *Bachianas Brasileiras*) is performed as a duo saxophone/guitar piece with an excellent sense of ensemble. It is a delicate *Aria*

handled with great skill and care by Bongiorno.

Composer Frank Martin's (1890-1974) *Ballade* was originally written for virtuoso saxophonist Sigurd Rascher. Bongiorno presents some emotional peaks in the second section. It is an excellent composition performed here by a very skilled saxophonist.

Debussy's *Syrinx* is performed here as an unaccompanied alto saxophone solo. Bongiorno wins again with a brilliant presentation. Bach's *Siciliano* is given to the soprano with an arrangement by Bongiorno based on jazz harmonies, and an improvisation, before returning to Bach's original score.

Fast Music is the last movement of an original work for five saxophones, written by David Kechley and titled *Music for Saxophone*. Premiered by Bongiorno in 1985 at the 8th World Saxophone Congress, *Fast Music* is excerpted here as a closing piece. Both the music and performance are excellent.

Saxophonist Frank Bongiorno is a performer to be listened to closely on this CD. His saxophone skills and natural talent will attract your ear. *Classic Saxophone* is only the beginning for this dynamic saxophonist.

-Joseph E. Viola, Paul Wagner