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IMAGES

The Ryoanji Duo

Frank Bongiorno, alto saxophone
Robert Nathanson, classical guitar
Liscio LCD-05032

The Ryoanji Duo has recorded an excellent CD of classical guitar and saxophone pieces. The Ryoanji Duo consists of Frank Bongiorno on alto saxophone and Robert Nathanson on classical guitar. They have performed together since their debut performance at the Tenth World Saxophone Congress in Pesaro, Italy in 1992.

In their search for new music for saxophone and guitar the Ryoanji Duo has commissioned new award winning pieces. They have also included transcriptions of Mozart, Handel, Villa-Lobos, and others. Both artists are on the faculty of the Music Department at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Frank Bongiorno is well known in the saxophone world and has appeared in the Saxophone Journal as a contributing author, a CD master class, and front cover interview. He received his B.M. at Ithaca College, M.M. from the University of North Texas, and his D.M. from Indiana University. He is an active recitalist, orchestral

soloist, jazz artist, and clinician throughout the United States and abroad. He has two previous excellent CDs titled *Classic Saxophone* and *Classic Saxophone, Volume 2*. Frank Bongiorno is Professor of Music and Chair of the Department of Music at the University of North Carolina.

The first selection on this CD is *Driveline: A Power Walk for Guitar and Alto Saxophone* by David Kechley. This piece abounds with energy as the guitar and alto intertwine with unrelenting intensity. Frank Bongiorno captures the listener's imagination by letting his melodic lines live freely and unfettered by mechanical limitations. The listener is totally engulfed in the drama of the music. His articulation is light and extremely precise. Another mark of the artistry of this duo is that everything on the recording sounds deceptively easy to perform. The piece encompasses the altissimo register at times, played to perfection by Bongiorno.

Face of the Moon by Marilyn Shrude creates a mysterious mood. It has its technically demanding passages, which are handled effortlessly by the duo. There

are also lyrical sections where the duo's sensitivity to the music makes the music soar.

Rock Garden by Daniel Worley is a fascinating piece that borrows some basic elements of rock music and incorporates them into a somewhat complex composition. *Barcarolle* by Michael Ruszczyński is an exceptionally beautiful work. In fact, all of the compositions on this CD are exceptional pieces of music including *In the Dragon's Garden* and *Images of China*.

The Ryoanji Duo is an astonishing ensemble offering a new medium (saxophone and classical guitar) that offers much to the listener. As you listen you will be impressed by how quickly you are inserted into the sound this amazing duo creates. The soli sections are impressive and the articulated passages are blended together in a magnificent manner. The Ryoanji duo has created an exciting CD in a wonderful new setting for the saxophone.

-By Paul Wagner
