



FACULTY RECITAL

**Paul Cohen, alto saxophone,
soprano saxophone, and
connosax**

With **Allison Brewster Franzetti**, piano

Anna Keiserman, piano

Kathleen Nester, piccolo and flute

Oren Fader, guitar

and **Mark Timmerman**, bassoon

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2022 | 7:30 PM
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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PROGRAM

AMANDA HARBERG

(b. 1973)

Feathers and Wax

Paul Cohen, soprano saxophone

Allison Brewster Franzetti, piano

MARC MIGÓ

(b. 1993)

Berceuse-Lament

Paul Cohen, alto saxophone

Anna Keiserman, piano

Mark Timmerman, bassoon

MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO

(1895–1968)

Ecloghe, Op. 206

Andante quieto

Allegro con spirito

Lento Elegiaco

Allegro vivace con spirito

Paul Cohen, connosax

Kathleen Nester, flute

Oren Fader, guitar

JEFF SCOTT (BM '90)
(b. 1967)

The Gift of Life (trio version)

I. *Overture*

II. *Tragedy and Ascent*

III. *Celebration of Life*

Paul Cohen, soprano and alto saxophones

Kathleen Nester, piccolo

Allison Brewster Franzetti, piano

Intermission

CARLOS FRANZETTI
(b. 1948)

Four Movements for Virtuosi

Palisades

Baya

Melancolico

Finale

Paul Cohen, soprano saxophone

Kathleen Nester, flute

Allison Brewster Franzetti, piano

THE CONN-O-SAX



The **conn-o-sax** (also spelled **connosax**) is a bold, innovative saxophone created by the Conn Company (Elkhart, Indiana) for a very limited time in 1928. Combining elements of the saxophone, english horn, and heckelphone, Conn attempted to create a new voice for the saxophone. It succeeded brilliantly as a new instrument but failed in the marketplace; we know of only 25 to still exist. Its innovations were numerous; a straight instrument with a pronounced bulb at the bottom, pitched in the key of F (Eb and Bb are traditional for saxophones) and equipped with an extended key range (low A to high G) and a custom mouthpiece. The result is an instrument with a unique timbre, stunning visual appearance and technical versatility visionary for its time.

Conn introduced and advertised the **conn-o-sax** with a heavy emphasis on novelty, presumably to woo the vaudeville clientele. Conn hoped to attract a separate and popular clientele for the **conn-o-sax**, creating an entirely new market for the instrument. Unfortunately, the instrument was not well received at its introduction and the anticipated sales never materialized. Despite heavy advertising and dealer promotion, the **conn-o-sax** simply did not catch on. Conn had badly miscalculated in a number of ways: the novelty aspect of the horn n ever gained widespread appeal; vaudeville was dying, and the roaring twenties were drawing to a close. As the economic collapse of the 1929 Depression deepened,

people were less concerned with new and exotic instruments and more concerned with basic necessities. In addition, there simply was little music available for saxophone in the key of F. While Conn continued to list the **conn-o-sax** in the back of their catalogs through the 1930s, there is no mention of it afterwards. It was in production for less than a year.

The **conn-o-sax** is a woodwind instrument with a sound like no other. There is now a renewed interest in this long forgotten saxophone whose haunting, brooding tone is especially effective in a concert setting. Despite its rarity and seeming impracticality, it has become the most coveted of rare and vintage saxophones. Possessing a dark, lyrical quality with hints of both the english horn and saxophone, the unique timbre of the **conn-o-sax** has captivated woodwind players for generations. Its visionary design and tonal qualities are now being heard, seen, and appreciated in both classical and jazz genres. The **conn-o-sax** has found a new voice in the 21st century.

— Paul Cohen



PROGRAM NOTES

Feathers and Wax

Amanda Harberg

Feathers and Wax is a soaring and playful showpiece originally for flute that was inspired by the Greek myth of Icarus. Through virtuoso writing and occasional jazz influences, *Feathers* depicts the brash, young Icarus reveling in the thrill of flight. *Feathers and Wax* was awarded a National Flute Association Newly Published Music Award in 2016.

In 2019, I created the soprano saxophone version at the suggestion of Paul Cohen, who then recorded it with Allison Brewster Franzetti on his recently released CD, *Soprano Summit*.

– Amanda Harberg

Berceuse-Lament

Marc Migó

Completed in Barcelona, Spain on February 10, 2022, *Berceuse-Lament* is dedicated to Paul Cohen and Anna Keiserman. It is scored for a trio of alto saxophone, bassoon, and piano, and lasts around eight minutes.

I wanted to write a work with long melodic lines and possessing (for the most part) the gentle, rocking nature usually attributed to the genre of the berceuse or lullaby. The elegiac and nostalgic character of the music required my adding the word “lament” to the title. It is up to each listener to decide whether this lullaby intends to put to sleep a child, a sorrow, or invoke an idealized past that inhabits the realm of our dreams.

– Marc Migó

Ecloghe, Op. 206

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) was a composer, pianist and writer born in Florence, Italy to an Italian Sephardi Jewish family. He became widely known as a composer and teacher in Italy during the 1920s and 1930s. But as facism and anti-Semitism continued to gain influence his personal safety was threatened and his artistic profession curtailed. By 1938, Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s music was eliminated from radio, and performances were canceled—all prior to the announcement of the official anti-Semitic laws. When in 1938 Mussolini’s “Manifesto of Race” was issued by the Mussolini government, the composer and his family left for America.

Like many artists who fled fascism, Castelnuovo-Tedesco found employment in Hollywood, where, with the help of Jascha Heifetz, he was offered a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a film composer. Over the next fifteen years, he worked on scores for some 200 films there and at other major film studios.

Ecloghe, Op. 206 (*Eclogues*) for flute, english horn, and guitar was written two years before the composer's death and is believed to be Castelnuovo-Tedesco's last completed work. It is an engaging four-movement work filled with ebullient joy, poignant melodies, and lively dances. I'm playing the english horn part on the conno sax.

– Paul Cohen

***The Gift of Life* (trio version)**

Jeff Scott

Originally written for piccolo and saxophone quartet, *The Gift of Life* was commissioned for me by flutist Helene Rosenblat in memory of Ingrid Werth. Ingrid was a vivacious 15-year-old flautist and former student of Helene who died in an automobile accident in Austria in 1975 just before starting her studies at the Vienna Conservatory. Scott's music reflects on Ingrid's life, from boundless youthful energy to devastating loss and the ascendance of the spirit; to the celebration of life and how everyone was uplifted by her presence.

The Gift of Life, for piccolo and saxophone quartet, quickly became one of my favorite compositions, and my quartet has twice recorded it in American and European releases.

During the recent pandemic *We are Trio!*, the flute, saxophone and piano ensemble, sought to reimagine repertoire to reach a virtual audience with music of singular vitality and personal connection. It was only natural to suggest that we create a trio version of *The Gift of Life*. Jeff Scott shared my enthusiasm and is excited by our trio adaptation.

– Paul Cohen

Four Movements for Virtuosi

Carlos Franzetti

Four Movements for Virtuosi was originally commissioned by and dedicated to the Palisades Virtuosi in 2005. My wife, Allison, the pianist on this recording, suggested to Paul Cohen that the clarinet part would sound wonderful on the soprano saxophone. I agreed, and as a result this is the first recording featuring soprano saxophone, flute, and piano. The four movements are based on popular music styles from the United States and from Argentina, where I was born and raised. These styles range from Argentine tango, milonga, and the folk idiom chacarera to some American ragtime in the last movement. My intention with this music was to feature each performer, both individually and as an ensemble.

– *Carlos Franzetti*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Paul Cohen (MM '76, DMA '85)

Paul Cohen is one of America's most sought-after saxophonists for orchestral and chamber concerts and solo recitals. He has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Charleston Symphony and the Bergen and Adelphi orchestras. His many solo orchestra performances include works by Debussy, Creston, Ibert, Glazunov, Martin, Loeffler, Husa, Dahl, Higdon, Still, Villa-Lobos, Tomasi, and Cowell. He has also performed with a broad range of orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera (NYC), American Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Hartford Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra.

He has recorded three albums with the Cleveland Symphonic Winds under the direction of Frederick Fennell and a CD of the music of Villa-Lobos with the Quintet of the Americas, as well as recordings with the Philharmonia Virtuosi, New York Solisti, Paul Winter Consort, North-South Consonance, and the New Sousa Band.

Dr. Cohen has rediscovered and performed lost saxophone literature, including works for saxophone and orchestra by Loeffler, Florio, and Dahl as well as chamber works by Grainger, Ornstein, Sousa, Cowell, Siegmeyer, and Loeffler. He has published more than one hundred articles on the history and literature of the saxophone in the *Saxophone Journal*, *Instrumentalist*, *CBDNA Notes*, *Clarinet and Saxophone Society Magazine of Great Britain*, *The Grainger Society Journal*, and the *Saxophone Symposium*. His seminal column, "Vintage Saxophones Revisited," was featured in the *Saxophone Journal* from 1985–2002.

Recent CDs include *American Landscapes* (American music), *Common Ground* (chamber music), *New York Rising* (American music for saxophone quartet), *Heard Again for the First Time* (premiering lost music), and *Soprano Summit* (soprano saxophone). His most recent album, *Center Chamber*, was released in December 2022.