

Thursday 2 October 2025
7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall



Quartz Saxophone Quartet

featuring Guildhall Saxophone Ensemble

conducted by Mick Foster & Richard Benjafield

Milton Court Concert Hall

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Filming or recording of the performance is not permitted.

Latecomers will be able to enter the auditorium at a suitable break in the performance.

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

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Guildhall School is provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation.

Quartz Saxophone Quartet

Paul Stevens | soprano saxophone / bass clarinet
Christian Forshaw | alto saxophone / bass clarinet
Brad Grant | tenor saxophone / bass clarinet
Mick Foster | baritone saxophone / bass clarinet

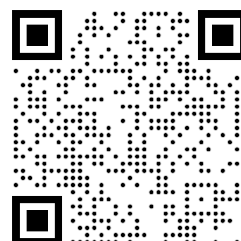
Guildhall Saxophone Ensemble

conducted by Mick Foster & Richard Benjafield

Catrin Roberts | soprano saxophone
Lauren Peck | soprano saxophone
Imogen Cookson | alto saxophone
Zach Knight | alto saxophone
Tristan Ng | alto / tenor saxophone
Violet Harus | alto saxophone
Joe Pollard | tenor saxophone
Emily Plumb | tenor / soprano saxophone
Charles Curtin | baritone saxophone
Hebe Cooke | baritone / alto saxophone
Emily Overend | baritone saxophone
Lucia Breslin | baritone saxophone
Samuel Beddard | bass / soprano saxophone
Kevin Ng | percussion
Kia Lares | percussion
Ali Ayaz | percussion

Access our digital programme for biographies, programme notes and more. Scan the QR code or visit:

**[guildhall-programmes.co.uk/
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Programme

Mick Foster

Saxophone Quartet No 1

I. With Movement

II. Freely, slowly – Tranquil

III. Lively

Mick Foster

Journey Home

featuring Guildhall Saxophone Ensemble

Steve Reich

New York Counterpoint

arranged by Susan Fancher

featuring Guildhall Saxophone Ensemble

I. Fast

II. Slow

III. Fast

INTERVAL**Mick Foster**

Autumn Tones

I. Sweet Dusk

II. Leaf Swirl

Mick Foster

Saxophone Quartet No 2

I. Brooding

II. Lively

III. Tenderly

IV. Joyful

Mick Foster

Five Contemporary Dances

I. Jivers

II. For Astor

III. Saturday Night

IV. Witney's Lament

V. Salseros

Christian Forshaw

Sgt Major Flaw

featuring Guildhall Saxophone Ensemble

Notes

Saxophone Quartet No 1

Saxophone Quartet No1 was completed in 2003, and revised in 2022, and was originally written for Quartz. The piece is composed in three movements. The first introduces a minor melody written in 7/8 time which reappears in the final movement. The second movement is a waltz, initially featuring the baritone saxophone, whilst the third movement is an energetic rondo in 6/8 time. The sound-world of the piece blends many elements; jazz harmony, syncopated cross rhythms and an overall sense of melody.

Journey Home

Journey Home was written for the Phoenix Saxophone Orchestra in 2023. The piece starts with a fanfare around the ensemble. This gives way to a gentle groove and a nostalgic melody played by saxophone quartet. The piece grows into a larger ensemble texture, with melodies being heard around the ensemble.

New York Counterpoint

New York Counterpoint was composed in 1985. It was originally written for a clarinet soloist and tape. In the original version the soloist pre-records ten clarinet and bass clarinet parts and then plays a final 11th part live against the tape. The piece is written in three movements which run without a break. It uses phrase shifting and melodic imitation – characteristic techniques of the minimalist style of composition. The effect is mesmerising and evokes the vitality of Manhattan.

Autumn Tones

Autumn Tones was originally written for a course at Benslow Music led by the clarinettist Ian Mitchell. The dark sound of the four bass clarinets has a mellow and mysterious quality, evocative of an autumnal landscape. The piece is in two movements; ‘Sweet Dusk’ has a chorale like texture with an emerging melody which creates a reflective, peaceful atmosphere tinged with sadness. ‘Leaf Swirl’ features an undulating groove with a restless, searching feeling. The melody is heard in both the high and low registers of the bass clarinet through the shifting harmonic landscape; to the composer a reminder of dancing leaves on a blustery autumn day.

Saxophone Quartet No 2

Saxophone Quartet No 2 was completed in 2022. It comprises four movements and combines contemporary sounds with jazz harmony. A brooding melody is introduced in the first movement by the tenor and baritone saxophones; the second movement is a quick, dance like piece with a strong rhythmic feel; the third movement is a lyrical waltz and the fourth movement is a joyous tapestry of interlocking rhythms and melodies.

Five Contemporary Dances

Five Contemporary Dances was originally composed for alto saxophone and piano, as part of the Guildhall Saxophone Series at Saxtet Publications. It takes its inspiration from Jean Francaix’s *Five Exotic Dances*, with each movement being influenced by a contemporary dance style; jive, tango, disco, ballad and salsa. The saxophone quartet arrangement was made in 2024 for Quartz.

Sgt Major Flaw

Sgt Major Flaw refers to a character caught in a constant internal power struggle. They long for acceptance, yet repeatedly fall back on behaviours that push others away – even those who once admired, respected and cared deeply for them.

This conflict is reflected in the music through opposing rhythmic groupings: the left and right sides of the ensemble pull against one another, one side interpreting units of five as 3 + 2, the other as 2 + 3. Between them, a central group offers moments of solace and stability, attempting to reconcile the tension.

Quartz Saxophone Quartet

Quartz Saxophone Quartet brings together four of the UK's top professional saxophonists. They started playing together in 1994 as students at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and have performed extensively throughout the UK and Ireland. They have commissioned and recorded new pieces by composers such as Gary Carpenter, Alex Levine and John Buckley. Their first album was released to critical acclaim on Black Box Music.

This evening's concert launches the recording *Sweet Dusk*, released by Deux-Elles Classical Recordings.

All of Mick Foster's pieces played in the concert are available at Saxtet Publications.

Mick Foster

Mick is a saxophonist and composer who is especially known as a soloist on the baritone saxophone. Originally from Harrogate, he studied at Guildhall School and has since worked extensively in the fields of jazz, commercial and classical music.

Mick has appeared with many ensembles which include the big bands of John Dankworth, Stan Sulzmann and Mike Garrick; Alan Barnes + 11, The Humphrey Lyttelton Band, Ginger Baker's Air Force, Laura Jurd's Human Spirit, The London Philharmonic Orchestra and English National Opera. Mick has recorded four albums under his own name and appears on many albums and film & TV soundtracks including *Don't Look Up* and *Downton Abbey*.

As a composer Mick has written for many types of ensemble including Onyx Brass and the London Jazz Orchestra. His music has been recorded and played around the world, broadcast on BBC radio and included on exams syllabuses.

Mick is known as an educator and teaches at Guildhall School and at Jazz School UK.

Paul Stevens

Paul studied with John Harle at Guildhall School. He has had a successful and varied career as a saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist and has performed around the world in venues including Carnegie Hall, The Lincoln Centre, Orchard Hall (Tokyo), Theatre des Champs, Esplanade (Singapore), the Royal Albert Hall, Barbican and the Festival Hall.

He has played and recorded with many orchestras and ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta, Britten Sinfonia, BBC Concert Orchestra and London Saxophonic. Artists with whom Paul has worked include Elton John, Katie Melia and Damon Albarn. He has recorded the soundtracks for many film scores including the Oscar nominated *Mr. Turner* for which he was a featured player; *Monuments Men*, *Fantasia 2000* and *Goya's Ghosts*.

Paul has held chairs on many West End Shows including *Aladdin*, *Kinky Boots*, *High Society*, *Sleepless*, *Urinetown*, *A Chorus Line*, *Shrek*, *Sister Act*, *Spamalot*, *Billy Elliot*, *Ferry Springer the Opera*, *My One and Only*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Maddie* and *Candide*.

Paul has held teaching positions at Reeds School and the Guildhall School Junior Department. He currently teaches saxophone, clarinet and flute at Guildhall School.

Christian Forshaw

Christian's distinctive sound as saxophonist & composer has drawn a global audience. His playing and writing have been featured by Tenebrae on *When Sleep Comes*, Voces8 on *Lux* and *Eventide*, and he was recently commissioned by the BBC Singers to compose and arrange 3 new works for a performance in Cadogan Hall, London in April 2024. To date he has recorded 6 solo albums, most featuring his own writing and arranging.

His music is heavily influenced by the choral landscape he grew up with, alongside colours from minimalism and jazz.

In 2023 his music was included by Ridley Scott in the 20th Century Fox movie *The Last Duel* featuring Matt Damon. He has worked with artists as diverse as Brian Eno, Michael Nyman, Damon Albarn, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Hugh Jackman.

Since 2002 Christian has been Professor of Saxophone at Guildhall School.

Brad Grant

Brad Grant studied saxophone at Guildhall School with John Harle. His performing career has taken him all over Europe and across the world playing at some of the world's prominent venues.

He is actively working as a freelance musician in fields as diverse as orchestral, dance bands, chamber groups and film sessions. He regularly plays with many of the country's leading orchestras and chamber groups. Most of Brad's performing time is occupied in theatre in London's West End, trebling on all saxes, clarinets and flutes. After starting out on several UK and European touring productions he has since been the chair holder on many West End shows and deputised on countless others. He currently plays alto sax, clarinet, flute and piccolo on *The Book of Mormon*, a chair he has held since 2016.

Brad has played with a variety of orchestras and ensembles including the Philharmonia, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Britten Sinfonia, English National Opera, Royal Opera House, Icebreaker, London Saxophonic, the Michael Nyman Band and the Graham Fitkin Band. He has also been recorded on a number of film soundtracks.

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Forthcoming events

Symphonic Wind Orchestra

10 October 2025
Silk Street Music Hall

Join our Symphonic Wind Orchestra for a vibrant programme of American music.

Spotlight on Wind, Brass & Percussion: Sound the Trumpet

23 October 2025
Silk Street Music Hall

Will O'Sullivan directs this celebration of music for trumpets, featuring works by Kevin McKee, Erik Morales and Carl Ruggles' *Angels*.

Guildhall Symphony Orchestra conducted by Joshua Weilerstein

5 November 2025
Barbican Hall

Ravel's dazzling Piano Concerto in G, Tchaikovsky's dramatic Fourth Symphony and Jessie Montgomery's *Coincident Dances* feature in this stirring concert conducted by Joshua Weilerstein.