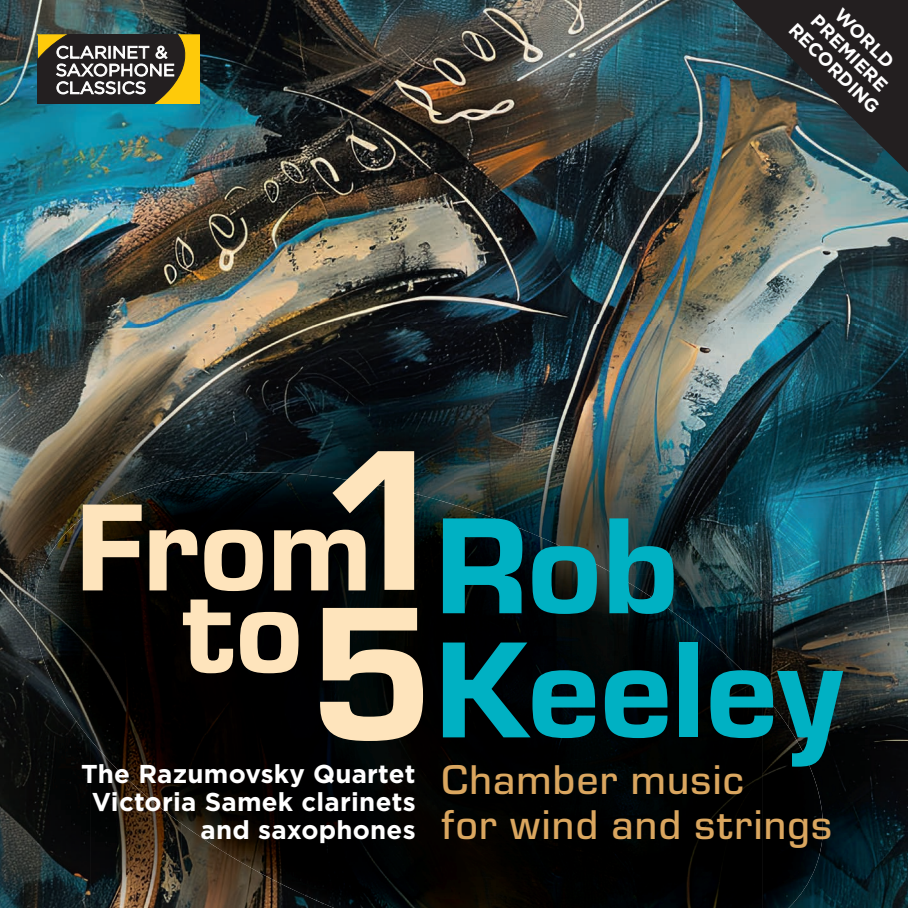




CLARINET &
SAXOPHONE
CLASSICS

WORLD
PREMIERE
RECORDING

From ¹ to ⁵ Rob Keeley

The Razumovsky Quartet
Victoria Samek clarinets
and saxophones

Chamber music
for wind and strings

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STRING QUARTET No. 3

13:30

1. Allegro moderato 4:14
2. Andante 1:32
3. Adagio (palindrome) 2:02
4. Scherzo: Allegretto 2:34
5. Allegro 3:08

6. **DUO 1** *Allegretto* 1:23
Two alto saxophones

7. **DUO 2** *Andante molto moderato* 1:49
Two alto saxophones

STRING QUARTET No. 4

14:53

8. Allegro moderato 3:24
9. Andantino 3:56
10. In memoriam (MK, JM, AP, GC) 7:33

11. **DUEL** 1.46
Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

12. **ELEGIAC CORTÈGE FOR JANE AND TONY** 3.00
Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

13. **SCHERZO** 2.49
Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

STRING QUARTET No. 5

12:19

14. Allegro piacevole 4:47
15. L'istesso tempo: quasi ciaccona 1:35
16. Andante - lazily - più mosso 5:59

17. **'A HUSH ON A WINTER'S EVENING...
(RIDING OUT)'** 7:47
solo bass clarinet

CLARINET QUINTET

15:11

18. Allegro - misurato - Allegro fugato 6:18
19. Interlude: Andante 2:50
20. Alla ciaccona - Allegro - grazioso -
Coda, Allegro molto 6:03

Total: 74:41



STRING QUARTET NO 3 (2019/2020)

This single movement quartet owes much to deep listening and absorption (over decades) of the Haydn quartets. A Sonata **Allegro**, both perky and robust, initiates the discourse: the 'classical' 4/4 rhythmic profile being occasionally interrupted by a dance-like idea in 11/4, with the more lyrical, turn-dominated second subject following.

The following **Andante** introduces a chorale unpinned by pizzicato and buzzing repeated triplets which take over, giving way to a fairly strictly palindromic **Adagio**, in which silences play a significant role.

A more relaxed **Scherzo and Trio** follow, complete with internal repeats, then finally a 6/8 quasi **Rondo Allegro** ensues, finally capped with a short Coda, which echoes the palindromic Adagio, eventually resolving into a bright D major-plus sonority.



ON MY CLARINET AND SAXOPHONE DUOS

For many years I've been fascinated by the two-voice medium; one can express one's thoughts with greater clarity and economy when there are only two lines to hear, quite apart from the highly practical purpose of the wind duo as a medium which my friend Victoria Samek has encouraged me to explore at length, so on this disc there are five such examples. The two alto saxophone pieces are both rather gentle, even 'domesticated' and amiable in character, as befits two identical instruments perhaps, with much unison and imitative writing.

The other three, however exploit the considerable tonal and registral differences between the E flat clarinet and tenor sax: the combative 'Duel' needs no explanation. However, the 'Cortège' is a deeply-felt, rather complex piece, appropriate to the legacy of its dedicatees, my friends Jane Manning and Anthony Payne. The final Scherzo, on the other hand, is as expected much lighter and playful in tone.

Duo 1 *Allegretto* - Two alto saxophones

Duo 2 *Andante molto moderato* - Two alto saxophones

Duel - Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

ELEGIAIC CORTÈGE FOR JANE AND TONY

for Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

SCHERZO

for Eb clarinet & tenor saxophone

STRING QUARTET NO 4 (2020/2022)

Composed at the same time as its immediate predecessor, this is in three movements, an **Allegro moderato**, and **Andantino**. followed by a longer, much weightier third, entitled 'In Memoriam', opening with an expressive cello solo. This rather intense music is intercut with short, heterophonic 'buzzing' fragments leading to an **Andante** featuring a high-lying 1st violin while violin 2 enjoys a brief, 'searching' solo. The Coda features offbeat pizzicato chords and lighten the mood towards the end.

A lot of people I cared about died around the time of its composition, and I myself had been seriously unwell at the time, but I hope that the ultimate impression of the music is positive and life-affirming; it's worth pointing out that the composer's own emotional or physical state need not necessarily be reflected in the music itself.

'A HUSH ON A WINTER'S EVENING... (RIDING OUT)'

for bass clarinet

This, the most recent on the disc is a piece where, unusually, the title came first: I am indebted to my friend the artist Mo Batchelor for allowing me to use his lovely, evocative words for a piece of music.

It's in two sections, the first highly improvisatory in character, it encourages the performer to take a very free approach to rhythm except where it says otherwise. The second, (riding out) suggests, I hope, a nocturnal horseback ride, but to where?? Needless to say, this was written for and dedicated to Victoria Samek.



STRING QUARTET NO 5 (2022)

This is the the last of a clutch of three quartets, written in quick succession - the 'bug' had definitely bitten me, after many years of avoiding the medium. This is perhaps the most light-hearted and playful of the three, and in it I aimed to complement this with a corresponding transparency of texture, as always emulating Haydn.

It's in a single moment, falling clearly into four distinct sections:

1. a cheerful triple-time **Allegro**
2. a brief quasi-chaconne
3. **Andante**, based around an 11/8 ostinato, and finally
4. 'Lazily' where the ostinato idea is developed using palindromic rhythms and changing metres (eg 12/8, 11/8, 10/8 etc). The viola interrupts with what becomes a gigue-like pattern, spreading to the whole ensemble, but eventually fading away into nothing.

CLARINET QUINTET (2022)

Having written a work for the more unusual combination string quartet with bass clarinet for Victoria Samek, Sonata Macabre (included on Clarinet and Saxophone Classics CC0070) I felt it was time to write something substantial for the more familiar line-up featured here.

I wrote this as a 90th birthday gift and homage to Alexander Goehr, for whom the subversion of a much-loved tradition and its formal procedures were an essential part of his output. (Since Sandy's death in August 2024, I would now like to dedicate this piece to his memory.)

Here I attempted something similar. The three substantial movements consist of:

1. **Allegro - Misurato - Allegro fugato**
2. Interlude: **Andante**, a sort of off-kilter sarabande
3. **Alla ciaccona - Allegro scherzando** - grazioso (this harks back to the previous quasi-sarabande) - Coda: **Allegro molto**



ROB KEELEY

Rob Keeley, b. Bridgend, South Wales, 1960: studied at the RCM, Oxford University, Accademia S. Cecilia (Rome) and Tanglewood. Active as composer and pianist, since 1993, Rob has lectured in composition at King's College, London. His large output includes two symphonies and a number of works for small orchestra, but his main interest is in chamber music and songs.

PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

I'm a composer, pianist, ex-academic in my early 60's, enjoying early retirement doing what I love – writing, playing and listening to music. My own work is mainly chamber music, with songs and a few big orchestral pieces to my credit. Early influences range from Britten, Messiaen, Stravinsky and Dallapiccola to my teacher Oliver Knussen and (early) Judith Weir, while later studies with Donatoni helped expand my aesthetic. These days I'm interested in concision, clarity and expressivity, generally within an intimate setting and on a relatively small scale. Recent pieces have included three string quartets, and there's a lot of chamber music with piano. Baroque and classical forms often make an appearance (variation, chaconne, sonata form) and I always aim to make my work entertaining, with emotional light and shade, and my love of Haydn and Poulenc have ensured, I hope, wit and humour are also present in my compositional voice.

I entered this crazy world in South Wales in 1960. I had a pretty conventional upbringing, learning the piano at 9 and starting to scribble notes at the same time. A strong attraction to Messiaen's music, awakened by hearing 'Dieu Parmi Nous', was strengthened by a memorable English Bach Festival concert including the UK premiere by Yvonne Loriod of the ferociously difficult 'La fauvette des jardins', (from memory), coupled with 'Visions de l'Amen' with the composer playing the tuneful, less virtuosic second piano. The radiant music of Luigi Dallapiccola was also a huge influence.

In 1973 I started attending the Royal College of Music Junior Department, first studying piano. In 1976 the composition teacher I'd been assigned was the young and so far relatively unknown Oliver Knussen, who further encouraged me, and introduced me to late Stravinsky, of whom I naturally began to make very bad copies. Roberto Gerhard was also there in the mix, along with constant love of (especially) Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Elgar.

1977 saw me going up to Magdalen College, Oxford to read Music under Dr Bernard Rose, who once a week covered my two-and three-Palestrina and Lassus exercises, not done with much enthusiasm, it must be said, with copious amounts of red ink. After staying on at Oxford to take the BMus in Composition, the period between 1982 and 1993 was taken up with earning a freelance living as a repetiteur / ensemble pianist and copying parts / making vocal scores for various publishers.

One of the ensembles I played with, Music Projects / London under Richard Bernas, made a BBC recording of Franco Donatoni's cello concerto 'Le Ruisseau sur l'escalier' - I'd not heard much of the Italian maestro's work before then, but I was immediately hooked, and after a meeting was invited to attend his class in Rome the following year (1988). Living in Florence for five months and commuting to Rome every fortnight was a memorable experience, as was two months in Tanglewood that summer, where I got to work with Hans Werner Henze and received encouragement from Leonard Bernstein (for a crazy orchestral piece I'd dashed off - a mixture of Carter and Berg!).

In 1993 I was offered a 'proper job' teaching Composition at King's College, London. Highlights for me were chances to work alongside Harrison Birtwistle, and to invite the American composers William Kraft and Leon Kirchner to talk to the students, plus a whole host of British composers.

But after 25 years of teaching and increasing admin (and it seemed to me, a lessening of the importance of Western classical music, the kind that I really cared about) I'd decided I'd had enough. So I took early retirement and moved briefly to Hereford. Now, back in London (or at least suburbia) I continue to compose, and have renewed my piano playing, above all with my old friend the violinist Rupert Bawden and in the company of the enthusiastic members of the Oxford and Cambridge Music Club.

Rob Keeley May 2025

VICTORIA SAMEK

Victoria Samek is a critically acclaimed international artist, a highly respected educator and a thoughtful and caring mentor. Combining breath-taking technicality and musical integrity in her performances and recordings, she is driven by her commitment to musical excellence. Born of Czech and Hungarian parents, she was a pupil at The Purcell School and studied clarinet with Roger Fallows before winning a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal College of Music studying clarinet with Colin Bradbury and bass clarinet and saxophone with Steve Trier. She later studied clarinet with Antony Pay. Prize winner of the prestigious Frederick Thurston Memorial Prize, she graduated with honours.

The power of communication in performance, the discipline of practice and the love of music through her chosen instruments have all shaped her distinguished musical career as a performer and recording artist. In 1992 she founded Clarinet & Saxophone Classics as an international recording label celebrating the clarinet and saxophone in all its richness and diversity. The label launched with her first recording of the World Premiere Recording of Copland's Clarinet Sonata alongside the complete music of 'les Six' which was voted 'most sheerly seductive record of the year' by the Sunday Times. The label's significant catalogue by artists encompasses new and period performances as well as carefully restored historical recordings.

Holder of a master's in performance science from the Royal College of Music, she has combined a lifetime of experience as player, teacher and educator alongside her continued scientific research. This has culminated in a musician's handbook - Organise, Prioritise, Commit; The Training, Testing and Performing Process. OPC is set to revolutionize training and performing for players, musicians and performers.

Victoria is a D'Addario Performing Artist and an official endorsee for Selmer Paris clarinets.



THE RAZUMOVSKY QUARTET

Ellie Fagg and Tom Norris *violins*

Dorothea Vogel *viola*

Orlando Jopling *cello*

The Razumovsky Quartet was formed in 2020 by four close friends: Ellie Fagg, Tom Norris, Dorothea Vogel and Orlando Jopling. Each member of the quartet brings with them a wealth of experience; Dorothea as a member of the Allegri Quartet for many years, Tom a principal member of the LSO, Orlando as a highly regarded conductor and cellist and Ellie, an avid chamber musician with experience of leading and directing small ensembles and chamber orchestras. Busy performing schedules meant that they had hardly ever had the chance to explore music together, until the pandemic gave them the opportunity, during which time they performed many extraordinary concerts online to hundreds of people around the world and explored some of the greatest works in the repertoire.



Producer & Engineer: Jim Unwin (tracks 1-5, 8-10, 14-16)

Producer: Jim Unwin (tracks 18-20)

Engineer: Adaq Khan (tracks 18-20)

Producer and Engineer: Simon Weir (tracks 6-7, 11-13 & 17)

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Victoria Samek photo credit for P.17: Olivia Wild

Victoria Samek with Rob Keeley photo credit for Back of booklet:
Simon Weir, Classical Media

The Razumovsky Quartet photo credit: Benjamin Robinson

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was founded in 1992 by Victoria Samek

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