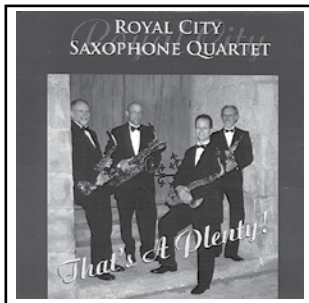


Recommended Recordings



Paul Wagner



THAT'S A PLENTY
 Royal City Saxophone Quartet
Bradley Moggachi, Larry Moser, Robert McWade, Ernie Kalwa

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This CD *That's A Plenty*, by the Royal City Saxophone Quartet, is not the first CD by them I've reviewed. Formed in 1991, The Royal City Saxophone Quartet has created interesting musical niches in the market, and their CD's enjoy world wide appeal. They've appeared on CBC Radio, on commercial classical stations, and on National Public Radio in the United States. Their concert tours have taken the quartet to many ragtime and jazz festivals throughout the United States and Canada. Their concert venue has included The du Maurier Downtown Jazz Festival in Toronto; the Evergreen Ragtime Bash in Colorado; the Grand International Ragtime-Jasstime at Alexandria Bay, and the world's largest Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, Missouri. In 1998 the Quartet represented Ontario in a Canada Day performance before an audience of over 100,000 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

The founder of the Quartet is Ernie Kalwa, who also plays baritone. On this recording he also doubles on tenor Saxophone. Bradley Moggach is the soprano player, however on this CD he also doubles on alto and piano. Larry Moser is the alto player, with Robert McWade filling out the foursome on tenor. The Royal City Saxophone Quartet is joined by Jack McFadden on bass and Michael Woods on drums and assorted percussion.

The opening selection is *That's A Plenty* which sets the mood

for the whole CD. You will immediately recognize the potential for a rollicking good time with the music on this recording. Including the boisterous enthusiasm contained in their overall performance.

Given the opening feel of the music, a change of style arrives with Monk's *'Round Midnight*. This is a delightful arrangement with some very nice alto work. The quartet reverts back to ragtime music with the *Charleston Rag*. Then suddenly, to give the listener an even more abrupt change, the quartet plays an excellent arrangement of *Aria* from *Suite No. 3 in D Major* by J. S. Bach (often nicknamed *Air on the G String*).

What follows next is Calvin Hampton's composition, specifically written for the Royal City Quartet, titled *Bach's Fireworks Music*. It is a charming piece for the quartet that is rooted in Bach but with a "modern" Baroque style (an excellent addition to the saxophone quartet repertoire). The quartet shifts gears and plays *Over The Rainbow* with beautifully rich undulating harmonies. There is a nice double time feel in a small segment of *Over The Rainbow* that lights a fire for the listener.

Starting with *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* an extra tenor is doubled tracked into the mix, creating a quintet. A rhythm section is added and the lead off tune is *Blues Dance* (a straight ahead jazz feel). *Blues Dance* features excellent tutti performing and some superb soloing. *Pick Yourself Up* follows as a very good arrangement and a tribute to big band jazz. Larry Moser gets the nod to introduce on alto, what else but the timeless favorite, *Harlem Nocturne*. Then we move to the exciting tune *St Thomas*, and ending the CD with *Dizzy Fingers*.

This Royal City Saxophone Quartet CD is a superlative recording, easily demonstrating their versatility, as well as virtuosity as a quartet. To perform so well in such a variety of musical styles is tribute to their considerable talents. In addition, they bring all the excitement and enthusiasm that they have for their niche ragtime theme tunes, into the other music styles on this CD. This is definitely a must have CD. §

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