



# Gerry Hemingway Quartet

Ray Anderson - trombone  
Ellery Eskelin - tenor saxophone  
Mark Dresser- bass  
Gerry Hemingway – drums

"Like the tightest of early jazz bands, this crew is tight enough to hang way loose. \*\*\*\*\*"

John Corbett, **Downbeat Magazine**

Gerry Hemingway, who developed and maintained a highly acclaimed quintet for over ten years, has for the past six years been concentrating his experienced bandleading talent on a quartet formation. The quartet, formed in 1997 has now toured regularly in Europe and America including a tour in the spring of 1998 with over forty performances across the entire country.

“What I experienced night after night while touring the US was that there was a very diverse audience interested in uncompromising jazz, from young teenagers with hard core leanings who were drawn to the music's energy and edge, to an older generation who could relate to the rhythmic power, clearly shaped melodies and the spirit of musical creation central to jazz's tradition that informs the majority of what we perform.”

“The percussionist's expressionism keeps an astute perspective on dimension. He can make you think that hyperactivity is accomplished with a hush. His foursome recently did what only a handful of indie jazzers do: barnstormed the U.S., drumming up business for emotional abstraction and elaborate interplay. That's something Ellery Eskelin, Mark Dresser and Ray Anderson know all about.”

Jim Macnie **Village Voice** 10/98

*“The Quartet played the compositions, stuffed with polyrhythms and counterpoints, with a swinging elegance and intensity, which left nothing more to desire.”*

Willy Taub, **Die Tageszeitung** 12/91

“Hemingway's compositions and improvisations have a strong sense of melody and while there is a degree of abstraction, the music seems more emotional than cerebral.”

Parry Gettelman, **Orlando Sentinel** 5/98

“The musical chemistry was an additive process, starting from scratch, gradually dropping in subtle ingredients of texture and making unexpected connections, taking lazy turnabouts and sonic fishtails that seemed to fall into a groove almost by accident. It was about examining tonality and making sirens out of sudden wailing thoughts, and most of all, about connecting in brash and, witty conversations that could almost make a listener wince at the edginess if you weren't so happily entranced. “

Mario Pietramala, **The Edmonton Journal**, 6/98

“Hemingway is an old hand at shaping speculative improvising techniques into cohesive compositions. On the four evocative selections that make up Johnny's Corner Song, the drummer reaffirms that he's one of the most interesting bandleaders and composers of the '90s. Hemingway thrives on establishing collective dialogue predicated on complex pulse-layering, modulation between different tempi within the ensemble, a richly textured sound vocabulary that extends the possibilities of what instruments are designed to do and melodies that stay with you.”

Ted Panken, **Downbeat Magazine** 11/98

*“Hemingway showed a very creative and original approach to composition. He combined subtle tonal characters and complex musical structures with the swinging confidence of a streetband”*

Jukka Hauru, **Helsingin Sanomat**, Finland 11/96



**Gerry Hemingway** has been composing and performing solo and ensemble music since 1974. Recordings of the quartet include Devils Paradise on Clean Feed Records of Portugal released in 2003 and Johnny's Corner Song released in 1998 on Auricle Records. Prior to the quartet, he toured and recorded regularly with his European based quintet whose final Cd was released on GM Recordings in the fall of 1999 entitled Waltzes, Two-Steps and Other Matters of the Heart. Previous recordings include four recordings on the Swiss Hat Art label and Slamadam (95) and Perfect World (96) on Random Acoustics.

His work as a composer and percussionist includes recordings and performances with Derek Bailey, Don Byron, Leo Smith, Oliver Lake,

Kenny Wheeler, Joe Lovano, Sam Rivers, Frank Gratkowski, George Lewis, Guus Janssen, John Cale and Hank Roberts among many others. Mr. Hemingway also recently performed in duet with pianist Cecil Taylor in May of 1999 on the invitation of De Singel in Antwerp, Belgium. He was a member of the Anthony Braxton Quartet from 1983-1994 and more recently has been performing as a member of the Reggie Workman Ensemble. He is a core member of Anthony Davis' Episteme Ensemble and has performed and recorded as a featured soloist on Mr. Davis' violin concerto "Maps" as well as the opera "Under the Double Moon" and "Tania". Mr. Hemingway also participates in many collaborative projects including BassDrumBone with Ray Anderson and Mark Helias (for 26 years!). Their most recent recording is called March of Dimes was released on Data Records in March of 2002. Other projects include a trio with German pianist Georg Graewe and cellist Ernst Reijseger whose CD's include, Saturn Cycle and View From Points West on Music & Arts. Another ongoing collaboration is with Marilyn Crispell which has taken many forms including a cooperative trio with bassist Barry Guy. "Tom & Gerry" is another duo with Thomas Lehn who performs live analog electronics.

Recent recordings of his music for solo percussion include Electro-Acoustic Solo Works (84-95) and Acoustic Solo Works (83-94) on the Random Acoustics label. Previous vinyl editions, about to go out of print, include Solo Works on Auricle Records and Tubworks on the Sound Aspects label.

Mr. Hemingway received a Guggenheim fellowship in May of 2000 for the composition of a new work for orchestra and three improvisors entitled "Sideband" which was premiered in California in 2003. It follows an earlier commission from the Kansas City Symphony of a concerto for percussionist and orchestra entitled "Terrains". In January of 1999 he completed two commissions, one from with funding from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust for a string quartet entitled "Contigualis". The other entitled "The Visiting Tank" for string quartet plus live electronics was commissioned by the New York State Council on the Arts. The program which was presented at Merkin Hall in New York City in February 1999 was rounded out with two other chamber works that are revisions of earlier commissions including "Aurora" for sextet and "Circus", originally commissioned by clarinetist Don Byron, for quintet. The entire program was released as a collection of Mr. Hemingway's chamber works in the fall of 1999 on Tzadik Records.

One of his more recent commissions was from the Holland Festival and NPS radio of the Netherlands was for a performance in June of 1998. The commission was for a co-composition with the Amsterdam based composer Guus Janssen. Entitled "Cycles", the work used a unique computer controlled conducting system that allowed the ensemble to play in multiple tempos. In addition to receiving fellowships from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation on the Arts, he has also received four prior commissions from the Parabola Arts Foundation with funding from N.Y.S.C.A. including "Aivilik Rays", a concert length work for solo work for tape and percussion, "Polar", a quadrophonic electronic work, "Lattice Bright in Glory's Lambence" which was premiered by Mr. Hemingway's mixed quintet at Merkin Hall in January of '95.



“If I ever had a home, it was the slide trombone” says **Ray Anderson**. Although the perennial poll-winner (6 times in Down Beat’s Critics Poll!) is indeed at home with the “slip-horn”, his unique music is now being heard all over the world. Anderson’s innovative and influential style is technically awesome but straight from the heart. He shatters musical categories but remains personal, emotional and accessible. He is often humorous but never predictable. He has given the trombone a whole new sound and also developed a trombone-like way of singing!

Born in Chicago in 1952, Ray Anderson started playing trombone when he was eight. “The music I remember from my parent’s house includes many Dixieland records (which inspired me to select trombone as my instrument) as well as Mahalia Jackson, Broadway shows, Mozart concertos and various folk singers. I played trombone

in the orchestra and jazz big band at the University of Chicago Lab School. I was introduced to everything from John Cage to the Blues, from Archie Shepp, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane and Bird to Motown, the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix and Sly and the Family Stone; I also heard some of the early AACM concerts. Thus I developed an omnivorous taste in music which has only grown over the years!”

After three years in California, playing in funk, R&B and jazz groups, Ray Anderson moved to New York City in 1972. He picked up a wide variety of musical experience, played in the booming loft scene and spent important periods with Barry Altschul’s trio and Anthony Braxton’s quartet. “Playing with Braxton (during 1978-81) really ended my period of apprenticeship and I’ve led or co-led my own groups ever since.” These bands have included the wild funk unit Slickaphonics and a trio with bassist Mark Helias and drummer Gerry Hemingway called BassDrumBone. Now Anderson can be heard leading his quartet (piano or guitar, upright bass and drums), his Wishbone Ensemble (which adds percussion and violin to the quartet), his Alligator Band (electric bass and guitar, drums, percussion and trumpet) his Bonified Big Band (classic big band instrumentation) and Ray’s latest incarnation, The Pocket Brass Band featuring Jack Walrath on Trumpet, Bob Stewart on Tuba and Charli Persip on Drums. Ray is also a member of Slideride, a four trombone cooperative featuring Craig Harris, George Lewis and Gary Valente. Ray is currently negotiating with several labels for his U.S. label debut.

“As truly astonishing as Anderson’s technical facility on the instrument is, it was never allowed to interfere with the spirit of the music, or over-shadow his collaborators.”

**Sydney Morning Herald Arts 7/99.**

“.....the cat who put the trombone back on the front seat of the Jazz Cadillac!”

**Village Voice 8/98**



**Ellery Eskelin** was born in Wichita Kansas on August 16th, 1959 and was raised in Baltimore, Maryland since the age of two. In 1969 at age ten he began playing the tenor saxophone. His interest in music was sparked by his mother "Bobbie Lee" who played Hammond B3 organ professionally in Baltimore with her own groups in the early sixties. Throughout high school and college he began playing professionally around Baltimore in a variety of musical situations while concentrating heavily on jazz, sitting in at local venues and forming groups of his own.

In 1983 he moved to New York City to devote himself to the pursuit of jazz and improvised music. Towards that end studies began with saxophonists George Coleman and

David Liebman. The first few years in New York were spent apprenticing with a wide variety of musicians (see below) including a notable stint with organist Jack McDuff, in an attempt to widen his scope as a player and solidify the necessary skills required to pursue musical ideas that were just beginning to gel in his mind.

Eskelin's recordings as a leader and co-leader (there are currently nineteen) have been named in Best of the Year critics' polls ranging from the New York Times, The Village Voice, and major jazz magazines in the US and abroad. He also appears on over thirty recordings as a side person (see discography). DownBeat Magazine named Eskelin as one of the 25 Rising Stars for the Future in its January 2000 issue ("...young players who not only insure the music's survival but promise to take it to the next level") as well as including him in the "Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition" category of their 46th Annual Critics Poll (August, '98), 49th Annual critics Poll (August 2001), 50th Annual Critics Poll (August 2002) and well as the "Rising Star" category of their 51st Annual Critics Poll (August 2003). Eskelin was also a nominee for the prestigious 2003 Jazzpar award.

In addition to his own work, Eskelin has also recorded and/or performed with Pheeroan Aklaflaff, Ray Anderson, Barry Altschul, Epizo Bangoura, Thurman Barker, Joey Baron, Han Bennink, Steve Beresford, Tim Berne, Joanne Brackeen, Delmar Brown, Jaki Byard's Apollo Stompers, Donald Byrd, Regina Carter, Eugene Chadbourne, Dennis Chambers, Anthony Coleman, Marc Copland, Joe Daley, Dave Douglas, Mark Dresser, Robin Eubanks, Mark Feldman, Mike Formanek, Erik Friedlander, Ben Goldberg, Drew Gress, Tim Hagans, Billy Hart, Phil Haynes, Mark Helias, Gerry Hemingway, the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band (w/Elvin Jones), Terumasa Hino, Frank Lacy, Pete Laroca, Andy Laster, David Liebman, Joe Lovano, Tony Martucci, Jack McDuff, Paul Motian, Buddy Morrow, the New York Composers Orchestra, Reggie Nicholson, William Parker, Tom Rainey, Marc Ribot, Herb Robertson, Josh Roseman, Mikel Rouse, Paul Smoker, Leni Stern, Mike Stern, Steve Swell, David Taylor, Gebhard Ullmann, Tom Varner, Jack Walrath, Carlos Ward, Fred Wesley and Larry Willis among many others.

"...a range of technical / emotional / sonic vocabulary and a bounty of ideas equaling or exceeding anyone who's ever broken in a reed." ([www.allaboutjazz.com](http://www.allaboutjazz.com))

"A major player in today's creative music" (Down Beat, September 1995)

**Mark Dresser** has been composing and performing solo contrabass and ensemble music professionally since 1972 throughout North America, Europe and the Far East. His own projects include Mark Dresser's "Force Green," and the Mark Dresser Trio, performing his music for the French Surrealist film masterpiece of Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, "Un Chien Andalou" as well as the German expressionist silent film classic, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari".



Additional original solo bass music was composed for the New York Shakespeare Festival Production of HENRY VI.

Collaborative projects include "The Double Trio" comprised of the "Arcado String Trio" and the Trio du Clarinettes. He was commissioned by the Banlieues Bleues Festival in Paris to premier Dresser's composition "Bosnia", later recorded on CD by the "Double Trio" as "Green Dolphy Street" on ENJA. A founding member of the Arcado String Trio, he also received a commission from WDR Radio of Cologne, Germany in 1991 to compose "For Not the Law," an extended work for string trio and orchestra. Released on CD by JMT, "For Three Strings and Orchestra," is the third of five CD's recorded by Arcado. In 1992, Dresser composed and performed "Armadillo," for Arcado and the WDR Big Band. In 1995, "The Banquet," a double concert for various flutes and contrabass with string quartet was written and commissioned by Swiss flute virtuoso Matthias Ziegler. "Invocation," on Knitting Factory Works is the most recent CD of Dresser's contrabass music.

Dresser, a virtuoso contrabass player has performed and recorded with many of the luminaries of 'new' jazz composition and improvisation. For ten years he performed with the Anthony Braxton Quartet, as well as diverse groups led by Ray Anderson, Tim Berne, Anthony Davis, Gerry Hemingway, John Zorn, and others. He has made over sixty recordings.

He has received grants from New York Foundation for the Arts and Meet the Composer, He holds both B.A. and M.A. degrees in Music from U.C. San Diego where he studied contrabass with the seminal virtuoso of twentieth century performance practice, Maestro Bertram Turetzky. He was awarded a 1983 Fulbright Fellowship for advanced contrabass study with Maestro Franco Petracchi.

"Mark Dresser is an inventor. He also may be the most important bassist to emerge since 1980 in jazz or classical music." **Boston Herald**

"He has proven to be one of the master bassists of modern jazz, perhaps even the most exciting. ...his improvisational fecundity was remarkable for its veritable ensemble-in-miniature, in which every orchestral maneuver can be deployed to advantage... Dresser's rhythmic mooring, melodic liquidity, and timbral hues showed how sanguinely he absorbs and adapts available contexts, emotionally and generically. The almost palpable physicality of his pizzicato slaps and pedal plunging, the luxuriant tremolos of his arco passages and refrains, were as identifiable as the calling cues we associate with elder bass paragons." **San Diego Reader**