



Gerry Hemingway Quartet

Herb Robertson - trumpet
Ellery Eskelin - tenor saxophone
Mark Helias- 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 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.

Herb Robertson is internationally renowned as an innovative instrumentalist, composer and arranger in both traditional and avant-garde jazz idioms and new music. In 1981, Robertson became one of the original members of Tim Berne's ensemble and shortly after joined Mark Helias's band. It is with these two artists that Robertson first began receiving enormous critical acclaim on tour throughout the United States and Europe and on subsequent recordings documenting his original brass concept incorporating extended mute technique. From 1985 to 1992, Robertson recorded as a leader with JMT musical productions in Munich, Germany, producing five albums under his own name. On various other labels, he has recorded with many of the leading lights of the New York Downtown Scene including Bill Frisell, Wayne Horvitz, John Zorn, Bobby Previte among others (selected discography included). After his debut album, *TRANSPARENCY*, Herb Robertson formed his own quintet and opened the Greenwich Village Jazz Festival in 1986 to high critical acclaim. This was the first time an avant garde band opened a major jazz festival in the United States. Soon after, the quintet toured Europe.



Robertson has been leading groups ever since, and now records as a leader for Leo, Splasc(h), Cadence, and the CIMP record labels. Robertson has been invited as a soloist and guest artist for many important European Jazz and New Music productions. He was invited to the important "October Meeting" in Amsterdam in 1987 and 1992, along with Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, Gerry Hemingway, Steve Lacy, Paul Bley, Horace Tapscott et al, and is a frequent performer at the Berlin, Saalfelden, Willisau and Nicholsdorf music festivals. He toured with the Charlie Haden Music Liberation Orchestra at major jazz festivals in Italy, England, Scotland, Switzerland and Austria.

Since the 1990's Robertson has recorded and performed internationally with Tim Berne, the Mark Helias Band, The Fonda / Stevens Group, the Simon Nabatov Quintet, Andy Lasteris Hydra and Barry Guy's New Orchestra along with many others. He has since performed/recorded with Anthony Davis, Bobby Previte, Elliot Sharpe, David Sanborn, The George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band, the London Jazz Composer's Orchestra, the Klaus Konig Orchestra, Rashied Ali, Ray Anderson, Bill Frisell, Paul Motian and Dewey Redman, among many others. Currently Robertson's own ensembles include The Double Infinitives, the Herb Robertson Brass Ensemble, and his improvising trios with Dominic Duval, Jay Rosen, Paul Smoker and Phil Haynes. Among Robertson's performances and recordings for theatrical and dance productions are the Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation with composer, David Behrman and the Public Theater production of "Track and Field" with composer, John Zorn.

"Robertson forces runs of super-human length, power and density from his horn, yet his tone is amazingly clear and crisp. He uses a range of half-valves, split tones, and mutes to introduce a breadth of tonal colorations to his performance." *Wire Magazine*

"One of the most talented and inquisitive trumpeters of the day." *Bob Blumenthal /The Boston Globe*

"Robertson transforms his instrument into many things; makes it squeal, purr and chortle; plays beautiful soaring, almost classically-contoured cries; and works out a Doppler shift effect, with fluffier notes approaching and receding, only to gradually skew out of equilibrium and become syncopated with ominous growls and squawks." *Joseph Milazzo / One Final Note*



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)

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

Bassist/Composer **Mark Helias** has been making innovative music since beginning his career in the mid seventies. He has enjoyed long musical associations with Edward Blackwell, Anthony Davis, Dewey Redman, Ray Anderson, Don Cherry and Gerry Hemingway.

Eight albums of his music have been released since 1984, including "Split Image", "The Current Set" (1987), "Desert Blue" (1989) and "Attack The Future", (1992) "Loopin' the Cool" (1995), "Fictionary" (1998), "Come Ahead Back" (1998) and "New School" (2001) "Verbs of Will" (2003).

Mr. Helias had a seventeen year association with the great drummer Edward Blackwell, with whom he recorded two CDs. He has also collaborated for 26 years with Ray Anderson and Gerry Hemingway in the ensemble BassDrumBone. A prolific composer of small ensemble music he has composed music for short films and two feature films by director Jay Anania.

Helias has worked with numerous bands including those of Oliver Lake, Slickaphonics, Julius Hemphill, Marilyn Crispell, Arthur Blythe, Abbey Lincoln, Karrin Allison, Cecil Taylor, Barry Altschul, Don Byron, Mose Alison and Marty Ehrlich's "Dark Woods Ensemble". In addition to his many performances on records and CDs, Mr. Helias has produced recordings for other artists on the Gramavision, Enja, New World, Arabesque, Sound Aspects, and Avant/DIW labels.

Presently, Mark is leading and collaborating on various projects: Open/Loose with Tony Malaby and Tom Rainey, Solo Bass performances, The Marks Brothers with fellow bassist Mark Dresser, MOI Project-a sextet with varying personnel, Attack the Future a quartet/quintet. Mr. Helias, a graduate of Rutgers University and Yale School of Music teaches at Sarah Lawrence College, The New School and SIM (School for Improvised Music)

"Helias is a musical omnivore whose inspirations range from classical etudes to world-music groovefests, from gut bucket blues to Crescent City struts to freebop, from Satchmo to Mingus to Trane."

Gene Santoro, Pulse Magazine

"(Mark Helias) is an exquisite bassist, a talent that's obvious on all of his records. Direct without being blunt, Helias' phrasing, finesse and gorgeous intonation continuously reveal themselves in performance."

Jim MacNie, The New Paper

"...the recordings I had heard of Helias had not prepared me for his formidable virtuosity. Each solo was a journey through lush pastoralism and scribbled abstraction, journeys which evinced gasps of wonder and enthusiastic applause."

Alan Brookings, On The Street, Sydney, Australia

