

Artist Series

**Smith and Steighner Duo**

Tuesday, January 15, 2018 at 8pm  
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University  
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music presents

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## Smith and Steighner Duo

Evan Smith and Erik Steighner, *saxophones*  
Oksana Ezhokina, *piano*

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Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.

Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.  
Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

### PROGRAM

**Konzertstück für zwei Altosaxophone ..... Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)**

*I. Lebhaft*

*II. Mäßig langsam—Lebhaft*

**Suite from *L'Histoire du Soldat* ..... Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)**

arr. Evan Smith and Erik Steighner

*I. Marche du Soldat*

*II. Le violon du Soldat*

*III. Petit concert*

*IV. Tango – Valse – Rag*

*V. Danse du Diable*

**Alborado ..... Bei Zhang**

**Two Old Ghosts ..... Nat Evans (b. 1981)**

**Infinites Untold ..... Andrew Boss (b. 1988)**

*I. Imagine*

*II. Empower – Arise*

## Program Notes

Paul Hindemith's landmark *Konzertstück* for two alto saxophones was composed for the German saxophone virtuoso Sigurd Raschèr, who approached Hindemith in Berlin during the summer of 1933. Finding it difficult to track down another player who could handle the difficult second alto part, Raschèr did not premiere the work until 1960. It received its first performance at the Eastman School of Music, with Raschèr's fourteen-year-old daughter Carina playing second alto. The work soon became a staple of saxophone concert literature.

One hundred years after Stravinsky arranged his own theatrical work *L'Histoire du Soldat* for clarinet, violin, and piano, we further transformed the concert suite into a version for soprano and alto saxophones and piano. The five movements that Stravinsky selected for his suite provide the framework for the story of a Soldier who sells his violin to the Devil in exchange for wealth and knowledge. As violinist Margaret Bragg recounts, "The Soldier later becomes disillusioned, entices the Devil to become inebriated and then beats him in a card game, thereby regaining possession of his violin. In the meantime the Soldier falls in love with an ailing Princess. He cures her of her illness by playing dances for her (a tango, waltz, and ragtime), and ultimately marries her. All goes well until the Soldier decides to leave his newly adopted town to return to his old hometown. As soon as he enters the land where he first dealt with the Devil, he is once more accosted and the Devil reclaims the violin and leads him away." While the violin's many double stops occasionally provided a challenge during the arrangement process, we feel that this new version captures the spirit of Stravinsky's original work; perhaps the Soldier from this tragic tale would have done better to play the saxophone.

*Alborado* is a piece for saxophone and pre-recorded electronics. It intends to describe the beautiful scene of the early morning, a moment when the sun rises up and wakes up all that's living.

—Bei Zhang

After Evan Smith commissioned me, I thought for a while about what I wanted to write, but didn't come to any solid conclusions for structure. Then, one evening I awoke from a dream at 3am with these insane screeching and endlessly running lines of free jazz sort of sax stuff. As in, it was so loud and present in my dream that the sound woke me up, and continued running in my head after I'd awoken. I have no idea where this stuff came from, but I tried to get it out of my head and get back to sleep. As I sat in bed listening to the rain on the laurels outside my window I could hear a train whistling and rocking in the distance; I eventually fell back to sleep. Exactly one week later I woke up at exactly the same time with the same sax lines, same type of rain – everything. As I settled back into my slumber, the trains whistled in the distance again. So, the piece began to take shape from there – it seemed to be about travel, about these strange ghosts that had woken me up with their screeching sound, and about the eternal sound of our everyday lives.

—Nat Evans

*Infinities Untold* explores musical elements of time, space, and technique while incorporating a humanistic notion of each of our inner potentials and capabilities that may still remain dormant underneath our consciousness. This work explores our way into finding and unleashing these subconscious strengths into our active awareness and thus bringing out the best and most advanced potentialities of our very selves. The work consists of two contrasting movements using the same thematic material throughout in various ways.

—Andrew Boss

## About the Performers

**Dr. Evan Smith** is a performer and educator based in Seattle, WA. He is co-founder of the Seattle Saxophone Institute, an innovative cross-genre summer intensive study program. He leads an active private studio and is a frequent clinician throughout the Pacific Northwest. He completed his doctoral studies at the University of Washington where he wrote extensively on the saxophone works of Yusef Lateef. A passionate advocate of new music, he regularly collaborates with modern composers, performing in contemporary classical, jazz, and popular musical contexts. Smith previously studied at James Madison University and the University of Northern Iowa.

Praised by the Tacoma News Tribune for his “effortless lyricism” as well as his “smooth tone and fluid virtuosity,” saxophonist **Erik Steighner** has performed with ensembles including the Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Federal Way Symphony, the Northwest Sinfonietta, the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra, the San Antonio Symphony, and the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra. Steighner has served on the faculty of Texas State University and currently teaches at Pacific Lutheran University and Tacoma Community College, where his course load has included Saxophone, Chamber Music, Music Appreciation, Ear Training, Music Theory, and Digital Music. He is also on faculty at the University of Puget Sound Community Music Department and is founder and conductor of the South Sound Saxophone Ensemble.

Steighner has premiered dozens of solo and chamber works and appears on CD releases from labels including Albany Records, Alea Publishing, Mark Custom, Naxos, Reference Recordings, and Vienna Modern Masters. His latest album is *Made in Tacoma: New Chamber Music for Saxophone*, and he is a recent winner of the Frances Walton Competition in Seattle. Steighner holds bachelor’s degrees in music and English from the University of Puget Sound and master’s and doctoral degrees in saxophone performance from The University of Texas at Austin. He is a Conn-Selmer artist and plays on Selmer Paris saxophones and mouthpieces exclusively.

Russian-born pianist **Oksana Ezhokina** is Chair of the Piano Faculty and Assistant Professor of Music at Pacific Lutheran University. An artist of great breadth and versatility, she appears frequently as guest recitalist and chamber musician on concert series across the United States and abroad. She has soloed with the Seattle Symphony, St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in Russia, Tacoma Symphony, and performed in venues such as the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Davies Orchestra Hall in San Francisco, and Klassik Keyifler Festival in Turkey. A dedicated performer of new music, she has premiered works by Marilyn Shrude, Wayne Horvitz, Bern Herbolsheimer, and Laura Kaminsky, among others. She has been featured on multiple live radio broadcasts on such stations as WFMT-Chicago, KUOW and KING FM in Seattle, Maine Public Radio and NPR Performance Today. Her collaborations have included concerts with the Seattle Chamber Players, Avalon String Quartet, violinists Ian Swensen and Andrew Jennings, and cellists Johannes Moser and Anthony Elliott.

Ezhokina holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from Stony Brook University. She is the pianist of the Volta Piano Trio, whose recordings for Con Brio label received accolades in multiple international music magazines, such as *The Strad*, *Gramophone* and *American Record Guide*.

A sought-after teacher, she has given piano and chamber music masterclasses in colleges and universities across the US and is in demand as an adjudicator. Additionally, Ezhokina is Artistic Director of several flagship classical music programs at the Icicle Creek Center for the Arts, including the International Chamber Music Festival/Institute and Winter Piano Festival, which annually welcomes advanced pianists from the most prestigious colleges and conservatories in the US and Canada.