

SERIOUS

ANDY SHEPPARD
Biography 2009

Established for over twenty five years as a successful composer and performer, Andy Sheppard is one of a very few British musicians to have made a significant impact on the international jazz scene, playing and writing for settings from solo to big band and chamber orchestra. Sheppard has composed over 350 works that incorporate a strong and characteristic sense of lyricism alongside a very personal use of rhythms from Asia, Africa and South America. Recent years have also seen a growing fascination with new music technologies and the grooves of club culture and his work in this area carries a heady mix of ambient electronic soundscapes, fragments of spoken word and sampled urban sounds.

Andy Sheppard has been invited to compose for large and small ensembles in the areas of jazz and contemporary classical music. His big band writing includes work with the renowned UMO Orchestra (Finland); the Bergen Big Band (Norway) – initially for a joint commission from Cheltenham and Vossa Festivals - and Voice of the North (UK). He wrote music for a collaboration with the classical saxophonist John Harle, and composed *View from the Pyramids*, a concerto for saxophone and piano for the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, which premiered at the 1998 Salisbury Festival, with Joanna MacGregor as piano soloist.

Other significant commissions include a solo performance piece for saxophone and electronics from the Maison de la Culture in Amiens which subsequently turned into his *Nocturnal Tourist* CD; *Nothing moved but the wind* – a work for the Kintamarni Saxophone Quartet; *Strange Episode* - a piece for tape, oboe and percussion for New Noise; the multi-disciplinary *Cityscapes* – a collaboration with Joanna MacGregor et al for the City of London Festival, and *Glossolalia* a choral work with saxophone, guitar and percussion soloists commissioned by Bigger Sky and the Norfolk & Norwich Festival with a premiere in the Norwich Cathedral.

Curiously, Andy has been commissioned to write music to commemorate two feats of UK engineering. The first was a collaboration with renowned Northumbrian piper Kathryn Tickell to celebrate the opening of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. This landmark commission resulted in *Music for a New Crossing*, written for the Northern Sinfonia, pipes and saxophones, with the premiere played live on the spectacular setting of the bridge itself. The second saw Andy commissioned by Brunel 200 to write a piece to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the engineer of the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol. For this work, entitled *The Living Bridge* Andy composed a fanfare using prepared electronics incorporating the sounds of the bridge and utilised the talents of 200 local saxophonists in homage to his early work with French performance artists Urban Sax. This latter work has subsequently formed the basis of *Andy Sheppard's Saxophone Massive* – a series of large-scale celebratory performances performed in the UK and abroad by saxophone choirs made up of players of all ages and abilities that can be tailored to suit indoor or outdoor performance venues.

Andy Sheppard has also written music for theatre (Bristol Theatre Royal's production of Arthur Miller's play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* which ran at the Young Vic); dance (his trio Inclassificable devised the music for the award winning dance piece *Modern Living*, choreographed by Jonathan Lunn); radio and TV. His TV credits include original music commissioned by BBC's Omnibus, for ice dancers Torvill and Dean; the Oscar-nominated Channel 4 film, *Syrup* directed by Paul Unwin; a documentary on the life of 18th century black violinist Joseph Emidy and a highly acclaimed score for the BBC2 Arena documentary series about Peter Sellers.

Andy Sheppard has been described as a serial collaborator, playing, recording and developing new music with artists as varied as Brazilian percussionist Nana Vasconcelos, Indian violinist L. Shankar, English folk musician Kathryn Tickell, contemporary classical composer-performers John Harle and Joanna MacGregor, singer songwriter John Martyn and a myriad of leading jazz figures – including the rare hat-trick of three of the seminal composers in contemporary jazz – Carla Bley, George Russell and the late Gil Evans.

www.andysheppard.co.uk www.ecmrecords.com

Serious, 51 Kingsway Place, Sans Walk, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0LU
t: +44 (0) 207 324 1880 f: +44 (0) 207 324 1881 e: martel@serious.org.uk