

Pharos Quartet Area 9 Quartet



January 23, 2026

Boston University
Booth Theatre Lobby

Pharos Quartet

Converging Spectrums

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

They Might Be Gods

John Leszczynski (b. 1987)

Three Jazz Settings

Ramon Ricker (b. 1943)

II. Soft Shadows of the Night

III. Trance Dance



Adagio for Strings

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
arranged by J. Bill

PAUSE

Area 9 Quartet

Saxteto

Victor Márquez-Barrios
(b. 1987)

I. Raguinho

II. Sangueo

III. Nana

IV. Sopla Pambiche

Pagine

Salvatore Sciarrino (b. 1947)

I've got you under my skin by Cole Porter

Diffusion

Gordon L. Goodwin

I. Allegro

II. Waltz

III. Swing

(1954-2025)



Veracruz!

compiled and arranged by
José Oliver Riojas

Pharos Quartet

Jon Amon, Jennifer Bill, Amy McGlothlin, Andy Wilds

Based in Boston, the Pharos Quartet is a respected musical collective comprised of four accomplished New England saxophonists. Connected through their diverse ideas, styles, and artistic voices, Pharos elevates the saxophone quartet to greater heights. Their vibrant repertoire spans both celebrated pioneers and emerging visionaries, reflecting a passion for the most compelling and challenging works in today's saxophone quartet literature. Drawing on their extensive international performance backgrounds, the members of Pharos create a uniquely compelling and memorable chamber music experience.

Pharos, the great lighthouse of antiquity and often considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World was built by the Ptolemaics in c.280 BC in the port city of Alexandria on the coast of Egypt. This great beacon of light, which stood for around 1,000 years, inspires the quartet to be a guiding light in 21st-century chamber music performance.

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Area 9 Quartet

Seychelle Dunn-Corbin, Cara Hachten, Sean Mix, John Rabinowitz

The Area 9 Saxophone Quartet is a Boston-based ensemble dedicated to exploring the rich, diverse and ever-growing chamber music repertoire for saxophone. Recent performances have included works by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Clara Schumann, Ida Gotkovsky, and Marc Mellits, as well as some of the earliest compositions for saxophone quartet by Jean Baptiste Singelée and Alexander Glazunov. Area 9 is also proud to have commissioned and debuted new works by contemporary composers, including Jun Feng's "Somehow, Tango", performed at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA, and Michael Kosch's "Castle in the Air", which Area 9 premiered at the Metropolitan Playhouse in NYC.

Program Notes

The concept for *Converging Spectrums* was the idea of having different spectrums of color and sound combine, twist, change, and ultimately, converge. There are many things you can do with saxophones to change the color, and so that was something I wanted to explore with this piece.

— Kevin Day

They Might Be Gods is a kind of lucid dream for saxophone quartet. At times exciting and others sarcastic, this virtuosic piece tumbles through a strange landscape with blurry edges and unexpected apparitions.

— John Leszczynski

Companion poem by Claire Ensley

Awake.
A rustle, a snap
Footsteps and shadows and
Eyes
Seeing, unseen.

Pursuit.
Chasing or chased,
It's unclear. Running
Just run
Run
Run. Until
Tripping, trapped.

Your quest, sir?
Yes, a quest.
A quest and a map and a bear.
A dancing bear?
Twirls, too delicately
Faster. Faster, then fading.
Gone.

Falling.
Falling, sveltely.
Look-Raindrops!
Tiny gleaming globes
Falling too
Falling, faster
The ground-but no collision.

And light.
Asleep?
Light-Somewhere far?
No.
Watching lanterns
Through a glass darkly.
And seen face to face
They might be gods

Program Notes

This suite (*Three Jazz Settings*) was inspired most notably by the saxophone quartets of Phil Woods and was written in a conscious attempt to wed certain stylistic elements of classical and jazz music. The players are not asked to improvise, but the piece does feature sections that sound spontaneous and freely created.

Soft Shadows of the Night features the alto saxophone in a quasi-Bolero setting. The piece conveys a feeling of a big city in the tranquil pre-dawn hours - hence the title.

Trance Dance is a rhythmically grooving 12/8 feel that features the tenor and baritone saxophones.

— Ramon Ricker

The *Adagio for Strings* is connected with one of the great names in conducting, Arturo Toscanini, who presented its world premiere with his NBC Symphony on a nationwide broadcast (November 5, 1938) and then took it, as the only work by an American composer, on a tour of South America with the orchestra.

It was a success from the start, but not as music for a large string orchestra. The piece began life as the slow movement—marked “Molto adagio”—of Barber’s only string quartet, written in 1936 while its composer was a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. The premiere of that work compared in glamor to that of the orchestral slow movement two years later, the performers being the Pro Arte Quartet, as celebrated in their intimate world as Toscanini was in his vast arena.

Music of austere grandeur, the *Adagio*, in the composer’s own arrangement for string orchestra, has become widely associated with solemn occasions, among them the funerals of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, and Princess Grace of Monaco. It reached its widest audiences, however, as the background leitmotif in Oliver Stone’s 1986 Vietnam War film *Platoon*.

— Herbert Glass

Dr. Bill made this arrangement in reaction to the murder of Renee Good by ICE in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026.

“We were raising our son to believe that no matter where you come from or what you look like, all of us deserve compassion and kindness. Renee lived this belief every day. She is pure love. She is pure joy. She is pure sunshine.

On Wednesday, January 7th, we stopped to support our neighbors. We had whistles. They had guns.”

— Becca Good

Program Notes

Saxteto is a concert setting of dance rhythms and melodies which are perhaps lesser-known than the tango, but certainly no less important. Composer Victor Marquez Barrios successfully blends Ragtime, Brazilian Choro, Venezuelan folk tunes, and the Pambiche (a cousin of merengue) into the four movements of his Saxteto.

— h2 Quartet

I was made aware of a certain lack of identity that the saxophone quartet suffers from, not being able to draw on, like almost every other instrument, its own repertory before romanticism. For this reason I have wanted to offer a real contribution to resolve the problem of the repertoire, central in my opinion, and I thought not so much about single compositions but about a cycle. *Pagine* (Pages) is an anthology based on different centuries and styles. In arranging the pieces, I have avoided the stereotypical aspects. To the contrary, I have aimed towards the inexorable modernity of the ancient masters, something that today is fashionable to blithely ignore.

— Salvatore Sciarrino

In *Pagine*, Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino sets works by Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa, Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Domenico Scarlatti, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin.

The saxophone quartet is one of the most expressive chamber groups for a composer to write for, and I hope *Diffusion* exposes the wide and versatile sounds and stylistic range potential of the saxophone quartet. An open mind, good technique in both jazz and classical styles along with a flexible approach is needed to perform all four of the movements.

— Gordon Goodwin

Veracruz! Is a collection of folk songs from Veracruz, Mexico include: El Balajú; Veracruz; La Bamba; Le Canto a Mi Veracruz; El Cascabel; El Zapateado; El Pájaro Cu

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