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**Vital Saxophone Quartet**  
*Kites Over Havana*

For all that it has done in the world of jazz, blues and rock, it is easy to forget that the saxophone was originally created as a classical instrument. The horn met difficulties as it tried to integrate into the symphonic world, not truly fitting into the brass or woodwind sections. The saxophone did meet a true champion in Marcel Mule, who became the true champion of classical saxophone and also the first saxophone quartet, *Quatuor de la Garde Républicaine*.

The concept of creating saxophone ensembles for chamber music grew steadily thereafter. In 1943, Cuban saxophonist Tito D’Rivera established his own saxophone chamber group called *Conjunto Sinfónico de Saxofones*, which debuted at the National Conservatory in Havana. Over seventy years later, D’Rivera’s son, and world famous woodwind master, **Paquito D’Rivera** is proud to present the **Vital Saxophone Quartet** and their new recording, *Kites Over Havana*.

The terrific Vital Saxophone Quartet is composed of four Cuban master saxophonists who all now live in the United States: **Oscar Gongora** on soprano, **Roman Filiu** on alto and soprano, **Alejandro Rios** on alto and tenor and **Raul Cordies** on baritone saxophone. The recording also features a handful of impressive guests, including **Yosvany Terry** on tenor and shekere, **Dr. Paul Cohen** on C melody saxophone, **Dr. Adonis Gonzalez** on piano and **Paquito D’Rivera**, himself, on clarinet and soprano saxophone.

The compositions presented on *Kites Over Havana* are a mixture of contemporary compositions from a handful of wonderful composers and three pieces by legendary Cuban composer and violinist extraordinaire, Alejandro García Caturla.

The program begins with three compositions by Paquito D’Rivera, including the lively hockets of “Wapango,” the episodic “Afro” that features Terry’s shekere and Gonzalez’s piano, and the fantastically diverse “Kites Over Havana,” which also features the composer on his lithe clarinet. Caturla’s wonderful “Berceuse” for saxophone septet is warm and harmonically rich. Filiu’s adventurous “Zapateo Oriental” exhibits some intriguing rhythmic devices and Eastern harmonies, while Argentinean Gabriel Senanes “Tan Tango” is stately and elegant.

Venezuelan composer Aldemaro Romero’s “Cuarteto Latino Americano Para Saxofones” follows in three parts, the lighthearted “Fandango,” the lovely and sedate “Serenata” and breathlessly exhilarating “Choro Y Tango.” The brief Caturla tone poem “Momento Musical” introduces Filiu’s fascinating “La Nana.” The program concludes with Caturla’s dancing “Berceuse Campesina.”

There is a proud history of chamber music for saxophone stemming from Cuba. The wonderful **Vital Saxophone Quartet** carries that tradition forward on their new recording *Kites Over Havana*.

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