



David Demsey

## New Saxophone Publications

**Eugene Rousseau: With Casual Brilliance** by Thomas Liley  
**Sax Solos Over Jazz Standards** Book-CD set Tony Dagradi

### Sax Solos Over Jazz Standards

Book-CD set Tony Dagradi

Jamey Aebersold (\$19.95)

*Recommended for: musicians who already have some knowledge of jazz theory, but are struggling to unlock their own "true voice" as a composer or improviser.*

Tony Dagradi has a long reputation as a major-league modernist tenor player. He has for years been on the faculty of Loyola University in New Orleans, and has played with the best of that city's legendary musicians as well as Carla Bley, Bobby McFerrin, Mose Allison and Nat Adderley.

It has been said that improvisations are actually compositions "done without benefit of an eraser." This collection allows students to gain great insight into Dagradi's compositional sense as an improviser as he constructs ear-bending solos based upon a set of jazz and popular song standards. Dagradi separates the tunes into two groups: one set built around the bebop rhythmic and harmonic tradition, and another group dedicated to more modal and "outside" playing in the realm of John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner and others.

The bebop-oriented solos are contained in his tunes *Brown Out* (based upon *Stella By Starlight*), *Caught Red Handed* (a latin version of rhythm changes), and *Flesh Tones* (*What Is This Thing Called Love*). More modern, modal styles are exhibited in his tunes based upon *Softly As In a Morning Sunrise*, *Impressions*, *Poinciana*, *Nica's Dream* and *Solar Flair*.

The accompanying CD contains two versions of each tune, one with Dagradi demonstrating the etude, and the other with the rhythm section only. The etudes appear in the book in B-flat and E-flat keys for alto and tenor. A wealth of experience can come from students simply listening to Dagradi's playing, first letting his terrific sound, sense of swing and phrasing get "inside the head" without any horn involved, then adding the saxophone to emulate his style.

This factual account of the book's contents doesn't differentiate it much from the vast amount of jazz material that's on the market. What separates Dagradi's book from the pack is – Dagradi himself. He has a gift for creating a balance between the spontaneous moment of improvisation and the "textbook" outlining of patterns. He takes his solos directly from his own improvisations, while still providing a wealth of patterns and ideas for younger students. There is a harmonic and melodic clarity in his playing that clearly outlines the harmony, without being pedantic or patterned. Every solo in this collection contains over a dozen short passages that I'd recommend that my students learn in all keys. §