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**Saxophonist Sam Sadigursky Unveils Third Volume in his Acclaimed
WORDS PROJECT Series on New Amsterdam Records**

***On MINIATURES, the Acclaimed Composer Transforms 18 Poems Through
Evocative Musical Settings in a Staggering Variety of Styles***

Continuing to draw inspiration from the words of poets both legendary and obscure, saxophonist / multi-instrumentalist and composer **Sam Sadigursky** returns with the third volume of his critically lauded **Words Project**. The most musically rich and stylistically diverse entry in the series, **Words Project III** represents another breathtaking leap in Sadigursky's compositional evolution.

For the occasion, Sadigursky gathered a roster of musicians that he's worked with in a variety of different New York scenes, from various styles of jazz, Latin and world music, classical settings, and even other musicians from the New Amsterdam family. His closest collaborator this time out was producer/multi-instrumentalist and, on five tracks, vocalist **Michael Leonhart**, whose credits include Steely Dan, Vinicius Cantuaria, and Yoko Ono's Plastic Ono Band. Other voices include **Monika Heidemann, Sunny Kim, Karlie Bruce, Christine Correa, Jamie Leonhart, Heather Masse, Roland Satterwhite**, and Sadigursky himself.

Texts are taken from an array of sources including American poets **Emily Dickinson**, Pulitzer Prize-winning **Carl Sandburg** and modernist **William Carlos Williams**; Portuguese writer **Fernando Pessoa**; Colombian **León de Greiff**; and Russian author **Maxim Gorky**. One piece, "Tears" was based on a poem written by a child imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp in Terezin, Czech Republic, and is part of a suite based on such works that Sadigursky hopes to record in the future.

Subtitled **Miniatures**, the new CD nearly doubles the number of pieces from each of the previous albums, offering eighteen short, gorgeous works that celebrate the emotional depth possible in a few brief lines of verse or a seemingly simple musical flourish.

"I look for a certain clarity, a poem that can be taken in on hearing it or reading it once but that you can come back to numerous times," Sadigursky says of his criteria for the poetry he chooses to set.

"It's just the right level of abstraction and evocativeness. Some poetry is very much like prose, telling a story. I've shied away from that because I don't want this to be musical word painting, based on action." Sadigursky takes a refreshingly unique approach to the marriage of text and music throughout the series, creating songs that fully integrate the lyric as a musical element. He thus avoids the pitfalls that lie at either extreme, either reciting the poems as spoken word over jazz clichés ("the old beatnik image of somebody reading over a walking bassline," as Sadigursky describes it) or obscuring the words' meaning via over-elaborate art-song virtuosity.

"One of the biggest challenges is working with a work of art that really is complete as it is," Sadigursky says. "I've tried to approach it the way someone framing a really great painting would work. I hope that I've just

put a little color around the edges of these poems while still respecting their integrity. I don't think the experience of them should ever be shaped in too heavy-handed a way.”

Where the first two volumes tread the border between jazz and contemporary classical music, the miniature form results in pieces that more resemble chamber music and even, at times, pop and electronic tunes.

Sadigursky's classical music influences, as evidenced in the shimmering multi-vocal tapestry of “Content”, the fugue-like “Recall” or the Satie-inspired string quartet of “Now”, can be traced directly back to his parents, classical musicians from the Soviet Union who met while studying at a conservatory in Moldova. He pays tribute to that heritage throughout the *Words Project*, in his use of poems by **Tsvetaeva** and **Mandelscham** on the first volume and via “O Muzyke Tolstykh” on *WP III*. The song is based on a propaganda piece written for *Pravda* by Maxim Gorky decrying the corrupt western decadence represented by jazz, which Sadigursky marries to a tense mechanic that he “tried to make as harsh and claustrophobic as I could.”

A native of Los Angeles, Sadigursky immersed himself into jazz early on and by the end of his teens had recorded with legendary bassist **Ray Brown**, performed with pianist **Brad Mehldau**, and toured Japan in a group sponsored by the Monterey Jazz Festival. He then studied under **Rufus Reid** at William Paterson University before settling in New York, where he has since become an in-demand sideman, playing with the **Mingus Orchestra**, pianist **Anat Fort**, and singer/pianist **Gabriel Kahane**, whose audacious song cycle based on Craigslist posts inspired Sadigursky to seek out unlikely sources for his work.

The *Words Project*, which became Sadigursky's recording debut as a leader, set ten classic and contemporary poems to illuminating jazz arrangements, including works by **Paul Auster**, **Donald Justice**, and Nobel Prize-winning Polish poet **Czeslaw Milosz**, who he discovered while touring Poland in 2004. It received widespread critical acclaim, including a four star review in *Time Out New York* and a nod by critic Steve Smith as one of the top ten albums of 2007.

On *Words Project II*, Sadigursky culled his texts from more unexpected sources, complementing the poets (including Langston Hughes and Audre Lorde) with pieces drawn from Andrew Boyd's twisted manifesto *Daily Afflictions* and Caitlin Upton's incomprehensible, YouTube-spread rambling from the 2006 Miss Teen U.S.A. pageant.

Plans are already in the works for a fourth *Words Project* recording, a more jazz-oriented volume with singer **Christine Correa** and the **Dan Tepfer Trio**. And although vocals retain a strong attraction, not least in the potential they offer to reach new audiences. Sadigursky has also recently returned to composing instrumental music for small groups.

“I've always been very uncomfortable with the idea of music for musicians and want to connect with the outside world a little bit more,” he says. “I really hope the *Words Project* can serve as a gateway to bring listeners from outside the jazz fold into this music, and I hope that the combination of ingredients provides a unique experience.”

Sam Sadigursky ▪ *Words Project III: Miniatures* ▪ New Amsterdam Records ▪ January 26, 2010

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