

3-5-2012

Concert: Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

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Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

"Head Charts"

Ford Hall
Monday, March 5, 2012
8:15 p.m.



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Cherokee

Ray Noble
(1903-1978)

Emily Pecoraro, tenor sax
Jason Juliano, alto sax

Willow Weep For Me

Ann Ronnell
(1906-1993)

Kevin Cope, trumpet
Damien Scalise, guitar

Embraceable You

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

Alana Dawes, bass
Andrew Horwitz, baritone sax
Sam Thurston, trumpet
Damien Scalise, guitar

Cheek To Cheek

Irving Berlin
(1888-1989)

Christopher Miley, alto sax
Josh Condon, piano

Chega De Saudade

Antonio Carlos Jobim
(1927-1994)

Joshua Condon, piano
Damien Scalise, guitar

Round Midnight

Thelonious Monk
(1917-1982)

Jason Juliano, soprano sax
T.J. Schaper, trombone

A Night In Tunisia

Dizzy Gillespie
(1917-1993)

Jason Juliano, alto sax
Joshua Condon, piano
Will Sigel, drums

Personnel

Saxophones

Jason Juliano, alto 1
Christopher Miley, alto 2
Emily Pecoraro, tenor 1
Alex Staples, tenor 2
Andrew Horwitz, baritone

Trombones

Ethan Zawisza, lead
T.J. Schaper
Jeff Chilton, co-bass
Bill Connors, co-bass

Trumpets

Sam Thurston, lead
Kevin Cope, solo
Paul Schwartz, asst. lead
Danny Venora, asst. lead

Rhythm

Josh Condon, piano
Alana Dawes, bass
Damien Scalise, guitar
Will Sigel, drums

Notes on Tonight's Program

For tonight's performance, all the arrangements were learned by ear and completely memorized during this term. You may notice the lack of music stands on stage. For this concert, we simply don't need any. This is known as playing "head charts," because these are pieces that are kept completely in the player's heads.

This practice was perhaps most famously used by the Count Basie Band (and other groups from the Kansas City tradition) whose pieces were developed over time, often based on repeated "riffs" (short, rhythmic, bluesy phrases) and were subsequently performed without any sheet music. This process affords us several advantages:

- (1) By keeping our eyes off written music, we can forget about many instrumental/technical concerns (such as translating the dots on the page into music) and focus on making music with a good, swinging rhythmic feel.
- (2) Music stands can actually deaden the sound of the instruments, so the absence of them allows us to reach the audience in a more direct, almost intimate way.
- (3) It gives us a feeling of musical connection with the great Count Basie band.

All the pieces on tonight's program are part of the "ten songs of the year" selected by the Ithaca jazz faculty. Even before preparing tonight's concert, all jazz students were required to learn the melodies and chord progressions for all ten songs. We then worked up the arrangements collectively.

Billy May's arrangement of Ray Noble's "Cherokee" was made famous by Charlie Barnet's band. Barnet's 1939 recording was the most prominent recording of the song until jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker started using it as fodder for advanced jazz improvisation in the 1940s.

Ann Ronell did not write many songs that are still well-known today, but "Willow Weep For Me" certainly has become a jazz standard. It has been

performed and recorded by many jazz musicians, including Art Tatum, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Armstrong and many others.

"Embraceable You" is a sweet song by George and Ira Gershwin, written for the 1930 musical "Girl Crazy." It was subsequently recorded by many jazz musicians, including Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman and Dinah Washington.

"Cheek To Cheek" was written by Irving Berlin, one of the most prolific composers of American popular song. He wrote it for the movie "Top Hat" where it was made famous by dancer Fred Astaire. In addition to Astaire's classic recording, our arrangement was also influenced by saxophonist Phil Woods' energetic recording from his album "Live at the Showboat."

Our version of Antonio Carlos Jobim's song "Chega De Saudade" was inspired by a Dizzy Gillespie concert recording that our guitarist Damien Scalise found on YouTube. Dizzy introduces the song as "Chega de Soul Daddy." The video also features a wonderful solo by saxophonist James Moody, which our saxophone section has learned for this arrangement.

Our arrangement of "Round Midnight" was inspired by under-appreciated jazz pianist/composer Clare Fischer, whose solo piano recording re-imagines the harmony of Thelonious Monk's classic song. Fischer himself wrote several jazz standards, including the beautiful song "Pensativa." He died in January, 2012, and this arrangement was created in his honor.

"A Night In Tunisia" is one of Dizzy Gillespie's most often-played tunes. He recorded it with saxophonist Charlie Parker several times, including an infamous 1946 studio recording which contains Parker's "famous alto break." Our challenging arrangement features two simultaneous time signatures. During the melody, half the band is in 5/8 and the other half in 6/8. Try to hear which is which!

Upcoming Ithaca Jazz Events

- **March 21 at 8:15 PM in Hockett Recital Hall:** Ithaca College Faculty Jazz performs a set of original compositions.
- **March 25 at 7:00 PM in Hockett Recital Hall:** Junior recital of Will Sigel, jazz drums.
- **March 29 at 9:00 PM in Hockett Recital Hall:** Junior recital of Damien Scalise, jazz guitar.
- **April 23 at 8:15 PM in Ford Hall:** Jazz Lab Band concert, directed by Greg Evans.
- **April 30 at 8:15 PM in Hockett Recital Hall:** Jazz Vocal Ensemble concert, directed by Catherine Gale.
- **May 2 at 8:15 PM in Ford Hall:** Jazz Lab Band concert, directed by Bill Tiberio.
- **May 3 at 8:15 PM in Ford Hall:** Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble concert, with guest artists Remy La Boeuf (saxophone) and Pascal La Boeuf (piano).