

10-8-2015

Concert: Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

Mike Titlebaum

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs

 Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble and Titlebaum, Mike, "Concert: Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble" (2015). *All Concert & Recital Programs*. 1230.

http://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/music_programs/1230

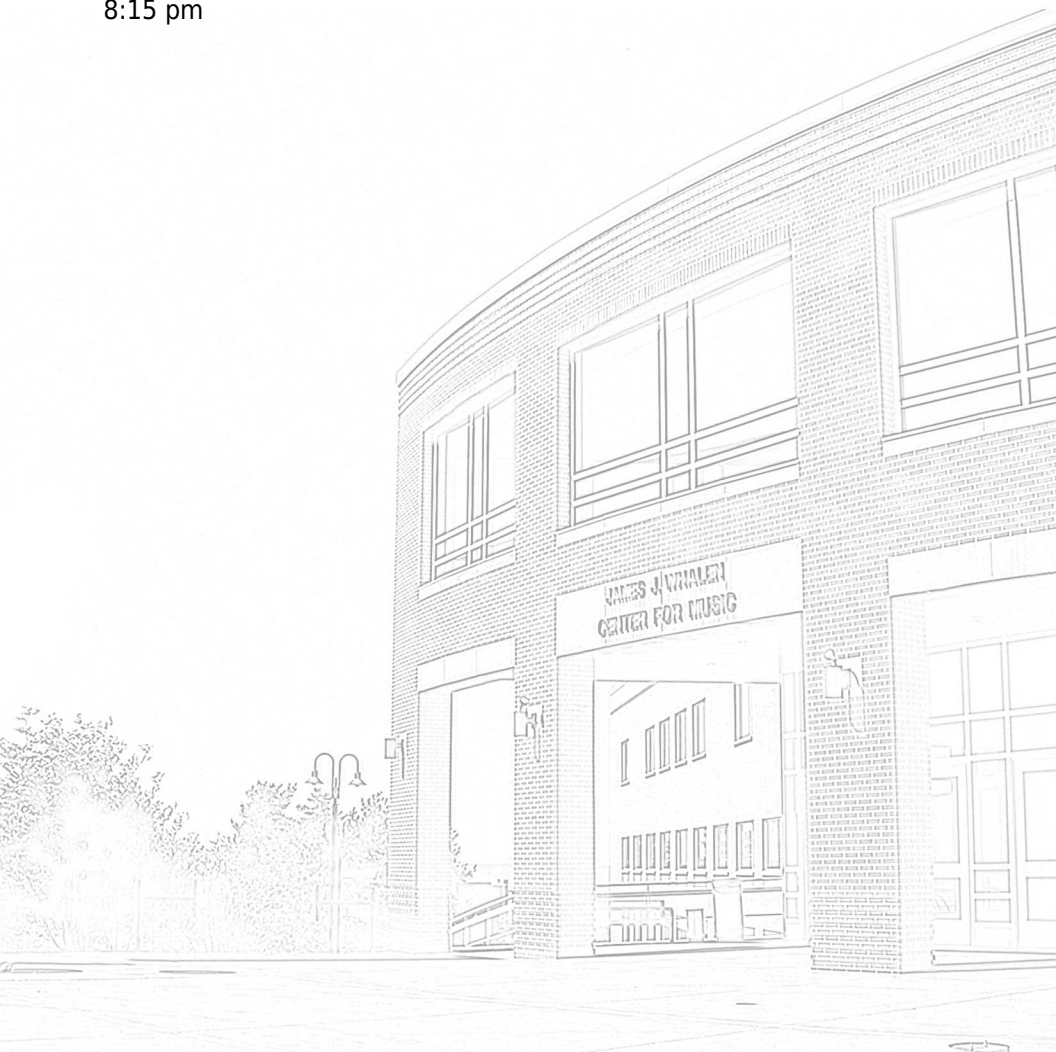
This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Concert & Recital Programs at Digital Commons @ IC. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Concert & Recital Programs by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ IC.

Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble

Mike Titlebaum, director

THE WAY BACK

Ford Hall
Thursday, October 8th, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Told You So Bill Holman
(b. 1927)

*Dunham Hall, tenor sax
Dan Wenger, trombone*

Chelsea Bridge Billy Strayhorn
(1915-1967)

*Dunham Hall, tenor sax
Ben Allen, trombone*

The Waltz You "Swang" For Me Thad Jones
(1923-1986)

*Lex Simakas, piano
Dan Felix, soprano sax*

Stompin' at the Savoy Benny Goodman, Chick Webb, Edgar
Sampson, and Andy Razaf
arr. Bill Holman

*Zach Forlenza-Bailey, tenor sax
Alex Miller, trumpet
Lex Simakas, piano*

World War II Pizza Man Mike Titlebaum
(b. 1968)

Brief Intermission

Schmeezlemop Mike Titlebaum

*Dan Felix, alto sax
Dan Wenger, trombone
Chris Walsh, trumpet
Jonah Prendergast, guitar
Alex Toth, bass*

Airegin Sonny Rollins
(b. 1930)
arr. Bill Holman

*Zach Forlenza-Bailey, tenor sax
Alex Miller, trumpet*

Half the Fun Duke Ellington
(1899-1974)

Dan Felix, alto sax

The Way Back Mike Titlebaum

*Dan Wenger, trombone
Dan Felix, alto sax
Chris Walsh, trumpet
Jonah Prendergast, guitar*

The Completely True Story of the World War II Pizza Man

One evening, several years ago

I'd just moved to a new town I knew very little about. Once my phone was hooked up, I decided that my first task was to investigate local takeout options. With a quick thumbing through the yellow pages, I discovered that there was a pizza place right around the corner.

I called and a friendly voice answered. I asked him if they had some kind of special veggie pizza.

"Sure," he said. "I've got all sorts of veggies."

"OK," I said excitedly. "I'll take one with whatever veggies you got."

"Great --- one veggie pie to go. Let me ask you, do you like garlic?"

"Sure, I like garlic," I said confidently.

"But how **much** do you like garlic?" he asked, more insistently.

I hesitated for a moment, briefly considering who I might offend the next day if I smelled really bad, but nobody came to mind.

"I like garlic quite a bit."

"Alright! What's your name?"

"Mike."

"Hey, I'm Mike, too!" he said. "I own this place. Give me about 45 minutes and I'll have it ready for you. You'll love it."

This was great. I had barely been in town for a few hours and I'd already met a friendly guy. I waited while my stomach started growling. I walked over to pick it up, went up to the counter and identified myself.

The now-familiar voice behind the counter said, "I'm Mike! I'm the one you talked to. I got your pie all ready for you." He put the box on the counter, turned it towards me and opened it. "See how nice and brown the top is? That's fresh garlic. I think I got the garlic JUST right this time!"

This guy was really proud of his work. I thoroughly enjoyed that pizza. It was definitely worth a 2nd order.

A couple weeks later

I ordered a veggie pie from new favorite pizza place.

Mike greeted me at the door. "Mike! Your pizza will be ready in just a minute."

"No problem," I said. Music was playing pretty loudly. To my

ears it was vaguely ethnic, but I couldn't entirely place its origins. It seemed to alternate between major and minor, but also between lydian and mixolydian modes. I found it confusing but beautiful.

I asked him "Do you have any idea who's playing?"

"Sure," he answers quickly. "It's me! I used to be a keyboard player in L.A. I played in a bunch of Greek bands out there."

I was fascinated. I don't think I'd ever heard anything like this before. I told him I was a musician, too. We chatted about music and careers for a bit. He told me about the differences between Greek music and jazz --- the odd meters, the dancing, and the culture. I felt a sudden realization that there are very interesting people in the world, and I'd gotten to be friendly with one of them.

"Hey, your pie is ready!" He put the box on the counter, turned it towards me and opened it. "I think I got the garlic JUST right this time!"

A few more weeks later

I was so happy to have a great pizza place nearby. As I walked in, I noticed a really old jeep parked right out front.

"Is that old thing yours?" I asked him.

"Yeah! I make deliveries with it. It's not in good shape, but it works well enough. It's an authentic Army jeep, not one of these commercial ones. This one was actually used in the war."

"Wow."

"Hey, your pizza isn't quite ready yet. It's going to be a few more minutes. Do you mind waiting?"

"Not at all." I didn't mind. The Greek music was blaring. I walked over to the wall and looked at some mounted pictures. I noticed photos of various guns --- rifles, handguns, and machine guns.

Mike saw me looking at them. "You like those?"

I said "Hmmm, I really don't know."

"Come over here and check these out." He pulled out a picture album from under the counter and set it on top. In one photo there were some grenades and many, many more weapons. Another shot was of racks of uniforms.

"Those are real German uniforms," he said. "Some are regular soldiers, some are SS, the secret police. This one is in my living room." He turned the page. "This other rack here is in the bedroom."

"You've filled your whole house with Nazi uniforms?"

"Yeah. You like 'em?"

I paused for a moment.

I asked, "You know my last name is 'Titlebaum,' right?"

"Oh, don't worry, I'm not a 'neo.' I'm a **historian**. My friends and I put on underground art shows with our private collections. You know, if we don't collect these things, they'll be lost forever. The Holocaust museum in Washington displays these very same uniforms and weapons. We just think they shouldn't be the only ones who can display them."

He then went to the back of the store for a moment, then brought me my pizza, turned the box to me, opened it up, and said "I think I got the garlic JUST right this time!"

I enjoyed the pizza, but felt a uneasy about the whole thing.

That night I had a strange, vague dream. It felt like a combination of several war movies. There was lots of quick movement all around. A uniformed soldier was running through a dirty trench, holding a pizza box, with bullets flying over his head and bombs exploding all around him. He was calling out, "Who ordered a pie?" Eventually, one wounded soldier on the ground, propped up on one elbow, held up his hand and said weakly, "I did." The delivery guy leans down, and at that moment I realized that he was my pizza man Mike. He opened the pizza box and showed it to the soldier. "I think I got the garlic JUST right this time!"

I woke suddenly and looked at the clock. It was 3AM. I could smell the garlic on my breath. I realized that there had been music accompanying the whole dream scene, and it was still lingering precariously in my head. It sounded vaguely familiar, but also unlike anything I knew. Perhaps it had some Greek qualities, but also sounded a little like an Irish jig. It reminded me of Sousa marches I played in school, but simultaneously felt a bit klezmer. It was all very elusive, but I knew I needed to write it down as rapidly as possible.

I spent the entire next day, between teaching elementary band classes, desperately trying to notate the music in the dream. I got one phrase down before 3rd grade clarinets, then another snippet came after 5th grade brass class. By the end of that afternoon, I had notated the entire melody, and I already had the title: **World War II Pizza Man**. I had a feeling of deep satisfaction knowing it was done.

A few months later.

I finished arranging a big band version of the tune for the first performance. In the score, I wrote that the style was a "Pseudo Greek/Irish/klezmer/free jazz/military march." The "pseudo" was because I didn't feel I had enough knowledge to write a truly **authentic** Greek/Irish/klezmer/free jazz/military march.

After the premiere, I told Mike I'd written something in his honor. I played him the first concert recording, and told him the title. I hoped he'd like it, but I could see he was pretty concerned about the whole thing.

I told him not to worry. He wouldn't be identifiable, but he still didn't seem entirely comfortable with it. I figured that was okay because I wasn't sure I was entirely comfortable with the explanation of his ownership of all that Nazi gear.

Not long after that he closed up his shop. I saw him one last time, in front of the boarded up store. He told me he'd received a contract to provide food for a nearby army base, and it was such a big contract that he wouldn't be able to continue selling at the storefront. And then I moved away soon thereafter.

Since then, the piece has been played a number of times, and each time I get a little nostalgic thinking back on that brief yet formative part of my life.

I do hope you enjoy your slice of the World War II Pizza Man.

-Mike Titlebaum

Jazz Ensemble Personnel

Saxophones

Dan Felix, alto
Nikhil Bartolomeo, alto
Zach Forlenza-Bailey,
tenor
Dunham Hall, tenor
Will VanDeMark, bari

Trumpets

Matt Allen
Alex Miller
Chris Walsh
Ray Fuller
Max Deger

Trombones

Daniel Wenger
Matthew Nolan Sidilau
Ben Allen
Matthew Della Camera,
bass

Rhythm

Andrew Hedge, drums
Jonah Miles Prendergast,
guitar
Alex Toth, bass
Lex Simakas, piano

Upcoming Jazz Events at Ithaca College

Monday, Oct 19 at 8:15PM (Ford): The Manley and Doriseve Thaler Jazz Concert and Masterclass: The John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble.

Friday, Nov. 6 at 8:15PM (Ford): Symphonic Band and Jazz Vocal Ensemble.

Saturday, Nov. 7 at 8:15PM (Ford): Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble.

Sunday, Nov 8 at 7:00PM (Nabenhauer): Elective jazz drum/percussion recital of James Powell, jazz studies major.

Saturday, Dec. 5, 12 Noon (Ford): Campus Band, and Campus Jazz Band.

Saturday, Dec. 5, 4PM (Ford): Jazz Ensemble.

Monday, Dec 7 (Ford): Jazz Repertory Ensemble.

Wednesday, Dec 9 (Ford): Jazz Lab Band, directed by Bill Tiberio. Thursday, Dec 10 (Hockett): Jazz Vocal Ensemble.