

THE BUZZ JONES BIG BAND

*Celebrating 30 Years as Central Pennsylvania's
Best Big Band Jazz Entertainment*



The Buzz Jones Big Band performs masterpieces of the Great American Songbook, swing standards of Basie & Ellington, blues of all genres, Latin jazz, and fusion. Current and former members have performance credits with jazz legends such as Buddy Rich, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Harry James, and Bill Watrous. The band has performed over 250 concerts at jazz festivals, conventions, ballroom dances, and summer park concert series. Three European tours included concerts at the Montreux and North Sea International Jazz Festivals and in Belgium, Germany, France, Holland, and Switzerland.



Buzz Jones is Professor of Music at Gettysburg College. He served as Director of Bands (1989-02), Music Department Chair (1999-05), and as Director of the Sunderman Conservatory of Music (2006-08). Buzz returned to full-time teaching in 2008 and coordinates the theory and composition program. He has directed the college jazz ensemble for twenty years and led the group on four tours of Europe with appearances at the Montreux, North Sea, and Vienne Jazz Festivals in addition to concerts in Italy, Greece, Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Holland.

Buzz has received annual *ASCAP Standard Awards* in composition since 1996. His commissioned works for concert band, jazz ensemble, orchestra and choir have been performed widely and received enthusiastically by audiences of all ages. He has been awarded grants from the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts, the Adams County Arts Council, and the National Welsh-American Foundation. Dr. Jones received the Creative Arts Achievement Award from Lebanon Valley College in 2002.

A Musical Journey Through
The History of Jazz

AXIOM ASUNDER

Composed and Orchestrated by Buzz Jones
Poetry by Langston Hughes
Narrated by Mwangi wa Githinji

*Four Episodes for Jazz Orchestra,
Narrator, Dance Ensemble & Choir*

Axiom Asunder

OCEANS APART

1. Elegua

Negro – Poem 1

2. Cape Roca

Our Land - Caribbean Sunset

NORTHERN TANGENTS

3. Konkomba

As Befits A Man

4. Red Dawn Blues

Saturday Night

5. 18th and Vine

Boogie: 1 a.m. - Gone Boy

COAST TO COAST

6. Lenox Ave. at Midnight

Harlem Night Song - Lenox Avenue: Midnight

7. Dig and Be Dug

Jazzonia - Motto

8. Silver Rain

In Time of Silver Rain

GROOVE MACHINE

9. LuLu's

Afro-American Fragment

10. The Old Tan Path (text from Isaiah and Daniel)

Tambourines

EPISODE 1 — OCEANS APART

An African-inspired dance is followed by a hypnotic vamp underscoring the Hughes poem "Negro." *Elegua* was a god worshiped by the Yoruba tribe of West Africa. The Afro-Cuban folkloric style of *Bembé* is in triple meter and emphasizes the clave (*key*) rhythm which has permeated Jazz since its beginnings.

I composed *Cape Roca* while visiting Portugal in 1996. Cape Roca is the western-most point of continental Europe and slave traders passed this way in the 1700s. The Gettysburg College Jazz Ensemble with guest soloist Denis DiBlasio first performed this music in 1997 and the Buzz Jones Big Band recorded it on its *Millennium Swing* compact disc in 2000. I rescored the music for jazz orchestra and added a mambo section to the lilting Bossa Nova and Calypso grooves.

EPISODE 2 — NORTHERN TANGENTS

A New Orleans brass band offers a solemn chorale as the narrator speaks of "a row of long tall mamas fanning, fainting, and crying" at his funeral. Konkomba (literal translation: poor man's brass band) is a celebration of life by the musicians using a "second line" percussion beat so common in New Orleans funeral processions. The dancers soon join in on the ever popular Charleston with scat singing accompaniment.

Jazz musicians migrated north in the early 1920s as the collective improvisation of New Orleans gave way to more stylistically adventurous solos found in Chicago clubs and speakeasies. Chicago is, and remains, a city with a deep Blues tradition. I set the poem "Saturday Night" to music as a gut-bucket blues with the entire band singing a refrain in response to the choir's sordid lyrics.

To the southwest lay Kansas City. *18th and Vine* is a straight-ahead "riff" tune that is a tribute to Count Basie and his seminal musicians: Lester Young, Jo Jones, Walter Page and Freddie Green to name a few. Swing dancing ruled the day as big bands across the country offered up hot rhythms for folks of all ages.

EPISODE 3 — COAST TO COAST

Envision yourself in 1940s Harlem during the early morning hours of a cool spring night. *Lenox Ave. at Midnight* is an alto saxophone ballad feature with a broad palette of supporting colors and Bossa Nova interlude. The band segues into *Dig and Be Dug*, a Bebop tune for septet you would have listened to at Minton's Playhouse after World War II: fiery pyrotechnics and virtuosic solos abound.

By the early 1950s Cool and Third Stream Jazz began to surface on both coasts of the U.S. These styles emphasized smoother textures, relaxed tempos, and often incorporated orchestral instruments as well as using classical forms. *Silver Rain* is a waltz composed as a passacaglia and fugue. Jazz aficionados may recognize my nod to the Don Ellis Orchestra's 1966 recording of Hank Levy's *Passacaglia and Fugue*.

EPISODE 4 — GROOVE MACHINE

A soulful tenor solo and bass ostinato in 7/8 meter set up a reprise of the opening Afro-funk motive. *LuLu* was a madam who ran the most notorious brothel in the Storyville section of turn-of-the-century New Orleans. *The Old Tan Path*, based on the chord progression of Oscar Peterson's *Hymn to Freedom*, was the third movement of my cantata *Glory Ridge* (2001) commissioned by the Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra. The "tan path" in question was a 19th century dirt road leading from the Lutheran Theological Seminary down to the borough of Gettysburg. Text for the vocal part is based on verses from the Old Testament books of Daniel and Isaiah. The dancers join the orchestra and singers for a joyous gospel "shout" in the finale.

The creation of *Axiom Asunder* is my way of giving back to the community of jazz listeners what has been an integral part of my life for over forty years. May live music, dance and poetry continue to flourish into the distant future!