

Graduate Recital

Ric Becker, trombone

Submitted remotely May, 2021

Program Notes

Benny Golson (b. 1929)
Along Came Betty (1958)

A standard of the jazz repertoire, story has it that this work was inspired by and named for a woman that Golson was dating at the time of its composition. It was first recorded for the influential Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers album *Moanin'*. During his time as a member of the Jazz Messengers, Golson penned this and several other compositions which were recorded by the band, including four of the six tracks on *Moanin'*.

Ric Becker (b. 1986)
Traveling (2021)

Traveling is a composition based on the jazz harmony, or changes, from another work. This is known as a contrafact. This practice is a jazz tradition with deep roots; many popular songs from the early and mid 20th century became commonly used for contrafacts. *Traveling* is based on the changes from saxophonist Sam Rivers' composition *Beatrice*, a jazz standard composed by Rivers for his 1964 debut album *Fuscia Swing Song*.

Sonny Rollins (b. 1930)
Arranged by Ric Becker
Doxxy (1954)

Rollins wrote this work early in his career, and it was first recorded with Miles Davis for the release *Miles Davis with Sonny Rollins*. It has since been recorded by numerous artists and stands among the most popular jazz standards. The title is supposedly in reference to a bread-spread which the band encountered while touring in Europe. This arrangement is a whimsical reimagining of the rhythmic structure of the melodic and harmonic content.

David Raskin (1912-2004)
Arranged by Ric Becker
Laura (1944)

Originally composed for the film *Laura* in 1944, this music became a popular hit and quickly found its way into the standard jazz repertoire. This version is inspired by JJ Johnson's improvised solo on his *J.J. in Person!* album, recorded in 1958 for the Columbia label. Inspired by his unique rhythmic feel, this arrangement is set in the *bolero* style, a slow ballad-like genre which arose in Eastern Cuba in the late 19th century. Distinct from the Spanish *bolero* (which was made famous by Maurice Ravel's composition of the same name), Cuban bolero arose in relative independence from European influences. This arrangement of *Laura* is based on a contemporary bolero style as it would be performed by artists such as Celia Cruz and Hector Lavoe.

Ric Becker

Brooklyn Sky (2020)

Brooklyn Sky was composed in bed in a single morning, the end to a discarded beginning, and is an exploration of rhythm and melody over a backdrop of cascading colors. Its creation was reflexive output in response to a stressful and challenging time on planet Earth, reflecting the schism of a quiet home amidst an invisible, silent storm. As a work, *Brooklyn Sky* stands testament to a single, immutable moment in time which will never recur.

Ric Becker

Non-Being (2021)

*We join spokes together in a wheel,
but it is the center hole
that makes the wagon move.*

*We shape clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that holds whatever we want.*

*We hammer wood for a house,
but it is the inner space
that makes it livable.*

*We work with being,
but non-being is what we use.*

-Lao Tzu, *Tao te Ching*

(translation by Stephen Mitchell, 1995)