

Gently
Bob Mintzer **BIG BAND**

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Gently is a piece which utilizes woodwinds and cup muted brass. There is an ostinato figure that occurs throughout that adds a little twist to the typical 4/4 swing scenario. I was going for the "soft burn" with lots of improvisation and interplay. Gil Evans was a huge inspiration on this tune.

Timeless is a Brazilian flavored number with french horns, woodwinds, and flugelhorns. My model on this piece was the large array of wonderful arrangers who can paint such a beautiful picture over a light samba groove, like Don Sebesky, Claus Ogermann, Thad Jones and Tonhino Horta. Peter Erskine played in such an incredibly understated way on this piece.

Original People is a song inspired by the Pequot Indian tribe, who resided in the northeast United States before Europe moved in on the area. They've built a fantastic museum in Connecticut that portrays their sophisticated approach to survival, which was environment-friendly. We could learn a thing or two from them.

Body and Soul is every tenor player's measuring stick. I've always wanted to do a lush arrangement of this song. The theme is pretty much as always, but I took a little side trip with the harmonic structure.

Who's Walkin' Who? is a tune I composed in honor of our two black labrador retrievers, Davis and Yosemite. When I'm home I walk them every morning in a wooded area near my house where they can run and play with other dogs (as long as they run they don't eat the furniture in the house). It's always an adventure to walk these two, and I usually feel like they are walking me. Pete Yellin really captures the quirkiness and swing I was going for on this tune.

Don't Ever Leave Me is a Thad Jones tune that I always wanted to record. It is such a beautiful melody, and captures Thad's incredible harmonic and melodic approach to composing. I want to be like him when I grow up!

Bright Lights is a tune I composed for the Yellowjacket's CD Live Wires back in '92. Carroll Dashiell asked me to write a big band version of this piece for his jazz ensemble at East Carolina University. This one was hard to play soft, but I think we got it.

Saxophone Quartet #2, second movement is the middle movement of a quartet composed for Miles Osland at the University of Kentucky. This piece really displays the blend and control in the sax section. Peter Erskine uses his inimitable musicianship to improvise an accompaniment on the drums. Although its somewhat of a departure from the other pieces, I felt that it was a nice way to leave the listener.



LAWRENCE FELDMAN alto sax & flute

PETE YELLIN alto sax

CHARLES PILLOW alto sax & flute

BOB MALACH tenor sax & flute

BOB MINTZER tenor sax & flute

ROGER ROSENBERG baritone sax & clarinet

BOB MILLIKAN trumpet & flugelhorn

FRANK GREENE trumpet & flugelhorn

MICHAEL PHILLIP MOSSMAN trumpet & flugelhorn

SCOTT WENDHOLT trumpet & flugelhorn

JIM SEELEY trumpet & flugelhorn

KEITH O'QUINN tenor trombone

MICHAEL DAVIS tenor trombone

LARRY FARRELL tenor trombone

DAVID TAYLOR bass trombone

JOHN CLARK french horn

FRED GRIFFIN french horn

PETER ERSKINE drums

JAY ANDERSON bass

PHIL MARKOWITZ piano

Special thanks to: Tom and Jean Jung for approaching this project as a labor of love that it is, to the musicians who are the best in the world, to my family, Carla and Paul, for enduring the countless hours I sat at the piano to write the music, to Jeff Jarvis at Kendor Music, Stan and Sue Garber at Selmer Company, Sandy and the staff at D'Addario (Vandoren Reeds), to the whole Yellowjackets organization for the inspiration, and the understanding to let me go AWOL to get this project done.

Produced by Bob Mintzer & Tom Jung

Recorded April 25, 26 & 27, 2002 at Ambient Recording, Stamford, CT by Tom Jung. Assisted by Mark Conese

Microphones: Shure KSM32 & KSM141

Microphone Preamplifiers: Earthworks 1024 & Sequerra 1078

Mixing console: None

Cables: EMM Labs Crypton Solid Copper

A/D & D/A converters: EMM Labs, designed by Ed Meitner

Recorder: Sony Sonoma Eight Channel DSD

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Design/Art Direction: Julie Hess, Barkin' Dog Graphics

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Maybe you've noticed. It's a loud world we live in. People seem to talk loud, cars are loud, and music is played at an unbearably loud volume. Even the buzzer to my doctor's office door is deafeningly loud. What's the deal? Is it that he who barks the loudest wins? (wins what? A free hearing aid?)

Big bands can be unbelievably loud. I know this from experience. There is something compelling about wailing trumpets, trombones and saxophones. Sometimes it feels good to play loud. But as a big band leader, arranger and saxophonist, I've had to reconsider the volume issue. The sax section sits in front of the brass typically. When the brass section plays loud it can sound like your head is inside a jet engine. The final straw was when one of the sax players in my band came to a gig wearing those big earmuffs that airline baggage workers wear out on the tarmac.

Tom Jung has been after me to do a soft and more textural big band recording for many years. After working with Tom for 18 years I finally figured out what he was getting at. I'm a bit of a slow learner at times. I think also I've reached a point in my life where I can appreciate the subtly factor in music and in life, where I would just as soon be gently caressed rather than smacked with a large stick.

Gently is exactly what the title suggests: a gentle approach to the big band instrumentation, using clarinets and flutes in place of saxophones, muted brass, the addition of french horns on two numbers, and writing for the band in a range and style which projects a soothing, warm sound. This is not to say that there isn't intensity in the music. What I've discovered is that when music is played softly it sounds more intense and projects with a greater clarity and energy. The band actually sounds louder when it plays softer.

Couple this softer approach with Tom Jung's cutting edge recording prowess, and you have a recording that envelops the listener in such a way that it feels like you are sitting in the middle of the band, and wanting to do so. Every time I listen to this recording I marvel at how it soothes rather than irritates.

The other major determining factor in the sound of **Gently** is the high level of teamwork and musicianship in the band. These guys know how to be on the team, and blend with an amazing amount of sensitivity and insight. Its easy to play loud, much more difficult to play softly with the cognizance of where your notes go in the greater picture.

— **Bob Mintzer**