

50 Years  
Ambassadors

AMERICA'S BIG BAND

THE UNITED STATES ARMY FIELD BAND





The United States  
Army Field Band

# JAZZ Ambassadors

In 1968, Chief Warrant Officer Three Charlie Almeida formed a new performing component of The U.S. Army Field Band, a jazz ensemble he named “The Studio Band.” Fifty years later, the band is known as the “Jazz Ambassadors” and its legacy of service is recognized around the world. Its alumni include some of America’s most celebrated musicians, including Steve Gadd, Joe Mosello, Jay Saunders, Ray Brown, and many more.

Sometimes called “America’s Big Band,” the Jazz Ambassadors has performed in all 50 states and around the world, connecting the American people to their Army and honoring our Soldiers and Veterans at home and abroad. Every performance by the Jazz Ambassadors pays tribute to the “Greatest Generation” by playing music from the era when big band swing was a rallying cry for troops overseas.

The selections on this album, recorded between 1969 and 2018, are snapshots of the Jazz Ambassadors throughout its history and include two new recordings that feature the current group. The album also illustrates the diversity of the band’s repertoire, which has been a mainstay of the band’s identity since the beginning. The members of the Jazz Ambassadors, past and present, hope you enjoy this celebration of the band’s history and look forward to another 50 years as America’s Big Band.

# 50 YEARS OF AMERICA'S BIG BAND

## JUMP CALL (2003)

benny carter

from *The Legacy of Benny Carter*

Originally recorded in 1946, Benny Carter wrote "Jump Call" as a nod to his years in the Army. Originally entitled "Melodrama in a V-Disc Record Room," this tune is an up-tempo jump-style chart that features many soloists throughout.

*SFC Andrew Layton, alto saxophone; SGM Pat Dillon, tenor saxophone  
SSG Paul Armstrong, trumpet; SFC Jeff Lopez, bass*

## KNOWLEDGE (2007)

mary lou williams

arr. SGM eugene thorne

from *The Legacy of Mary Lou Williams*

This Mary Lou Williams composition was written during the bebop jazz era, when many bebop jazz musicians were known to have studied with Williams. Sergeant Major Eugene Thorne wrote this arrangement to demonstrate the freedom explored by the second great Miles Davis quintet in the 1960s.

*SFC Andrew Layton, alto saxophone; MSG Michael Johnston, trumpet*

## ANGEL EYES (1969)

matt dennis

arr. SP7 dave wolpe

In preparation for one of the Studio Band's 1969 tours, bandleader and saxophonist Chief Warrant Officer Three Charlie Almeida asked staff arranger Specialist Seven Dave Wolpe for two new charts. Wolpe proposed "Angel Eyes" as one of the two. That weekend, when Wolpe and Almeida were playing a jazz combo performance at the Andrews Air Force Base Officer's Club, Wolpe asked if they could play "Angel Eyes" a couple of times, so he could "figure out some ideas." They played it once in the first set, and once in the last set, and on Monday morning, the chart was on Almeida's desk.

*CW3 Charlie Almeida, saxophone*

## SING (1996)

joe raposo

arr. SFC vince norman

from *The Jazz Ambassadors 1996*

"Sing" was originally written by Portugese-American composer Joe Raposo in 1971 for the television show Sesame Street. "Back then," said arranger Master Sergeant Vince Norman, "I was experimenting with all of these parallel major 7th chords over a pedal bass note. Sometimes the song wouldn't fit the pedaling bass note, but with 'Sing,' it worked really well with that melody. [Staff arranger Master Sergeant] Eric Richards heard me playing that at the piano one day, and said 'You'd better arrange that, or I'm gonna steal it.'"

*SSG Dana Rogers, vocals; SFC Vince Norman, tenor saxophone*

## ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET (2018)

jimmy mchugh

arr. SSG daniel jamieson

Arranger Staff Sergeant Daniel Jamieson and trombonist Staff Sergeant Kyle Johnson were looking for an opportunity to collaborate, and Johnson wanted to use the sound of a pixie mute and plunger. They chose "On The Sunny Side of the Street" for its easy application in both New Orleans traditional and modern big band styles, both of which are explored in this arrangement.

*SSG Kyle Johnson, trombone*

## SPEAK LOW (1988)

kurt weill

arr. SGM eugene thorne

from *Getting Sentimental*

The concept of the Jazz Ambassadors' album *Getting Sentimental* was to arrange old tunes with a new twist. "That was back when we used paper and pencil and copied everything out," remembers arranger Sergeant Major Eugene Thorne. "The whole idea behind 'Speak Low' was to do it as an up-tempo opener. Most versions of that tune tend to be at a slow to medium-slow tempo, but I gave it a different treatment."

*SSG Tom Williams, trumpet; SSG John DeSalme, tenor saxophone*

**TISHEROME** (2007)mary lou williams  
arr. SGM darryl brenzelfrom *The Legacy of Mary Lou Williams*

Also written during the height of the bebop era, Sergeant Major Darryl Brenzel's arrangement brings "Tisherome" firmly into the 21st century. The melodic line uses straight eighths instead of swing. Muted trumpets, reed doublings, and mallets on the drums are a few of the colors to listen for.

*SSG Mike Bravin, trombone; SGM Darryl Brenzel, alto saxophone*

**FRANKIE & JOHNNY** (2015)frank & bert leighton  
arr. sammy nesticofrom *Sammy Nestico: The Soldier Sessions*

Described as "toe-tapping music" by arranger Sammy Nestico, "Frankie & Johnny" is a traditional tune arranged to feature a number of soloists. "Every record should have a shuffle!" said Nestico. "Everyone loves a shuffle!"

*SSG Jonathan Epley, guitar; SSG Thomas Davis, trumpet*  
*SFC Jeff Adams, trombone; SSG Dustin Mollick, baritone saxophone*

**I WANT TO BE HAPPY** (1990)vincent youmans & irving caesar  
arr. SGM eugene thornefrom *Jazz Ambassadors promo-1990*

Recorded twice by the Jazz Ambassadors, Sergeant Major Eugene Thorne's up-tempo, hard-hitting vocal arrangement of "I Want To Be Happy" is in keeping with renditions made famous by Ella Fitzgerald and June Christy, while also showcasing the band's ensemble playing and technical prowess.

*SSG Delores Williams, vocals; SSG Vince Norman, tenor saxophone*

**HIDDEN AGENDA** (2001)

MSG eric richards

from *Prospects*

This original by Master Sergeant Eric Richards evolved in 1999 after a period of intense study on the music of Astor Piazzolla. "The piece just seemed to materialize on its own," said Richards, "as I played with the idea of an imaginary theme to an espionage film set in Central America."

*SFC Andrew Layton, soprano saxophone*

**WILLOW WEEP FOR ME** (2002)ann ronell  
arr. SFC vince normanfrom *The Jazz Ambassadors-In Concert*

"'Willow Weep for Me' was one of my earliest charts with the band," said arranger Master Sergeant Vince Norman. "Delores King Williams, the first full-time vocalist the band ever hired, wanted to do it. I probably wrote it when I was 23 or 24 years old."

*SFC Marva Lewis, vocals; SSG Andrew Layton, alto saxophone*

**A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER** (1992)clyde connor  
& SSG vince normanfrom *A Change in the Weather*

"'A Change in the Weather' was from an album of the same name," said arranger Master Sergeant Vince Norman, "meant to feature originals by members of the group. The original idea for that tune came while I was a student at the University of Central Oklahoma. I wrote it with my roommate Clyde Connor, who went on to play drums with the Navy Band Commodores. It might have just been chords and a bass line initially, but when we both ended up in DC, we got together and finished it."

*SGM Pat Dillon, soprano saxophone; SSG Kevin Watt, trumpet*

**BYE-YA** (2018)thelonious monk  
arr. SFC paul white

"I arranged 'Bye-Ya' as a drum feature," said arranger Sergeant First Class Paul White, "with a groove like a Tower of Power section feel. When I wrote it, I was thinking that it might be nice for the horns to accompany the drum solo, since the drums always accompany the horn solos."

*SSG Wesley Anderson, drums; SFC Jonathan Epley, guitar*  
*MSG Patrick Shook, tenor saxophone*

CWO — Chief Warrant Officer • SGM — Sergeant Major • MSG — Master Sergeant  
SFC — Sergeant First Class • SP7 — Specialist Seven • SSG — Staff Sergeant

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\*On this commemorative album, credits indicate the Soldier's rank at the time the chart was written or the solo was recorded.

# 1969



# 2019



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1969

The original Studio Band of The United States Army Field Band, under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer Three Charlie Almeida, 1969.



1983

Trumpet player Master Sergeant Don Ryer sings at a Jazz Ambassadors concert. Saxophonists Specialist Six Loran McClung and Sergeant First Class Eugene Thorne also pictured, 1983.



1989

The Jazz Ambassadors at the Taj Mahal, 1989.

1970

1975

1980

1985



1972

Chief Warrant Officer Three Charlie Almeida, founder and bandleader of the Studio Band, 1972.



1974

Saxophone section of the Studio Band, 1974.



1989

The Jazz Ambassadors perform at the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague, Netherlands, Summer Tour 1989. Sergeant First Class Jim McFalls on trombone, Sergeant First Class Lew Chapman on trumpet.

The Jazz Ambassadors perform at the Nice Jazz Festival "JVC Grande Parade du Jazz" in Nice, France, Summer Tour 1989.



1989



1992

The Jazz Ambassadors at the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, Mexico, 1992.

The Jazz Ambassadors, led by Chief Warrant Officer Four Freddie Vinson, Jr., perform at the New York-Brussels Jazz Rally in Brussels, Belgium, 1995.



1995



2001

The Jazz Ambassadors perform at Snowmass Village, Chief Warrant Officer Four Kevin Laird conducting, 2001.



2008

The Jazz Ambassadors are featured performers at "The Midwest Clinic" in Chicago, 2008.

1990

1995

2000

2005



1994

Publicity photo for the Jazz Ambassadors' 1994 European Tour commemorating the 50th Anniversary of D-Day.

The Jazz Ambassadors perform for the opening of the Japan Branch of the Glenn Miller Birthplace Society, 1994.



1994



1999

The Jazz Ambassadors perform at the 1999 International Association of Jazz Educators Conference at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, CA.

The Jazz Ambassadors perform alongside the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra with maestro Erich Kunzel, 2003.



2003

Staff Sergeant Bradford Danho solos with the Jazz Ambassadors at Blues Alley, Washington DC, 2013.



The saxophone section of the Jazz Ambassadors performs at the 2018 Norwegian Military Tattoo.



2010

2015



“Meet Your Army” event with the Jazz Ambassadors and Major General Bradley Becker, 2017.



Live recording session at BIAS Studios with Sammy Nestico for *Sammy Nestico-The Soldier Sessions*, Chief Warrant Officer Two Dan Wood conducting, 2015.

## CREDITS

commander . . . . .	Colonel Jim Keene	mastering engineer . . .	Mr. Alan Silverman (Arf Mastering)
executive producer . . . .	Chief Warrant Officer Two Kevin Pick	graphic designer . . . .	Master Sergeant Brian Spurgeon
producer . . . . .	Sergeant First Class Thomas Davis	editor . . . . .	Sergeant First Class Phillip Johnson
co-producers . . . . .	Sergeant First Class Paul White Staff Sergeant Daniel Jamieson	liner notes . . . . .	Sergeant Major Andrew Layton Sergeant First Class Phillip Johnson
project manager . . . . .	Sergeant First Class David Parks	photo references . . . .	Sergeant Major John Altman Staff Sergeant Sean Casey
recording/mix engineer . . . . .	Staff Sergeant Ricky Furr		

*“On the Sunny Side of the Street” and “Bye-Ya” recorded at Devers Hall, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, September 10-11, 2018  
Mixed at Devers Hall, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, 2018*

*Special thanks to Chief Warrant Officer Three (Ret.) Charlie Almeida for providing access to the first studio recording of the Studio Band*

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All performances by the Jazz Ambassadors are free of charge, but are arranged with the help of a concert sponsor. If you are interested in sponsoring a concert by the Jazz Ambassadors, or if you are an educator and would like one of the the Jazz Ambassadors' small groups to perform a live or online clinic, masterclass, or recital at your school, please contact us at our website or at:

THE UNITED STATES ARMY FIELD BAND  
ATTN: SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS  
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FORT MEADE, MARYLAND 20755



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# THE UNITED STATES ARMY FIELD BAND

- 1. JUMP CALL** (3:57) benny carter
- 2. KNOWLEDGE** (5:26) mary lou williams  
arr. SGM eugene thorne
- 3. ANGEL EYES** (3:25) matt dennis  
arr. SP7 dave wolpe
- 4. SING** (3:38) joe raposo  
arr. SFC vincent norman
- 5. ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET** (5:00) jimmy mchugh  
arr. SSG daniel jamieson
- 6. SPEAK LOW** (4:04) kurt weil  
arr. SGM eugene thorne
- 7. TISHEROME** (5:06) mary lou williams  
arr. SGM darryl brenzel
- 8. FRANKIE & JOHNNY** (5:23) frank & bert leighton  
arr. sammy nestico
- 9. I WANT TO BE HAPPY** (2:20) vincent youmans & irving caesar  
arr. SGM eugene thorne
- 10. HIDDEN AGENDA** (6:46) MSG eric richards
- 11. WILLOW WEEP FOR ME** (5:59) ann ronell  
arr. SFC vince norman
- 12. A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER** (5:56) clyde connor  
& SSG vince norman
- 13. BYE-YA** (7:00) thelonious monk  
arr. SFC paul white



U.S. ARMY