

...And now for the heavier comments. I originally began composing *Your Absence is Noted* after hearing of the tragic death of Canadian alto saxophonist Calder Spanier in 1997. Calder was a dear friend of mine in college and one of the finest young jazz musicians in Canada at that time (1987-88). In 1997 he was killed in a car accident leaving behind his wife Madeline and a lot of fellow musicians who continue to miss his strong, unique musical personality. I was not able to attend his funeral, but a friend informed me that people came from all over the world to pay their respects to a guy who spent more time busking in the Montreal metro stations than he spent in his classes at McGill. After a huge mental block, I set aside this composition for a while. Shortly after September 11th, 2001, however, I began to work on it again. *Your Absence is Noted* was never fully completed but we chose to record it anyway. It seems appropriate to make special mention of all those who have recently passed on, far too early in life, before they had a chance to realize their dreams. This CD is dedicated in particular to the memory of Moragh Parks. Moragh was the principal bassist in the Saskatoon Symphony (2000-2002) after which she became the principal bassist of the Winnipeg Symphony. Moragh brought a great deal of talent and positive energy to the musical community of Saskatoon and to also our music department. Moragh played in many classical, jazz, folk, and commercial groups in town and performed on the U of S Jazz Ensemble's first CD, *Bumper Crop*. Moragh was a giving and versatile musician who considered herself a musical 'work in progress' and was a wonderful role model for many of our student musicians. Her willingness to play in our jazz band for an entire academic year benefited our university musicians greatly.

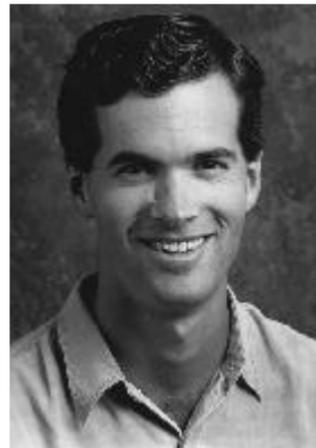


Finally, *But Not For One* was a fun way to end this project. It is a modern swinger that again features Brian O'Kane and also our fine pianist Steven Scharfstein. This piece was commissioned while I was conducting the *University of North Texas Four O'Clock Lab Band*. The *UNT* band and I agreed to ask *UNT* alumnus Bret Zvacek to write for us whatever he wanted. We chose Bret as our composer for the project because of his open-mindedness and his insight as a prolific jazz artist. Thank you again Bret for the composition and for giving the U of S *Jazz Ensemble One* the opportunity to record it.

Of the fourteen selections recorded on this CD, five are original compositions, five are unpublished arrangements, and four are our renditions of jazz classics. The result is a collection of music, new and old, played with sincerity and commitment, which documents the collective hard work and talents of several students over the past two years. We hope you enjoy *Bumper Crop II - Outstanding In Their Fields*, our 2002-2003 harvest of musical offerings!

Thanks for listening.

Dean McNeill
Associate Professor of Brass/Jazz,
University of Saskatchewan



The Recording:

Wayne Giesbrecht and I have annually collaborated on these U of S jazz band recordings since the spring of 1999, as sound engineer and producer respectively. Over the years, we have used more and more sophisticated recording technology in order to improve the sound quality of the final product. This spring we recorded simultaneously onto three recording devices: a Tascam DA88 eight channel digital tape recorder, a two channel digital audio tape recorder, and a computer via a thirty two channel digital mixer and used VEGAS audio software. We used twenty-two sets of headphones and recorded the piano in a different room of the Education Building, one floor above where the rest of the band was playing. Three smaller analog mixers and four headphone amplifiers were also part of the equation. The net result was a rather complicated recording process! However, due to Wayne's technical expertise, the recording and mix-down sessions were all relaxed, productive and positive. Thank you very much Wayne for your patience and for the many hours of hard work you have dedicated to this project. It would not have been the same without you!

This CD was recorded on March 23, 2002, and on March 29-30, 2003 in the University of Saskatchewan Education Building.



Thank you!!!

This CD would not have been possible were it not for the support of the following:

???University of Saskatchewan President Peter MacKinnon

???College of Arts and Science Acting Dean Dr. Keith Taylor

???College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts,
Dr. Judith Henderson

???College of Arts and Science Associate Dean of Student Undergraduate Affairs,
Dr. Tom Steele

???College of Arts and Science Acting Associate Dean of Science Dr. Richard Neil

???Department of Music Chair Dr. Patrick Browne (2002-present)

???Department of Music Chair Dr. Garry Gable (1999-2002)

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???Long and McQuade Music (Saskatoon) & Kelly Prior (Manager)

???Yamaha Canada & Steve Butterworth

???CD Graphic Artist Naomi Lepage

???Field photograph on front cover Marie Linsley

BUMPER CROP II: All Out-Standing in Their Field

Track

- 1) I Left My Heart in San Francisco
- 2) Where Or When
- 3) April In Paris
- 4) Body & Soul
- 5) Every Day Living
- 6) Bunsen Burner
- 7) End of a Love Story
- 8) I Let a Song Go Out Of My Heart
- 9) Night and Day
- 10) Look for the Silver Lining
- 11) Tall Cotton
- 12) Pegasus
- 13) Your Absence is Noted
- 14) But Not For One

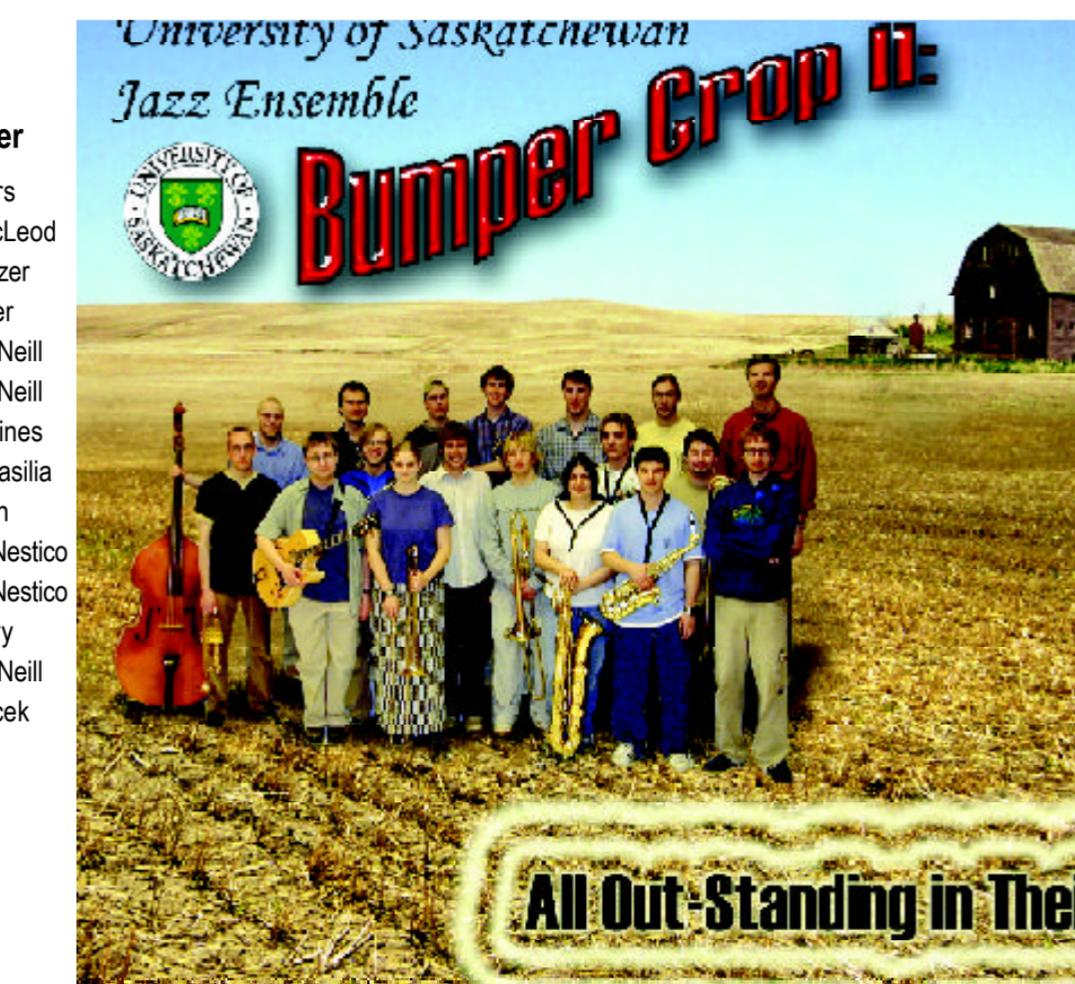
Composer

- George Cory & Douglass Cross
Rogers & Hart
Vernon Duke
Johnny Green
Dean McNeill
Dean McNeill
Steve Haines
Duke Ellington
Cole Porter
Jerome Kern
Sammy Nestico
Hank Levy
Dean McNeill
Bret Zvacek

Arranger

- Billy Byers
John MacLeod
Bob Mintzer
Ron Collier
Dean McNeill
Dean McNeill
Steve Haines
Mickey Basilia
Rick Garn
Sammy Nestico
Sammy Nestico
Hank Levy
Dean McNeill
Bret Zvacek

Tracks 1-8 & 14, Spring 2003 Ensemble
Tracks 9-13, Spring 2002 Ensemble



Spring 2002 Ensemble

Dean McNeill, Director
Saxophones
Michael Kurpjuweit
Teri Gieni
Arjun Shankar
Jason Matches
Stewart Parkinson
Trumpets
Daniel Funk
Vince Spilchuk
Dave Anderson
Dylan McKinnon
James Wood
Trombones
Jeremy Drotar
Kristine Eggertson
Carl Norum
Sean Sinclair
Piano
Jeremy Geddert
Bass
Cody Kurz
Chase Figley
Drums
Arlan Kopp
Vibes/Percussion
Brett Balon

Spring 2003 Ensemble

Dean McNeill, Director
Guest Artist
Brian O'Kane – Trumpet/Flugelhorn
Saxophones
Adam Gillespie
Justin McCrea
Michael Kurpjuweit
Paul Suchan
Regan McLachlan
Trumpets
Mike Barth
Dylan McKinnon
Dave Anderson
Matt Luciuk
Alison Olson
Trombones
Kristine Eggertson
Carl Norum
Shaun Bzdel
Peter Nosgaard
Sean Sinclair
Guitar
Graham Pritchard
Piano
Steven Scharfstein
Acoustic Bass
Cody Kurz



Drums
Arlan Kopp
Vibes/Percussion
Brett Balon

Brian O'Kane

I first met our guest artist Brian O'Kane while studying music at McGill University. Brian inspired many of us at McGill with his sharp wit, good-natured humor and most importantly, with his mature and exciting jazz playing. Brian has since gone on to lead a very productive career as a full time professional musician in Toronto, one of Canada's strongest musical centers. It was a pleasure to have him as our guest artist on this CD project.

Toronto based Canadian Trumpeter Brian O'Kane has performed with artists/groups such as the Rob McConnell Tentet, Diana Krall, Don Thompson, Dave McMurdo, Ron Collier, Vic Vogel, David Liebman, Barry Elmes, Bernie Senensky, Dave Young, Peter Appleyard, Dave Brubeck, The Brass Connection, Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Peabo Bryson, Bill Medley, Little Anthony and the Imperials, Engelbert Humperdink, John Davidson, and Gene Pitney. He has performed in France, England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States at venues including the Cork Opera House, Dublin Opera House and Carnegie Hall. Brian is a sessional faculty member at Humber College and has performed in the professional musical productions *Frank - A Life In Song*, *The Full Monty*, *Chicago*, *Romancing the One I Love*, *Swing Step*, *Damn Yankees*, *West Side Story*, *Grease*, *Hello Dolly*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *The Sound of Music*.



The purpose of this CD project was to produce a lasting record of the music of both the 2002 and 2003 U of S Jazz Ensembles. All puns aside, *Outstanding in Their Fields* (plural) seemed like an appropriate title for this project as the students in this ensemble are registered in a variety of colleges across the U of S campus. Although the music department offers many jazz courses, including Jazz History, Jazz Theory & Ear Training, Jazz Improvisation, Jazz Arranging, Jazz Pedagogy, and of course, Large Jazz Ensemble, the department does not offer a full degree in Jazz Studies. As a result, the musicians performing on this CD have all been pursuing some other degree while at the U of S. These programs include Music (Education), Music (Performance), Music (Composition and Theory), Law, Computer Science, Education, Soil Sciences, Arts, Commerce, Religious Studies, and Engineering.

Both bands heard here were an absolute pleasure to work with during each academic year as we prepared for this recording, concerts at the local jazz club *The Bassment* and at *Louis' Pub*, for the annual *Jazz Ensemble Big Band Dance*, and for our provincial tours. The 2003 spring tour included a trip to Alberta where the band performed as a featured guest ensemble at the Cantando Music Festival. Over the past two years these dedicated and hard working students have had the opportunity to work with guest artists Jon Ballantyne, Hugh Fraser, Slide Hampton, Campbell Ryga, Dave Robbins, Joe Luloff, Brad Turner, Craig Brennan, Gordon Foote, and Brian O'Kane, resulting in a very active and productive collection of activities.



On a personal note, as was the case with our first recording, entitled *Bumper Crop*, I have again used the U of S *Jazz Ensemble One* as a means for furthering some of my own professional objectives as a jazz composer. I am again proud of the way these musicians have brought to life the music I composed for this project. I want to thank them again for their enthusiasm, their musicianship, and their patience as we worked out the 'bugs' in each piece (often part of the process when playing newly composed music!).



I Left My Heart in San Francisco is a great old slow swing tune that I heard for the first time this year at the *International Association for Jazz Education Conference* held in Toronto. The *McGill Jazz Orchestra* directed by Gordon Foote played this arrangement with great style and sophistication at the conference. I was immediately inspired to find the same arrangement for our band. Thanks, Gord, for continuing to lead the way. It was a treat for us to play John MacLeod's arrangement of *Where Or When*. This medium swing tune was the perfect vehicle to feature Brian's lyrical flugelhorn playing on. John's great writing combined with Brian's warm, personal sound and adventurous spirit as an improviser resulted in us wanting to include all three of the takes we recorded however we had to pick one simply for time considerations. Bob Mintzer's refreshing arrangement of *April In Paris* typifies one of our objectives on this recording - to offer to the listener a balanced repertoire, combining the traditional with the contemporary. Ron Collier is one of Canada's most highly respected jazz composers/arrangers. His arrangement of the classic jazz standard *Body & Soul* was another real treat for us to record and to feature Brian on. Ron's writing combined with Brian's playing added a great deal of taste, professionalism and class to this entire project. Saskatoon bass trombonist Dawn McLean is a wonderful professional musician/music educator who asked me to compose *Everyday Living* for her jazz band at St. Joseph High School. It was a fun project to be involved in and I revised this piece to feature U of S student Dave Anderson as flugel horn soloist. While at the *IAJE* conference in Toronto, I met one of my musical heroes. For those of you who do not know composer/arranger Sammy Nestico, he has composed and/or arranged more great big band tunes than perhaps any other jazz composer. He is also one of the most humble and down-to-earth guys I have ever met.



There is a famous composition of Mr. Nestico's entitled *Hay Burner* that we love to play in the *Metro Jazz Ensemble* here in Saskatoon. *Bunsen Burner* is a direct take-off of *Hay Burner*. It is intended as a tribute tune to Mr. Nestico and was composed as a means by which I could learn more about his arranging style. The title seemed very appropriate given the rather academic approach I used to write the tune, which included using Mr. Nestico's *Hay Burner* form, overall harmonic progressions and voicings. *End of a Love Story* is a beautiful ballad and yet another newly composed original composition written by Steve Haines, a professor of jazz studies at the *Miles Davis Institute* in Greensboro, North Carolina. Our ensemble has enjoyed performing many of Steve's compositions and arrangements over the past five years. For five years now, we have been fortunate to have Sean Sinclair play bass trombone in many of our Department of Music ensembles. It seemed fitting to feature Sean here as he nears the end of his law degree at the U of S. Sean, we hope you never *Let a Song Go Out Of (your) Heart* when you put on your white collar. *Night and Day* features recent Music Performance graduate Blake Cummings. Blake did a great job of this classic tune that was recently arranged by a mentor of mine, *Grant MacEwan Community College* professor Rick Garn. Thanks Rick for the gift of this arrangement. *Look for the Silver Lining* was arranged by Sammy Nestico. Need I say more? Jeremy Drotar is a recent graduate of our five-year double degree Bachelors of Education/Music Education program. *Tall Cotton* features Jeremy in his last semester at the university. We wanted to document Jeremy's strong contribution to this band and to our entire department. *Pegasus* by Hank Levy features yet another Music department student, Dylan McKinnon. It is always a pleasure to watch students grow musically over their time here. His enthusiasm for jazz music has been a very positive influence on this ensemble.