

GOING FOR ADDS: OCTOBER 18th, 2024

FILE: JAZZ SEPTET

ARTISTS: VISIONS JAZZ ENSEMBLE

SAM BUTLER AND GARRETT FASIG

**TITLE: ACROSS THE FIELD – College Fight Songs
Reimagined**

LABEL: PATOIS RECORDS PRCD032

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Track Listing

1. Tiger Rag (3:32) Nick LaRocca
2. Anchors Aweigh (5:01) Charles A. Zimmermann (music), Alfred Hart Miles (lyrics)
3. Indiana, Our Indiana (3:37) Russell P. Harker (lyrics), to the tune of the trio from "The Viking March" by Karl King, conductor of the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band
4. Rocky Top (5:45) Felice and Boudleaux Bryant
5. Across The Field (4:38) William A. Dougherty, Jr.
6. Glory, Glory (5:06) The melody of "Glory, Glory" is the same as that of "Say Brothers Will You Meet Us" by John Brown's Body, and Battle Hymn of the Republic; arr: Hugh Hodgson
7. Hot Time in the Old Time Tonight (feat. Wycliffe Gordon) (4:43) Theodore August Metz (music), Joe Hayden (lyrics)
8. Fight On (4:40) Milo Sweet (music), Glen Grant (lyrics)
9. Hail Purdue (4:27) Edward S. Wotawa (music), James R. Morrison (lyrics)
10. The Victors (4:06) Louis Elbel
11. Ramblin' Wreck (5:04) based on "Son of a Gambolier", Charles Ives (music), lyrics on an English and Scottish drinking song
12. Victory March (4:45) Michael J. Shea (music), John F. Shea (lyrics)
13. On Wisconsin (4:02) William T. Purdy (music), Carl Beck (lyrics)

Personnel

Sam Butler - Trumpet and Arrangements

Garrett Fasig - Tenor Saxophone and Arrangements

Nick Recktenwald - Trumpet

Jeff Parker - Trombone and Bass Trumpet

Wycliffe Gordon - Trombone (track 7)

Dan Ventura - Piano

Jacob Smith - Bass

Francis Bassett-Dilley - Drums

Recorded at Primary Sound Studios in Bloomington, IN

March 16-17, 2024. Recorded, Mixed and Mastered by

Jake Belser

Liner Notes

Rah. Rah. Rah.

C'mon admit it — you see the phrase “college fight songs,” you get a flash of halftime shows and packed bleachers on autumn afternoons, far removed from the nuanced layers of a nightclub performance in the shank of the evening.

On this album, these seemingly polar opposites find a meeting point, right at midfield. In the hands of Sam Butler and Garrett Fasig, though, there've been some changes made.

Butler's arrangement of Notre Dame's famed “Victory March” unfolds in three-quarter time — I guess the Irish are “waltzing to victory?” — with some New Orleans funk on the tail end. “Hail Purdue” is usually a fast-paced rabble-rouser, but Fasig lifts the homespun melody from its frantic tempo and improbably creates a lovely glee-club chorale. Then he gives the well-known “On Wisconsin” a minor-key makeover, turning it into a theme that would suit any James Bond caper. Butler's arrangement of “Ramblin' Wreck,” from Georgia Tech, uses flute to play up the melody's Scottish roots, while on USC's “Fight On” he finds the link between march beat and samba, then fades it into a light bossa, the better to tame the portentousness of that opening fanfare.

And so it goes throughout this delightfully inventive tour of collegiate athletics. The melodies haven't changed — well, not *that* much — and the songs remain instantly recognizable. (Well, *almost* instantly.) But you haven't heard them like this. And that's the whole point: bringing a new perspective to music written a century ago, for a notably different purpose, and letting a team of savvy improvisers run wild.

As it turns out, the college fight songs of yore and the jazz sensibilities of today have more in common than it seems at first glance. Says Butler, “Interestingly, these songs, except for the more modern ones, take their emphasis from the early march form” — the idiom popularized in the late 19th and 20th centuries by John Philip Sousa. Not coincidentally, that's about the time

that most collegiate anthems were composed; Sousa himself wrote a half-dozen or more.

And as any jazz historian can tell you, marches and parade music supplied an important thread in the early jazz tapestry, lending their influence in terms of instrumentation and tempo — and even their content — to New Orleans street music. “A lot of these songs are not that far from the origins of early jazz,” Butler explains. “We all have a concept of modern marching bands, but once we dug into the music, we started to find a lot of commonalities. It’s more closely related than we thought.”

“Tiger Rag” offers the perfect intersect: a hit jazz tune that made its way to the gridiron. First recorded in 1917, it became synonymous with jazz in the music’s infancy, and it remains a clichéd signifier for the Jazz Age itself. But in 1926, the Louisiana State University Tigers adopted it as their fight song, and a century later, the band still plays it before each home football game (a scene repeated at practically every high school and college that has a tiger for its mascot).

In 1954, Dave Brubeck famously documented his tour of college campuses with an album titled *Jazz Goes to College*. Seventy years later, Butler and Fasig, along with the members of this estimable septet, have brought college to jazz, turning fight songs into love songs, frantic marches into cool grooves, and somehow getting “rah, rah, rah” to “swing, swing, swing.”

Go team. – *Neil Tesser*

SAM BUTLER is a professional jazz trumpet player, composer, arranger and educator based in Indianapolis, IN. He has performed all around the Midwest with various ensembles including the Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra, Sean Dobbins and the Modern Jazz Messengers, Sammy Miller and The Congregation, and his own Folklore Sextet.

Sam began work as a jazz education curriculum developer, transcriber, arranger, and composer with Playbook Music in July of 2023. He was also an Associate Instructor in the Jazz Department of the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University while completing his master’s degree in Jazz Studies.

In 2019 and 2020 he was named a semi-finalist in the Jazz Division of the National Trumpet Competition, and performed with the Plummer Jazz Sextet, a select group of musicians that writes original music, plays shows around the Midwest. And in 2023 he was the winner of the International Trumpet Guild Jazz Solo Competition.

Sam recorded an EP of all original compositions with his sextet “Spoken Thoughts,” which was released in early 2022 followed by his highly acclaimed Folklore in 2023.

GARRETT FASIG is an emerging composer and saxophonist originally from Defiance, Ohio. In his short career thus far, Garrett has written several original jazz ensemble compositions that have been recorded by the Brent Wallarab Jazz Ensemble, a full program of music for jazz sextet and string quartet and has been commissioned for both jazz ensemble and orchestral works by the New York Youth Symphony and Brianna Thomas, respectively. He has also learned and performed alongside world-class musicians Walter Smith III, Steve Houghton Dayna Stephens, and Greg Ward.

The first eleven years of Garrett’s musical journey were devoted to his development on the saxophone. This led him to the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University where he would go on to complete both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in jazz studies. While spending most of his time studying saxophone. This changed in early 2020 when a neurological disorder, dystonia, would prevent him from spending long amounts of time playing. Garrett turned his focus towards composition, and by the next year was awarded the David N. Baker Jazz Composition Scholarship from BMI.

Sam and Garrett Social Media

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