

METROPOLITAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA



SHARKS & MATAJEES

DAZZLE  
RECORDINGS  
DR507



**1 You Don't Know What Love Is**

(GENE DEPAUL & DON RAYE / ARR. ERIC RICHARDS)

Solos: Gary Dempsey (piano), Tyler Farr  
(alto sax), Dan Johnson (trumpet) 6:29

**2 Beauty and The Beast**

(ALAN MENKEN / ARR. GORDON GOODWIN)

Solos: Gary Dempsey (piano),  
Ejric Bernhardt (tenor sax) 4:56

**3 Souvenir**

(BENNY CARTER / ARR. ERIC RICHARDS)

Soloist: Gary Dempsey (piano) 7:36

**4 I Love Bein' Here With You**

(PEGGY LEE & WILLIAM SCHLUGER / ARR. ERIC RICHARDS)

Vocalist: Suzanne Morrison  
Solo: Kevin Buchanan (trombone) 3:20

**5 Sharks & Manatees**

(EJRIC BERNHARDT)

Solos: Scott Handler (trumpet),  
Rap: Ejric Bernhardt 6:12

**6 Bridge Over Troubled Water**

(PAUL SIMON / ARR. KEITH MANSFIELD)

Solos: Scott Handler (trumpet),  
Ejric Bernhardt (tenor sax) 3:35

**7 A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square**

(MANNING SHERWIN / ARR. MIKE TOMARO)

Vocalist: Doug Barta 4:55

**8 Nature Boy**

(EDEN AHBEZ / ARR. MATT AMY)

Soloist: Zack Cassell (alto sax) 6:46

**9 You Are So Beautiful**

(BILLY PRESTON & BRUCE FISHER / ARR. GARY URWIN)

Vocalist/Soloist: Doug Barta (trumpet)  
Solo: Zack Cassell (alto sax) 5:28

**10 Fantasia on Kang Ding Love Song**

(ERIC RICHARDS)

Solos: Zack Cassell (flute, alto sax),  
Doug Barta (trumpet) 8:15

**11 Taki Tari**

(M. VIVANCO / ARR. SYD POTTER)

Vocalist: Suzanne Morrison 1:52

**12 The Nearness of You**

(NED WASHINGTON & HOAGY CARMICHAEL / ARR. ERIC RICHARDS)

Soloist: Kevin Buchanan (trombone) 5:43

**13 Zen and The Art of Samba**

(JIM MICK)

Solos: Zack Cassell (alto sax), Dan Johnson  
(trumpet), Serena Eads (guitar) 5:22



# METROPOLITAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR:

Jim Mick 3

## VOCALISTS:

Suzanne Morrison 6  
Doug Barta 11

## REEDS:

Zack Cassell ALTO & SOPRANO SAX, FLUTE 1  
Tyler Farr ALTO SAX, FLUTE 8  
Ejric Bernhardt TENOR & SOPRANO SAX, FLUTE 2  
Alan Nowicki TENOR SAX, CLARINET 7  
Mark Halberstadt BARI SAX\* 4  
Doug Blease BARI SAX† 5

## TRUMPETS:

Scott Handler LEAD 9  
David Froman 10  
Doug Barta 11  
Mark Ibsen 12  
Dan Johnson 13

## TROMBONES:

Kevin Buchanan LEAD 14  
Greg Hoppe 15  
Ron Argotsinger 16  
Jace Van Bradt BASS 17

## RHYTHM SECTION:

Serena Eads GUITAR 20  
Jason Malmberg BASS 19  
Gary Dempsey PIANO 21  
Alan Aluisi DRUMS 18

\* TRACKS 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13

† TRACKS 3, 6, 10, 11, 12

**SHARKS AND MANATEES** are two of nature's best known animals representing two extremes in terms of temperament and style. This seemed a fitting title for our debut CD. Not only is "Sharks & Manatees" a unique big band arrangement by our own Ejric Bernhardt, but the name also symbolizes the depth and extremes of MJO's repertoire, which we have showcased on this CD. Here we include everything from jazz classics, straight-ahead burners, cult classics (Maynard Ferguson fans!) and lush ballads to exotic tunes from all over the world!

**HISTORY OF MJO: The Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra (MJO)** was formed in January 2002 by Kevin Buchanan and myself, Scott Handler, out of a desire to play **what** we wanted, **when** we wanted! To our excitement and encouragement, our first night's rehearsal was attended by 20+ local Denver Metro area musicians. After the dust settled, MJO was born. Out of those original players, seven are still in the group today with many of the original musicians gladly joining us occasionally to sit in. Early on, vocalists were recruited to add the big band jazz vocal style we all know and love, enriching and expanding our already solid repertoire of sound. After a couple of years, Jim Mick moved from the trumpet section to the directors stand to become the MJO Musical Director. What began as a creative avenue has blossomed into one of Denver's premier jazz orchestras with no sign of slowing down!

#### **MJO: GIVING BACK THROUGH**

**EDUCATION:** Coming up on nearly 10 years now, MJO is still going strong – playing regular monthly gigs at **Dazzle Jazz Club** in Denver, CO (voted a "Top-100 Jazz Club in the World" by *Downbeat Magazine*) as well as at fairs, galas, festivals, private events, fundraisers, and even a wedding or two. In May 2006, MJO was granted its **non-profit status** (501c3) with a stated mission of "supporting big band jazz music in our schools." We started with our wildly successful **MJO Presents** program, which features a different high school jazz ensemble in concert with MJO at Dazzle twice a month. We then expanded our program again to add our **Guest Artist Program**, which brings national and international professional musical talent to town for special clinics/concerts with MJO and area jazz students.

**MJO DEBUT CD:** This groundbreaking CD has been a labor of love and a long time coming, as we have worked diligently to coordinate the schedules of 20 musicians, most of whom have "day jobs". During 2009-2011, MJO musicians and vocalists spent many an hour at Audio Park Recording Studio in Arvada, CO under the discerning ears of Park Peters for three separate recording sessions. In order to put our very best musical foot forward, we really took our time on this project.

I'd like to offer a **SPECIAL THANK YOU** to our friends Eric Richards, Gary Urwin, and Matt Amy, as well as our own Jim Mick and Ejric Bernhardt, for their contributions of original

material to the repertoire. The other arrangements on this CD represent the finest arrangers in the industry who consistently put out some of the best big band music we could ever have the pleasure of performing. And of course, a most heartfelt **thank you** goes to out to all of the men and women of MJO who constantly brave the various Colorado elements every week, every month, every year; attending rehearsals and various gigs all over the Rocky Mountain Region.

We hope you enjoy **SHARKS & MANATEES!**

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**You Don't Know What Love Is** is a great opener and a fantastic arrangement by our good friend Eric Richards. One of the most consistently outstanding arrangers of our time, Eric is featured prominently on our CD because his charts (arrangements) are just that good! Eric, a former staff arranger for the US Army Jazz Ambassadors (to name only one of his career accomplishments), has been a featured soloist with our group for many years. The variety of challenging yet downright fun-to-play charts he brings to us has been a never-ending source of great tunes for our set lists. It's not far from the truth to say that we play an Eric Richards arrangement at least once per set. This chart on the jazz standard is a straight ahead burner, giving our two soloists, Tyler Farr on alto sax and Dan Johnson on trumpet, an extremely fun and





driving set of changes to play. The chart goes from warp speed to a solid swinger; even slipping in the classic James Bond Theme quote.

**Beauty and The Beast** is one of Gordon Goodwin's outstanding arrangements that takes the familiar Disney tune and arranges it in the classic Basie swing style. It features soft-soft moments punctuated with loud brassy pops and swings from the very beginning to the very end!

**Souvenir** is another example of how Eric Richards masterfully takes a jazz standard and gives the soloist (in this case our piano player, Gary Dempsey) room to stretch out, while still making it a pleasure both to listen to as well as to play. First composed by Benny Carter for a 1987 recording with the American Jazz Orchestra, this gorgeous ballad was arranged by Eric for a tribute album by the Army's Jazz Ambassadors: The Legacy of Benny Carter.

**I Love Bein' Here With You** is another outstanding Eric Richards arrangement in the hard-swingin' Thad Jones-influenced style that he originally composed for the US Army Jazz Ambassadors. Our vocalist,

Suzanne Morrison, gives it her own unique interpretation, along with our lead trombonist and co-founder of the band, Kevin Buchannan, who adds the fine trombone solo.

When Ejric brought MJO the chart for **Sharks & Manatees** to try out, we immediately enjoyed its contemporary feel... but with a rap vocal? In a big band jazz tune? Never! But, throughout the music, as you feel yourself roll back and forth on the calms and the storms encountered at sea, the flow is just perfect. It's a pleasure to hear and play Ejric's outstanding composition, masterfully combined with the universal message of personal improvement and life's constant struggle to become a better person on the ever-changing "high seas" of life.

Like many of us trumpet players who grew up listening to Maynard Ferguson, it is an honor and privilege to play **Bridge Over Troubled Water**, the classic Paul Simon tune arranged by Keith Mansfield for Maynard's self-titled album in 1971. Maynard Ferguson ("The Boss"), whose career spanned decades—from Stan Kenton to his own Big Bop Nouveau — is often imitated but never duplicated.

This is my personal tribute to a musician who has touched so many musical lives by giving many young players the opportunity to play with and learn from the master. Ferguson inspired a legion of trumpet players (and non-trumpet players alike) who carry on his memory and keep his musical legacy alive and well.

### **A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square**

**Square** is one of the most popular vocal ballads ever covered and has been performed by the likes of Frank Sinatra, Harry Connick Jr., The Manhattan Transfer, and even Rod Stewart. Our vocalist, Doug Barta, adds his own unique touches to this outstanding Mike Tomaro arrangement. This chart meshes the lush ballad with the easy bossa nova flavors that make Mike one of jazz's most creative and prolific arrangers of our time.

A few years back, via cyberspace, I met a very talented composer, arranger and trombonist from Australia named Matt Amy, who was always willing to let us play his compositions. Matt graciously agreed to let MJO record his very creative and colorful arrangement of the classic **Nature Boy**. Featuring Zack Cassell on alto sax, this song, written in 1947 by Eden Ahbez, tells the fantasy story of a "strange enchanted boy... who wandered very far" only to learn that "the greatest thing... was just to love and be loved in return." It was covered by Nat King Cole in 1948 and has since become a pop and jazz standard.

Another good friend of MJO is Gary Urwin, a lawyer by day and composer, arranger and big band leader by night. We commissioned Gary to arrange a tune for MJO; the result was a transformation of the classic Joe Cocker rock ballad **You Are So Beautiful** into a big band vocal masterpiece. Gary has a unique and contemporary style of writing that he routinely shares with the legion of amazing players in his home town of Los Angeles. As performed by our vocalist Doug Barta, we are inspired by his soothing vocals and his outstanding trumpet work on this excellent arrangement.

**Fantasia on Kang Ding Love Song** is an original Eric Richards composition written for the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Jazz Ensemble in October 2008. A well-known Chinese folk song is the point of departure for this piece that combines Chinese folk tradition with the language of contemporary Western jazz in a new and exciting way. While not played on the xun, a traditional Chinese vessel flute, MJO's Zack Cassell imbues the piece with a rich and warm flute sound that is a perfect and satisfying alternative. This piece begins with an orchestral "impressionistic blur" that flows into a driving – yet swinging – variation on the theme before returning gently to the tune's cultural origin.



**Taki Rari** is a tune from the repertoire of Yma Sumac, a famous Peruvian singer/actress rumored to be a descendant of an Incan princess. In the exotic tradition circa 1950's, Yma was known for her extreme vocal range spanning 4+ octaves. Suzanne Morrison, our resident soprano vocalist with an equally impressive vocal range, adds her own stylings to this unique and mysterious mambo; she pays tribute to Yma by incorporating a unique Peruvian Spanish dialect that is magical and compelling.

**The Nearness of You** is another excellent Eric Richards chart that was originally arranged for trombonist Jim McFalls. Eric has a unique ability to take a jazz standard and transform it into something both current and enjoyable to play. This chart gives our lead trombone player,

Kevin Buchanan, a loping jazz waltz to blow through. The song was written in 1938 by Hoagy Carmichael with the biggest-selling 1938 version recorded by the Glenn Miller Orchestra and even recorded as recently as 2002 by Norah Jones.

We are always excited to bring the compositions and arrangements of our very talented members to life, and so we close our CD with an exciting original composition by MJO's Musical Director, Jim Mick.

Jim composed **Zen and The Art of Samba** during his nearly 20-year stint with Colorado State University's jazz ensembles as a featured soloist, director, composer and arranger. This chart was heavily influenced by Robert Pirsig's book "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance," in which the author is quoted as saying, "The real cycle you are working on is a cycle called 'yourself.'" Jim adds, "At the time, it didn't seem like much of a stretch to leap from working on a motorcycle to creating music. It's all a process of self-discovery through trial and error. In addition, I thought the title was really pretty catchy!" Jim also states that "The connection between my intent behind 'Zen' and what Eric is saying in 'Sharks & Manatees' makes a fitting conclusion to our project, with the hope of inspiring young musicians to 'test the waters' of their abilities."

MJO can be contacted through the usual channels (website, Facebook, e-mail, phone) and we welcome comments about this CD, our group or any of our programs! We are continually a "work in progress," striving to improve our musical product with every performance. Thank you again for your support of MJO; please come see us in Denver and come say "hi!"

**Scott Handler**

**MJO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CO-FOUNDER**

**WEB:** [MetropolitanJazzOrchestra.org](http://MetropolitanJazzOrchestra.org)

**FACEBOOK:** [Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra](http://MetropolitanJazzOrchestra)

**YOUTUBE:** [Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra](http://MetropolitanJazzOrchestra)

## THANK YOU

### Scott Handler | MJO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CO-FOUNDER

I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE of playing in a lot of great big bands in our Colorado front range area! That said, the MJO is my personal labor of love and I am so thankful and appreciative of the time and efforts of our MJO family, the current and former members who have helped shape and mold



this band into the great band that it is today. After getting non-profit status in record time, we developed

our education programs into what is now a well-oiled music machine! A sincere thanks goes out to all the hard-working band directors that have helped us keep this program going strong for 8+ seasons. A special thank you to my brother Dan who spent many an unpaid hour designing our outstanding logo and the artwork on this CD.

### Kevin Buchanan | MJO OPERATING DIRECTOR, CO-FOUNDER

BEING CO-FOUNDER and co-leader of the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra has helped to build my creative side. This project is a reflection of that. Ten years ago when Scott and I started this, I had no idea we would be where we are today. I would like to thank my mom and dad for not allowing me to quit music. (I wanted to, many times). Thanks to Dick



Shoulders and Pete Vivona for influencing me as a trombone player and musician.

Thank you to the great musicians of this CD and all their hard work. Very special thanks to God, my wife Carla, and my children Corrina and Scott. Thanks for your support and understanding.

### Jim Mick | MUSICAL DIRECTOR

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED big band jazz. As a kid, my peers were listening to rock & roll while I was listening to Count Basie, Woody Herman and Duke Ellington. I have either played in or directed big bands now for 50+ years and continue to be amazed at the amount of great material that keeps this music current and relevant.

There's something about 18 players all being able to play the same note, for the same length of time, with the same attack at exactly the same moment in time that makes big band music so enjoyable and satisfying to me. The MJO definitely has the ability to do all the



above which creates a real sense of teamwork and accomplishment. What really makes this group enjoyable to listen to is our ability to create a sense of family, fun, and cohesion plus our desire to include the audience in our performances as

opposed to playing "at" them. Getting to stand in front of the MJO is truly a privilege and an honor; this is easily the best big and I've ever directed.

## CREDITS

Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra, Inc.  
Denver, CO

WEB: MetropolitanJazzOrchestra.org  
FACEBOOK: Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra  
YOUTUBE: Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra (Denver, CO)

PRODUCED BY: Scott Handler  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: Jim Mick, Kevin Buchanan

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