



# MIKE HOLOBER'S *Thought Trains*

NEW BIG BAND RECORDING FROM ACCLAIMED COMPOSER WITH GOTHAM JAZZ ORCHESTRA

featuring *Ron Carter, Tim Ries, John Riley, and others*

"Highly melodic, Holber's tunes fall easily on the ears, but the collective execution is full of substance.... Holober, as both pianist and arranger, seems to draw on the mid-1960's Herbie Hancock for inspiration, and his playing extends the influence with a fresh approach to dynamics, articulation, and rhythm."

— Larry Nai, *Cadence*

New York, NY – Sons of Sound proudly announces the October 16, 2004 release of *Thought Trains*, a big band recording led by rising star composer/pianist **Mike Holober** and featuring the **Gotham Jazz Orchestra**, a collection of New York City's most talented musicians.

The Gotham Jazz Orchestra ("GoJO"), a staple of Mr. Holober's for years, boasts a collection of first call musicians who are leaders in their own right. Bassist **Ron Carter** is best known for his work in the classic Miles Davis Quintet. Saxophonist **Tim Ries** has toured with the Rolling Stones and played lead saxophone for Maria Schneider. Others, such as trumpeters **Scott Wendholt** and **Tony Kadleck** and saxophonist **Charles Pillow**, hold significant positions in the Maria Schneider Orchestra and/or the Village Vanguard Orchestra. Alto saxophonist **Jon Gordon** is a former winner of the Thelonious Monk competition, and **John Riley**, widely recognized as among the finest big band drummers working today, was named #1 Big Band drummer in the *Modern Drummer* 2004 Readers Poll.

The music on *Thought Trains* is vibrant and fun, propelled by positive attitude. In the liner notes for the release, Thomas Staudter points out that much of *Thought Trains* was 'through composed,' meaning that Holober "penned one musical idea after another, hitching them together like cars for a boisterous engine to pull, the whole, sizable, forward-moving entity a creative dynamo to be enjoyed." The program ranges from the hard-driving swing of "Thought Trains" and "Let's Get Nice" to the funk-samba of "Big Sky" to the thoughtful ballad "Form x Mood." Those familiar with Mike's small group debut, *Canyon*, will enjoy the big band arrangement of "Heart Of The Matter." Providing the listener with a reference point for his harmonic sense, the set includes his arrangement of the traditional "Jump Down, Spin Around." Taken from a promotional sampler issued by the label earlier this year, "Let's Get Nice" has been used by Continental Airlines in their inflight jazz programming since April. Reviewing a pre-release copy of the disc for *Mainly Big Bands*, John Killoch wrote: "...an exciting surprise...unexpectedly and surprisingly accessible... a must for those who enjoy music that rewards and stimulates the imagination."

Challenging charts appeal to the best musicians; melodic, swinging tunes attract and sustain an audience. Holober is a rare composer who can appeal to both groups. Most of the Gotham Jazz Orchestra members have been working with Mike since early days with the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop under Roger Kellaway, Jim McNeely, and Manny Albam. Big Band recordings are among the most ambitious in jazz, and *Thought Trains* is no exception, having waited seven years from its recording in 1996 to mixing late last year. Remarkably, the recording was done in a single day, with a group of musicians already well-acquainted with the charts. Each member of the band is a friend who had asked Mike to participate "if he ever did the record." In spite of the years and the rise in the prominence

of its musicians, GoJO remains almost entirely intact in support of the recording, having performed twice at the International Association of Jazz Educators conference in New York City in January of this year and at the Fieldston Jazz Festival in Riverdale, New York, this past March.

Holober inspires comparison to the great harmonic masters, for his technique, ensemble work, and writing. In his review of Mike's 2003 outing, *Canyon*, David R. Adler for *All About Jazz* wrote: "Holober's piano style can be compared to a handful of Miles Davis alumni, perhaps: Bill Evans or Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock; but it's his tunes and the ensemble interplay rather than his instrumental prowess that hold sway on *Canyon*; ...The arrangements here don't call attention to themselves but are absolutely first-rate, begging for repeated listens... Marvelous!"

A composer of growing importance, Holober has twice been named a MacDowell Fellow, joining Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and only a handful of other jazz composers such as Fred Hersch and Mark Dresser. During his most recent visit to the artist colony, he wrote big band music in the same studio where Thornton Wilder wrote "Our Town." He has been a guest composer, conductor, and soloist with the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra and has been asked to appear with UMO in Helsinki. He has been in residence at the Conservatory at Innsbruck, Austria. His compositions are in the repertoire of the BBC Jazz Orchestra (under Jiggs Whigham), the Village Vanguard Orchestra, and other prestigious groups, including the former Radio in American Airspace (RIAS) orchestra in Berlin. The Armed Forces' premiere jazz bands, the Airmen of Note and the U.S. Army Blues, are each adding Mike's charts to their repertoire.

*Thought Trains* is Mr. Holober's second CD as a leader, following an impressive small group debut, *Canyon*, which featured *DownBeat* poll winners **Scott Colley** on bass and **Brian Blade** on drums, **Tim Ries** on saxophones, and **Wolfgang Muthspiel** on guitar. In a four-star review for the UK's *Jazzwise*, Kenny Mathieson writes "Confidence in Holober's ability to deliver high quality jazz as both performer and composer is fully justified by the music. His intricate but attractive melody lines unfold over imaginative and carefully textured ensemble voicings and structures."

With the legendary bassist **John Patitucci** joining in place of Mr. Colley, the quintet played two sold-out performances on May 25, 2004 at the *Jazz Standard* in New York City. During the same week, the group entered Avatar Studios to record the follow-up to *Canyon*, entitled *Wish List*, slated for release in early 2005 on Sons of Sound.

In addition to his own recordings, Mr. Holober may be heard on the Sons of Sound releases *A Whole Nother Story* and *Fundementia*, led by saxophonist/composer Andy Parsons and drummer Gene Lewin. At home with chamber music as well as jazz, Mike's composition "Views From A Train" was commissioned for and recorded by The American Saxophone Quartet, led by former New York Philharmonic principal saxophonist Albert Regni and featuring guest soloist Larry Combs, principal clarinet for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This work can be found on the ASQ's third CD for Sons of Sound, *The Commission Project*.

**Sons of Sound** is an independent jazz label founded in 1997 to support musicians who are active in music education. Mr. Holober is on the faculty of the City College of New York and has held many residencies as composer in NYC public schools. Mr. Holober is also an annual participant in *Swing 'N Jazz*, a three-day celebration of music education with workshops, concerts, and a fund-raising golf tournament for the benefit of The Commission Project, a music education nonprofit based in Rochester, NY.

For additional information see the label's web site at <http://sonsofsound.com/>. For more about The Commission Project, see <http://tcp-music.org/> and <http://swingnjazz.org/>.

#

CDs, full press kits, color and b&w jpgs available upon request.