Borja Rojo

MUR 122a

Concert Review 1

10/16/14

UR Jazz Band

UR Jazz band performed a short concert on Mel Weekend. It is comprised of a large ensemble containing a rhythm section of piano, bass, guitar, and drums, a sax section of seven altos and two tenors, a trombone section of three, and a trumpet section of four. This band played three pieces: Too Many Things by Mike Titlebaun; Groovin Pie by Dizzy Gillespie; Basically Blues by Phil Wilson.

Too Many Things began with an easy groove by the drummer accompanied melodically and harmonically by the trumpets and trombones. They play lines together for quite a while, the trombones periodically easing from the main motifs to play supporting rhythms and swells. Then, the saxophones join, only to act as a counterpoint that really fills the gaps left by the horns with a nice smooth pad. The piece then built as the horns began to play in unison with extreme power and finally crecendoed to a full cut of all the instruments. Slowly, the drums built back up with the saxophones and the horns let the saxophones breath and play their lines. From this rhythm that the saxophone and drums set up, the horns crept back in with an incredibly syncopated rhythm. By the end of the piece, the ensemble seemed to be falling apart, but then all of a sudden, all the instruments aligned, the saxophones with the horns, and the piece ended with one final bang. All in all, it was a short piece that I would have liked to see more from

Groovin Pie started with a drum call-and-response with the rest of the band. The drummer played 4 fills with the rest of the ensemble playing parts of the pieces main motifs. Then, the ensemble began to dominate with incredibly dynamic ascending lines with the horns progressively covering the saxophones. After the lead trumpet hit the high tonic, all the horns dropped out to leave the saxophone bare with just the rhythm section. The horns immediately began to crescendo, again repeating the same feel from the previous section of the piece. Once the trumpet reached his high point, the entire ensemble cut out once more to reveal a saxophone solo. Much of the piece continued this way, with the sax taking a more conservative route. Although he did play some interesting licks, he left something to be desired. After this, the song repeated back to the beginning, with a call-and-response from the drums with the ensemble and multiple builds and cuts with the horns. Finally, the piece finished with an ascending line that ended with a screeching trumpet blaring through the rest of the ensemble.

Basically blues began with an easy blues piano and a drum grooving behind it. Soon, the saxophones joined in unison, emulating the small lines the piano was playing alone. Then, the horns joined in as the saxophone repeated the last section. The horns only played simple swells as the saxophones continued to lead the ensemble. Then, both the horns and the saxophone changed their playing to become counterpoints. These lines evolved into the saxophones now supporting the horns and invited the horns to lead, blasting through to the end. The piece finishes with a loud, full ensemble chord.