



Press Release

'*THE JAZZ AMBASSADORS*'

ORIGINAL SCORE - DIGITAL RELEASE

Release Date: Sunday 25 November 2018

Rezzonator Music is delighted to announce the original music score to the award-winning "*The Jazz Ambassadors*" documentary will be available to download on all digital platforms and streaming via Apple Music and Spotify from 25th November 2018.

A THIRTEEN/Antelope South/Normal Life Pictures co-production, in association with BBC, ZDF and Arte, "[The Jazz Ambassadors](#)" tells the extraordinary story of America's plan to win hearts around the world and counter the Cold War with the USSR in 1956 with the help of America's most influential jazz artists. Over a period of ten years, performers including Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and Dave Brubeck, along with their racially-integrated bands, travelled the globe to perform as cultural ambassadors and became 'America's coolest weapon in The Cold War'. The documentary also reveals how the U.S. State Department unwittingly gave the burgeoning Civil Rights' movement a major voice on the world stage just when it needed one most.

Directed by Peabody Award-winner Hugo Berkeley and produced by Emmy-winner Mick Csáky, the film features striking archival footage, photos and radio clips, with iconic performances throughout. American composer, [Michael J McEvoy](#), rose to the challenge of writing an original score that would capture the atmosphere of the times, while creating an underscore that blended seamlessly with the iconic live performances in the film. With nods to jazz innovators Lee Morgan, John Coltrane and Mile Davis, McEvoy's music is at times meditative and reflective and, at others, segues into hard driving grooves encompassing bebop and blues. While complementing the narrative, McEvoy's score also stands alone as a unique and mesmerising soundscape.

The music is performed by a 9-piece ensemble of leading UK jazz performers brought together especially for this recording, featuring virtuoso drummer, Mark Mondesir (John McLaughlin, Courtney Pine) and powerhouse bass player, Karl Rasheed Abel (Jason Rebello, Laura Mvula) who provide a deep pulsing rhythmic foundation. The horn section features the exceptional talents of trumpet players Freddie Gavita, Tom Walsh and Kevin Robinson, Paul Booth, Graeme Blevins and Patrick Clahar on saxophone, and Fayyaz Virji and Dennis Rollins on trombone. Between them they have worked with artists from Quincy Jones, Al Jarreau, Ray Charles and many other

jazz greats. McEvoy completes the line up on piano and brings a wealth of experience as a composer, performer and musical director.

Michael has a string of composing credits in film and TV drama and documentary from the 2018 British feature, *Finding Your Feet* (Imelda Staunton and Timothy Spall), Richard Linklater's *Me and Orson Welles*, *Dark Angel* (ITV) to acclaimed documentaries *Alien Deep* (NATGeo) and *Einstein's Big Idea/E=Mc2* (NOVA-PBS/C4). He is also known as a contemporary jazz composer with three previous album releases: most recently '*The Long Way Home*' (2014) which featured a stellar line up of modern British jazz stars including Nigel Hitchcock, Gerard Presencer, Jason Rebello, Ben Castle and James Maddren.

The score for "*The Jazz Ambassadors*" was recorded and mixed at Air-Edel Studios by engineer Nick Taylor, with the musicians performing the compositions together while watching the visuals on screen. Director, Hugo Berkeley, was present at the recording sessions explaining the story to the musicians which enabled them to deeply engage with the subject matter. In contrast to the process in many film recordings, McEvoy kept the jazz philosophy throughout by choosing a group of strong individual voices who each brought a heartfelt depth and authenticity to their performances. At the same time, the score was recorded without a click track giving the recordings a unique improvisatory feel.

Composer, Michael J McEvoy said:

"The vibe in the room was really important to me. I wanted all the players there to feel that what we were doing was special, performing a music score that was supporting an important document of jazz history that would be watched, listened to and enjoyed for many years. I believe the score fully embodies that vibe. It was an immense honour and privilege to work on this project and I'm very proud of it."

Director, Hugo Berkeley said:

"Mike did a phenomenal job. The soundtrack is meditative, but also very musical. And he worked wonderfully with brass to create a sound that doubles both as ambassadorial and at the same time bluesy and mournful. I'd never realized how close those vibes could be, and I think Mike plays with that duality beautifully in these haunting compositions."

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Contact: Tracey McEvoy - tracey.mcevoy@mac.com. Photos and music available on request.