



North Texas Two O'Clock Lab Band

Published: December 5, 2009

By Jack Bowers

Jack Bowers

[View Profile](#) | [Contact Me](#)

Senior Contributor

Joined AAJ in 1997

A former newspaper writer / editor who has been writing about big-band Jazz for more than a dozen years.

North Texas Two O'Clock Lab Band

Bruce Hall Jazz Music

North Texas Jazz 2009

Bruce Hall Jazz Music, the second of four albums by the University of North Texas Two O'Clock Lab Band to be reviewed consecutively in this column, brings to the fore the Classes of Spring 2006-07 under recently retired director James Riggs. Bruce Hall, as it turns out, is not a person but a place, a dormitory and rehearsal space situated next to the UNT Music Building. Many music majors have been and are among those housed in its 492 rooms, presumably including some or even all of those who perform on this admirable CD.

The 2007 band leads off with trombonist Dave Richards' suitably named "Funkle Jelly Bags," spotlighting tenor saxophonist Alastair Otteson and trumpeter Thomas Eby. The 2006 ensemble embraces the next three numbers—the standard "There Will Never Be Another You" (arranged by UNT's Matt Gowlick), **Bob Brookmeyer's** explosive "Boom-Boom" and **Thad Jones'** luminous "Thank You"—but appears only once more, on **Phil Kelly's** swinging version of "You and the Night and the Music." The Class of 2007 takes charge on Kelly's galloping arrangement of **Duke Pearson's** "Jeannine," trumpeter Sean Foley's multi-layered "Raga," Alf Clausen's playful "Looking for the Back Door," **Bill Holman's** Stan Kentonesque arrangement of "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" (featuring trombonist Dave Winslow) and Steve Owen's perceptive look at **Wayne Shorter's** vigorous "Yes or No" (a splendid showpiece for altos John Leadbetter and Tim Barclay).

As noted before, the Two O'Clock Lab Band is one of a sizable number of blue-chip jazz ensembles at UNT, and its resemblance to the renowned One O'Clock Band is about as close as that of the Doublemint Twins. In fact, the Two O'Clock Band was named Best College Jazz Ensemble in *DownBeat* magazine's 31st annual Student Music Awards in 2008. Listening to *Bruce Hall Jazz Music*, it's easy to understand why. The soloists are consistently strong, the ensembles tight and focused, the rhythm sections sharp and responsive. As a bonus, the playing time is generous, sound clear and well-balanced. The listener can't ask for more than that from a university-level performance.