

THE TOMMY DORSEY LEGEND

In Big Band history, the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra is recognized as one of the best all-around dance bands. It could swing with the best of them, and no other band could come close to Tommy's when it came to playing ballads. Tommy Dorsey, "The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing", was a master at creating warm, sentimental, and always musical moods – at superb dancing and listening tempos. Tommy sustained these moods through the arrangements of the likes of Paul Weston, Axel Stordahl and Sy Oliver, and he showcased singers who could project them brilliantly.

Jack Leonard sang with the band for about four years, recording such fine sides as "Dedicated To You", "If It's The Last Thing I do", "Little White Lies", "You Taught Me To Love Again", "Once In A While", and, probably the most famous of all, "Marie". With the band singing vocal riffs as Jack sang the straight lyric, "Marie" was so successful that he recorded several more standard tunes with the same formula. They include "Who", "Yearning", and "East Of The Sun". "Song Of India", the other side of "Marie", was also a huge Dorsey hit.

Frank Sinatra's career blossomed with Dorsey, and, with Sinatra's vocals, the band became more successful than ever. Frank had often admitted that listening to Tommy helped him develop his phrasing and breathing, along with his musical taste and knowledge.

Sy Oliver infused the band with a new musical spirit. It was a gentler version of the rocking, rhythmic sounds that he had created for Jimmy Lunceford, toned down somewhat and played with more precision by the Dorsey Band. These original tunes included "Easy Does It", "Quiet Please", "Sing High", "Yes, Indeed", "Swingin' On Nothing", "Well, Git It", and "Opus No 1". Oliver also had a unique way of approaching a straight pop tune, injecting a soft, two-beat feeling into. He did this with resounding success in such arrangements as "What Can I Say After I Say I'm Sorry?", "For You", "Swanee River", "Mandy", "Make Up Your Mind", "Chicago", and "On The Sunny Side Of The Street".

The vocalists worked both individually and together, turning out several hits of superior quality. There was Sinatra's "This Love of Mine", Jo Stafford's "Embraceable You", the Pied Pipers' and Sinatra's "There Are Such Things", "Just As Though You Were Here", "Street Of Dreams", and "Oh, Look At Me Now". Their biggest hit of all, the one that established vocal groups forever, was "I'll Never Smile Again".

The Band was at its best in this decade. In the summer of 1941, it outranked every other band to finish first in one of the most indicative of all popularity polls, Martin Block's Make Believe Ballroom contest.

By late 1946, it was becoming apparent that the band business was having problems. In December 1946, eight top bandleaders announced they were calling it quits – Woody Herman,

Benny Goodman, Harry James, Les Brown, Jack Teagarden, Benny Carter, Ina Ray Hutton and Tommy Dorsey. Essentially, this was the official end of the Big Band Era. However, it was Tommy Dorsey who, in the years immediately following, fought the case of the big bands with words and action. Less than two years later, he was fronting a formidable new group.

The music world lost Tommy at an early age, but his legacy of great music has transcended time. The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra repertoire continues to entertain audiences of all ages throughout the world.

TERRY MYERS

"Terry Myers is undoubtedly one of the best all-around reed players in the country today." So said Buddy Morrow, former leader of the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and one of the great musicians and band leaders who was there for the early stages of the "Big Band Era." "His versatility and expertise on the clarinet and saxophone are a treat to the ears", Buddy added.

An Iowa native, Terry was a member of the US Marine Corps Reserves for five years. After college, where he majored in music and education, Terry honed his musical talent and soon developed a successful career in Nashville and New York City. When Terry decided to move to Florida, he quickly became one of the most in-demand musicians in the state. He was a band leader at Disney World's Epcot Center for four years and, for a time, led the band at Rosie O'Grady's, which was part of the popular Church Street Station entertainment complex in downtown Orlando.

In 1990, he became one of the original members of Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band, performing at jazz festivals all over the United States, Europe, and Asia. He has appeared at the North Sea Festival in Holland, the Birmingham, England, Festival, the Cork Festival in Ireland, the Bern Festival in Switzerland and many others. He, himself, has also toured the world as a guest artist on both clarinet and saxophone to rave reviews.

In the past, Terry has performed with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, The Tex Beneke Orchestra, The Les Elgart Band, The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, Ray Charles, Don Lamond, Chubby Jackson, Louis Bellson, Bob Haggart, Jake Hanna, Butch Miles and many others too numerous to name. In addition, he led the Artie Shaw Orchestra when former leader, Dick Johnson, was on hiatus, and Terry was always Buddy Morrow's "first call" to sub for him with the TDO.

In 1992, Terry was invited to form and lead a "Tribute to Benny Goodman" orchestra, which performed successfully for many years at such attractions as Busch Gardens in Florida and Virginia, Cypress Gardens and Silver Springs, as well as most of the major concert halls in Florida and across the country.

In reviewing one of Terry's albums, "*Soul Mates*", Dick Bogle of the *Portland Scanner* wrote: "Buried in the various nooks and crannies of the country is unheard-of jazz talent equal to those who bear the most familiar names. Such is the case of saxophonist Terry Myers....The man has certainly got it going on." Since then, Terry's subsequent CD's have earned him accolades from music critics and organizations such as Downbeat Magazine, and his latest release for Arbors Records also received rave reviews. According to JAZZ TIMES: "The sheer joy of Myers' music comes out swinging as he bops an unaccompanied intro and plays... 'Them There Eyes'." From JERSEY JAZZ: "...from his first notes, I had my eyes opened with delight."

Now featured with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, Terry is an exceedingly charming host who puts the audience at ease and then wows them with his and the TDO's musical presentation.