

Friday 14 February 2025
7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

GUILDHALL
SCHOOL

Guildhall Jazz Orchestra & Choir: Emboldened

featuring **Steve Banks**

Scott Stroman director

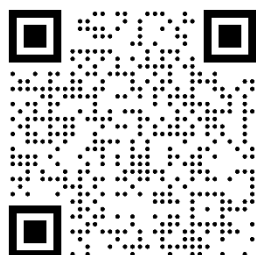
Steve Banks composer & guitar

Jonathan Silk arranger & coach

Digital Programme

Scan the QR code to access our digital programme:

[guildhall-programmes.co.uk/
emboldened](http://guildhall-programmes.co.uk/emboldened)



Milton Court

Please make sure that digital devices and mobile phones are silenced during the performance.

Eating is not permitted in the auditorium. Drinks are allowed inside the auditorium in polycarbonates.

Filming or recording of the performance is not permitted.

Latecomers will be able to enter the auditorium at a suitable break in the performance.

Programme

All works by Steve Banks, arranged by Jonathan Silk:

The Mancunian Candidate

Crockatt Man

Saunton Sands

Two Brothers

Just Listen

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Emboldened Suite

I. Emboldened (Prologue)

II. Fear

III. Belief (Prologue)

IV. Belief

V. Unity (Prologue)

VI. Unity (Main Theme)

Always For You And Forever Yours

Special thanks to Sara Colman, Jules Jackson, Flora Medlicott, Ralph Salmins and Clare Wheeler for their help in preparing the jazz orchestra and choir.

Programme correct at time of publication.

Welcome

I composed the *Emboldened Suite* with three movements reflecting the positive journey of people facing challenge and adversity: Fear, Belief and Unity. I wanted to offer an optimistic and reassuring experience for the peaceful majority. A message that we are heard, and we do have influence, that everyone across the world shares a common humanity and we are strongest together in adversity. The music was toured across the UK by my quintet and recorded alongside other compositions of mine before eventually releasing as the *Emboldened* album in May 2023.

Since then, it has been an extraordinary experience for me to collaborate with arranger Jonathan Silk as he has expanded my compositions for quintet into the dynamic, soaring musical landscapes of jazz orchestra, imbued with his unique musical voice. Jonathan balances the skill of extending a composition, adding rich textures and new movements, without losing the initial identity. He possesses an innate ability to know exactly what a composition needs and reveals fresh, exciting, hidden directions I would not have imagined. We have also seized the opportunity of further enhancing the jazz orchestra with choir. This brings an emotional depth and connection with the audience only possible with voices and has culminated in an exhilarating re-imagining of this music.

– Steve Banks

Guildhall Jazz Orchestra

Woodwinds

Belle Brunson
flute & piccolo

Sophus Lauesen
*soprano & alto
saxophone, clarinet,
flute*

Tom Townsend
*alto saxophone &
clarinet*

Emma Foulds
*tenor saxophone &
flute*

Ivy Pilley
*tenor saxophone &
clarinet*

Alex Wardill
*baritone saxophone &
bass clarinet*

Trumpet

Luke Lane
Sandy Watkin
Carmen Llana Pérez
Felix Bork
Will Everitt

Trombone

Angus Grierson
Matt Cooper
Felix Rockhill
Josh Brierley
(bass trombone)

Guitar

Jake Heron
Ben Lammin

Piano/Keyboard

Diarra Walcott-
Ivanhoe
Thomas Sladden

Bass

Marcus Baber

Drums/Percussion

Theo Hayhurst
Finn Seemann

Guildhall Jazz Choir

Jasmine Anderson
Ana Baginska
Chelsea Becker
Cass Begg
Ralph Bishop
Erin Bradley
Alexandra Cojocariu
Tilley Gartan
Louis Gascoyne
Urte Gineleviciute
Evie Hill
Tiger-Lily Jonathan
Lucy Joy
Daisy Lihoreau
Johanka Petrlikova
Martina Petrova
Hannah Richardson
Charlotte Stocks
Benny Tayler
Amelia Taylor
Bridget Walsh
Henry Ward
Angel Wong
Olesa Zgurskaia

Notes

The Mancunian Candidate

This is a composition dedicated to the joyful spirit and endless musical inspiration I will always find from my friend, Mike Walker. Born and raised in Manchester, he lives now just north of the city in a small cottage with thick stone walls. A peaceful haven, it's like stepping off the world. I've spent many days there, lost in music, walking amongst the surrounding hills, and laughing until my sides ache.

Crockatt Man

Dedicated to the saxophonist in my quintet, Sam Crockatt. Sam's energy, and the rhythmic and dynamic momentum he creates is so powerful. His creativity and vocabulary as an improviser seem limitless and his enthusiasm for the music sometimes makes him dance a bit on stage, which I love. He also writes beautiful compositions. You can hear the influence of giants in his music, but he's created a sound all of his own. I tried capturing some of Sam's energy in this composition whilst providing him with a launch pad to take off . . .

Saunton Sands

When entering periods of composition, I spend time listening to inspiring musical influences and amongst nature. It usually takes me a while to move from an 'input to output' phase. During March 2023, I was searching for elusive inspiration when my wife, Sara and I took a weekend break to north Devon. We spent several hours walking on Saunton Sands at low tide, a stunning 3-mile stretch of sandy beach. When we returned to the house later that day, my senses filled up by the huge skies, rhythmic waves, sights, sounds and colours of the sea, I composed this piece. Enhanced now by Sara's lyrics and Jonathan's arrangement, complete with the wind, you will hopefully be transported onto the sand dunes, looking out across the waves, or perhaps taking flight with one of the sea birds . . .

Two Brothers

This composition began by writing a melody in two keys, combined with influences from the music of Fred Hersch and Kenny Wheeler. This also got me thinking about siblings – people connected, yet separate. There are several pairs of brothers in my extended family and so I named it *Two Brothers*.

Just Listen

This is dedicated to the importance of listening. In composition and improvisation, I've found that allowing a natural, inner voice to emerge is essential. In performance, we're also constantly listening to the other musicians. I think we can often find the answers we're looking for if we're quiet enough to listen and value listening very highly. Jonathan refers to this as "the happiest tune ever" and it includes the biggest chord I've written!

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Emboldened

During the first lockdown in 2020, I decided to create a project reflecting what I saw happening around me. Inspired by the music of Maria Schneider and Nikki Iles, amongst others, I chose to write a suite of music with three movements documenting the positive journey of people facing challenge and adversity: Fear, Belief and Unity. I wanted to offer an optimistic and reassuring experience for the peaceful majority. A message that we are heard, and we do have influence, that everyone across the world shares a common humanity and we are strongest together in adversity. I called this suite *Emboldened*.

Always For You And Forever Yours

I wrote this after listening to Tom Waits on my own, deep in the Welsh countryside. The title comes from a lyric in the song *Take It With Me* and is also inspired by Bill Frisell.

Programme notes by Steve Banks

Steve Banks

composer & guitar

Steve Banks is a guitarist, composer, band leader and session musician. He has performed at venues across the UK and Europe including Birmingham's Symphony Hall, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Centre, the Barbican, Kings Place, Manchester Jazz and Cheltenham Jazz Festivals and Jazzahead! in Germany.

Steve released *Emboldened*, his critically acclaimed debut album on Stoney Lane Records in 2023 followed by a UK tour. A collaboration with arranger Jonathan Silk now presents the *Emboldened* album alongside other compositions of Banks' for jazz orchestra and choir, with concerts as guest artist and composer including Guildhall School, Leeds Conservatoire, University of Birmingham and Wiltshire Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Steve's captivating style and versatility have kept him much in demand for many successful music projects, most notably playing electric, acoustic, baritone and nylon string guitars on Sara Colman's albums, *What We're Made Of* and *Ink On A Pin*, with credits as composer, co-composer and arranger. Both albums feature jazz sextet with string quartet and received high UK/US critical acclaim including *Jazzwise Magazine's* 'Top 10 albums of 2018', 'Best of Jazz on Bandcamp' and 5 stars by *UK Vibe*.

Further projects include Greg Cordez Band (Ropeadope) and The Colman Brothers (Wah-Wah 45s), amongst others.

Scott Stroman

director

Scott has been a Professor in the Jazz Department at Guildhall School of Music & Drama since 1983 and was made a Fellow of Guildhall School in 1988. US-born but long based in London, he is a composer, conductor, singer, trombonist and educator, and Director of the London Jazz Orchestra, Eclectic Voices and Artistic Director of Highbury Opera Theatre (HOT). As a trombonist, singer and conductor he has performed with numerous jazz and world music artists including Youssou N'Dour, Goran Bregovich, Ramamani, Phil Collins, Billy Cobham, Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Wheeler, Dave Liebman, Norma Winstone, Bobby Wellins and Rufus Reid. He conducts baroque to contemporary music with orchestras, choirs and opera in the UK and Europe and directed the London Philharmonic Orchestra's innovative cross-genre Renga and Hit Squad ensembles.

He directed the first European performances of all of the Gil Evans - Miles Davis collaborations, created and directed new versions of Coltrane's *Africa/Brass*, Ellington's *Second Sacred Concert* and Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers' *Moanin'*, and last season directed the Guildhall Jazz Orchestra in the first live performance, since Miles Davis recorded it with the Danish Radio Orchestra in 1989, of Palle Mikkelborg's *Aura*.

A prolific composer, he has written numerous works for jazz ensemble, choir, orchestra, and the stage and recently premiered his second opera, *The Weekend*, based the book by Michael Palin. He received a BASCA gold badge award for services to music from the Ivors Academy in 2018.

Forthcoming Events

The Messengers & ImPossibilities: In Orbit

09 March 2025

Milton Court Theatre

ImPossibilities and The Messengers continue the tradition of sharing the stage at Milton Court Theatre in a performance which will feature the premiere of new music inspired by the theme 'In Orbit'.

Guildhall Big Band: Portraits in Jazz

09 March 2025

Milton Court Concert Hall

Acclaimed jazz pianist and composer Helen Sung joins Guildhall Jazz musicians for the UK debut performance of her new multi-movement work *Portraits in Jazz*.

Guildhall Jazz Orchestra: Dankworth Seven

13 March 2025

Milton Court Theatre

Immerse yourself in a golden era of UK jazz as the nucleus of the Guildhall Jazz Orchestra brings the vibrant spirit of the legendary Dankworth Seven to life in an intimate performance at Milton Court Theatre.

We hope you thoroughly enjoy today's performance at Guildhall School. If you feel inspired by our students and would like to support world-class training for these talented performers and production artists, we would be grateful for a voluntary donation.

Join the Guildhall Circle to access priority booking, exclusive events and more while providing vital support to our students. Join us at gsmd.ac.uk/patrons.

Alternatively, you can make your gift using our contactless GoodBox devices located at the Box Office and foyer bars. Thank you.