

Mike Holober

Pianist/Composer/Arranger/Conductor/Educator

Described by *Downbeat Magazine* as “one of the finest modern composer/arrangers of our time” Mike Holober was awarded the 2022 American Academy of Arts and Letters Andrew Imbrie Award in Music. His big band recording, *Mike Holober & The Gotham Jazz Orchestra: Hiding Out* (ZOHO Music, 2019) was nominated for a 2020 GRAMMY® Award (Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album), and features two of Mike’s extended works for jazz orchestra. The 5-movement title piece, “*Hiding Out*,” was commissioned by The Philadelphia Museum of Art (funded by the Pew Foundation), and was composed at the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming; “Flow” is a 3-movement work commissioned by the Westchester Jazz Orchestra (with funding from a NYSCA Individual Artist Grant), and was written during a residency at MacDowell. *Downbeat Magazine* proclaimed the double CD a “long-anticipated, epic work,” and it garnered rave reviews in the jazz press. Critics praised the composer’s “daring compositional voice,” “powerful orchestral magic,” and “profound artistic vision,” confirming his place in “the front rank of the most accomplished and inventive composers in jazz,” and “leading the charge to shift what a big band can sound like.”

Prior to the release of “*Hiding Out*,” Mike has served at the helm of some of the world’s most renowned large ensembles as director, conductor, composer, and arranger. From 2007-2013 he was Artistic Director/Conductor of the Westchester Jazz Orchestra (WJO), and he served as guest Conductor/Arranger of the WDR Big Band (WestDeutsche Rundfunk - German National Radio Big Band, Cologne, Germany) in 2009, and 2014-2016. From 2011-2015 he was Associate Guest Conductor of the hr-Big Band (Hessischer Rundfunk - Frankfurt, Germany).

With WJO he curated, arranged and conducted concerts for jazz luminaries such as Joe Lovano, Kate McGarry, John Scofield, John Patitucci, Randy Brecker, and Paquito D’Rivera. Projects for the hr-Big Band include arranging and conducting concerts featuring renowned jazz artists such as Kurt Rosenwinkel, Billy Cobham, Jane Monheit, Terje Rypdal, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Miguel Zenon, and a suite based on the music of Frank Zappa titled “Jazz from Hell,” which was performed at the Frankfurt Jazz festival in 2015. With the WDR Big Band Mike arranged and conducted projects for Israeli trumpeter Avishai Cohen and saxophonist Eli Degibri, and for legendary drummer Al Foster. Other international projects include arrangements for a concert featuring Eli Degibri with jazz orchestra and strings, which was premiered at the National Opera House in Tel Aviv in 2014 (DVD recording pending release), and a tour with the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra as guest composer, conductor and soloist in 2000.

Mike is a 2017-18 recipient of a Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Grant for “Don’t Let Go,” a song-cycle in the tradition of Robert Schumann, Samuel Barber, Francis Poulenc, and Ralph Vaughn-Williams, which was premiered at Symphony Space (the Leonard Nimoy Thalia) in June 2018, and recorded live at Aaron Davis Hall, City College Center for the Arts in October, 2019. “Don’t Let Go” was written for Mike’s jazz octet *Balancing Act*, whose eponymous premiere recording was released in 2015 (Palmetto). The recording features Mike’s original compositions and lyrics, with Kate McGarry, Dick Oatts, Jason Rigby, Marvin Stamm, Mark Patterson, John Hebert, and Brian Blade.

In 2017 Mike was named the inaugural Stuart Z. Katz Professor in the Humanities and the Arts at The City College of New York for “This Rock We’re On: Imaginary Letters,” an oratorio for jazz orchestra, voice, cello, and percussion. This in-progress work celebrates explorers, conservationists, writers, and photographers whose lives have been inspired by the natural world.

Mike is a Full Professor at The City College of New York, where he has been teaching since 1995, and he has enjoyed artist residencies at The MacDowell Colony (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2009; 2020), The Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts (2019), The Ucross Foundation (2007; 2019), and Yaddo (2005). He has also been

teaching composing and arranging at The Manhattan School of Music since 2014, and from 2007 - 2015 he served as Associate Director of the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop, (founded by legendary jazz composers Bob Brookmeyer and Manny Albam), where he taught with Director Jim McNeely.