

THE 1940S

This concert featuring the *Impressions in Jazz* Orchestra and special guests *Swing Dynamite* will present music and dance made popular during the 1940's.

Although the bebop style of jazz was the new musical innovation in the 1940s, it was very much an insider's music. Complex to listen to and to perform and definitely not music for dancing, bebop turned heads, but big bands played the popular music of the day.

During World War II music played an important part in lifting spirits on the home-front and building morale for the troops abroad. Glenn Miller joined the U.S. Army Air Force and was instrumental in infusing jazz into the traditional military music repertoire although his efforts were initially met with resistance. Based initially in the United States, Miller had his band transferred to London to be close to the fighting troops in the ETO (European Theater of Operations). Clarinetist Artie Shaw enlisted his entire band in the U.S. Navy and performed a similar role in the Pacific theater.

Rules of racial segregation were more relaxed in jazz than they were elsewhere and white bandleaders began to recruit African American musicians. One of the first to bypass the Jim Crow laws was Benny Goodman who hired African Americans to play in his groups ten years before Jackie Robinson would break the color bar in Major League Baseball.

The big bands of the 1940s were larger than the swing bands of the 1930s and played more complex and challenging works. Bandleaders such as Miller, Goodman, Shaw and Ellington all sought to elevate jazz to the concert platform but also wrote and performed music that everyone could dance to. The *Lindy Hop* continued to be a popular dance and spread to other nations through American troops stationed overseas while other dance styles including *Shag* and *Balboa* became popular in various parts of the United States.