



MICHAEL DEASE

WITH THE MSU JAZZ TROMBONES
SPARTAN STRONG

“Michael Dease is one of the Giants of the trombone. I was very fortunate to have played with JJ Johnson, Curtis Fuller, Slide Hampton, Al Grey, the other Giants of that instrument.” **Jimmy Heath, Legendary Saxophonist & NEA Jazz Master**

Much in the way Michael Dease has defined the state-of-the-art for jazz trombone over the last two decades, his effectiveness in shaping the next generation of players also requires inspired superlatives. A 2025 Guggenheim Fellow, and Distinguished Professor in Rodney Whitaker's renowned Jazz Department at Michigan State University, Dease has been central to fostering MSU's reputation as a thriving center of creative musical development. “Spartan Strong,” while possibly implying a football cheer, in this case reflects the powerful musical instincts, exhilarating orchestrations, and uninhibited improvisational prowess of these 18 members of his teaching studio. Along with the rhythm section of Xavier Davis, Jared Beckstead-Craan, and Keith Hall, the ensemble tackles arrangements of several originals, and old & new standards, while stylistically spanning Afro-Cuban grooves, lush trombone choir passages, and unabashed swing. The future, as witnessed here, is in fine hands.

1. **Huesos Con Clave** 5:49
2. **Remembrance** 3:51
3. **Evidence** 4:32
4. **Frame for the Blues** 7:01
5. **Some Skunk Funk** 6:12
6. **It Could Happen to You** 6:02*
7. **The Nearness of You** 6:58
8. **Song of Those Who Seek** 5:31*
9. **‘Round Midnight** 3:57
10. **Groove Blues** 5:19
11. **Alftitude** 4:36
12. **Blues After Dark** 6:18
13. **Spartan Strong** 4:46
14. **Blues in the Closet** 5:24

Trombones: DANIEL BEAR, AIDAN CLARK, HANNAH DAVIES, MICHAEL DEASE, JUDAH GUERRA,

NANAMI HARUTA, ELI HOWELL, DREW KILPELA, ANDREW KIM, PABLO MULLER-SANTIAGO, DAN PARRISH, ALTIN SENCALAR, BRIDGETTE SETTERS, JACK TRATHEN, MILES COLE, CHARLES SCANLON, KEN THOMPKINS

Bass Trombones: KYLE QUICK, GINA BENALCÁZAR-LÓPEZ, CHARLES GRACE JR., WYATT FORHAN, CHRIS GLASSMAN

*FEATURING: BENNY BENACK III - vocals (6) / SHAREL CASSITY - alto saxophone (8)

Rhythm Section (except 2,8-10,13):

XAVIER DAVIS - piano / JARED BECKSTEAD-CRAAN - bass / KEITH HALL - drums

(8 & 10 only):

ETHAN FRANK - piano (8,10) / REUBEN STUMP - bass (8,10)

RANDY GELISPIE - drums (10) / BRIAN ALLEN - drums (8)

Produced by Michael Dease
Recorded, Mixed & Mastered by
Corey DeRushia at Troubadour
Studios, Lansing, MI
Recorded on April 4-5, 2024
Liner Notes by Gary Fukushima
Band photo by Lynne Brown
Cover design & layout by John Bishop



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