





# CONTENTS

Tunes included in this volume are:

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Sponge</i>               | 6. <i>Song For Barry</i>    |
| 2. <i>African Skies</i>        | 7. <i>And Then She Wept</i> |
| 3. <i>Inside Out</i>           | 8. <i>Slang</i>             |
| 4. <i>Funky Sea, Funky Dew</i> | 9. <i>Above &amp; Below</i> |
| 5. <i>Some Skunk Funk</i>      | 10. <i>Straphangin'</i>     |

INTRODUCTION.....	ii
BRECKER BROTHERS BIO.....	iii
BRECKER BROTHERS DISCOGRAPHY.....	iii
TRACK-BY-TRACK COMMENTS.....	iv
NOMENCLATURE.....	v
LIST OF HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT RECORDINGS.....	12
 CONCERT KEY SONGS & CHORD/SCALE PROGRESSIONS.....	1
 Bb INSTRUMENT SONGS & CHORD/SCALE PROGRESSIONS.....	18
 Eb INSTRUMENT SONGS & CHORD/SCALE PROGRESSIONS.....	32
 BASS CLEF INSTRUMENT SONGS & CHORD/SCALE PROGRESSIONS.....	46

**NOTE:** Any codas (⊕) that appear will be played only once on the recording at the end of the last recorded chorus.

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# Introduction

This is an album for the musician who has gotten comfortable with some standards and bebop tunes and is looking for something a little more contemporary. The tunes presented here will definitely be a stretch for anyone who is used to traditional II-V-I movement.

There have been brothers working together in jazz before, like Benny and Harry Goodman, Cannonball and Nat Adderley, and the Marsalis brothers, but never on an equal footing as the Brecker brothers. As a team they have worked over several decades with an incredibly diverse list of artists including Horace Silver, Hal Galper, the Average White Band, Todd Rundgren and Frank Zappa. Individually they have recorded and toured with an even greater variety of musicians.

The Breckers were born into a musical family in Philadelphia in the postwar forties (Randy in 1945, Michael in 1949). Both spent some time at Indiana University in the sixties and (at different times) both impressed the judges at the Notre Dame Jazz Festival before going to New York. Randy arrived first in 1966. He became a charter member of Blood, Sweat & Tears but left to join Horace Silver before the band's biggest successes. Michael followed Randy to New York a couple of years later. In 1970 they helped form the jazz-rock group Dreams, a direct ancestor of the original Brecker Brothers band that formed and recorded for Arista Records in 1975 (many of the Arista tracks have been reissued on a couple of RCA/Novus CDs; see the discography). Before it broke up in 1982, the band garnered a hit single (*Sneakin' Up Behind You*), seven Grammy nominations and countless gigs. A decade later the Brecker Brothers reformed to record and tour; their 1994 album "Out of The Loop" was awarded two Grammys.

This play-a-long album has been assembled by George Whitty, who has served as keyboardist and producer in the second edition of the band. The selection of tunes are evenly drawn from the repertoires of the original band and its '90s incarnation. Similarly, Randy and Michael split the composing chores down the middle, each contributing five tracks to the set. The Breckers themselves have some comments on each track elsewhere in this booklet, but a few amplifying words might be helpful:

Barry Rogers was a trombonist who worked in New York with several Latin bands but recorded from the mid sixties to the late eighties with artists as diverse as Ron Carter, Cal Tjader, Pucho and His Latin Soul Brothers and Don Grolnick. He was a founding member of Dreams and did countless sideman record dates with the Breckers. Rogers' death shortly before the recording of "Return of the Brecker Brothers" prompted Michael's tune *Song for Barry*.

In 1991-92 Michael toured for fifteen months with Paul Simon's 'Rhythm of the Saints' band, which included several musicians from Africa, so it should be no surprise to hear an African influence in some of his writing, particularly in *Song for Barry* and *African Skies*. Incidentally, the version of the latter that features McCoy Tyner (whom Michael says he had in mind when he composed the piece) is on Michael's 1996 album "Tales From the Hudson" (Impulse IMPD-191). The version on this play-a-long is based on the Brecker Brothers' recording.

It is strongly recommended that you find and listen to the original recordings of these tunes. In learning them you should pick up quite a bit about the funk idiom and perhaps gain a certain expertise that will make you more marketable when the call comes for a band with a contemporary sound. After all, the more styles you master, the more in-demand you will be as a musician.

## Recordings of This Volume's Tunes:

### First edition:

- \*Brecker Brothers Collection Vol. 1\* (RCA/Novus 3075-2-N)  
incl. *Some Skunk Funk*, *Sponge*, *Funky Sea*, *Funky Dew*,  
*Inside Out* and *Straphangin'*.
- \*Brecker Brothers Collection Vol. 2\* (RCA/Novus 3076-2-N)  
incl. live versions of *Some Skunk Funk*, *Sponge*, and  
*Funky Sea*, *Funky Dew*.

### '90s edition:

- \*Return of the Brecker Brothers\* (GRP GRD-9684)  
incl. *Song for Barry* and *Above & Below*.
- \*Out of the Loop\* (GRP GRD-9784)  
incl. *Slang*, *African Skies*, and *And Then She Wept*.

by Phil Bailey 4/9/98



# 2. African Skies

♩ = 92

**A** F-7

F-7

**B** Db/Eb D-7add11 Db6/9 Db6 D D7/D DbΔ

Ab/C Db Ab/Eb Gb F-7

**C** Ab/C C7alt

Dbadd9 BbØ C/Eb Ab/A Ab/C

Bb-7b5 Eb6 AØ Ab/E C7alt

Keyboard