



When I was a Quaker kid 45 years ago in Annapolis MD, there was a man who would stand up before the rise of meeting for worship every year at Christmas and sing, in a rich baritone, his a capella rendition of "O Holy Night." Much to the mirth of my mom and my aunt, he would crescendo into the high note on the words "O night divine" with a dramatic intensity that may have missed the mark, I don't remember. But for him, the song

was a heartfelt devotion to the Christchild, his delivery completely free of irony. Some in the meetinghouse may actually have wiped away a tear.

Panorama often gets called for Holiday gigs at this time of year so, over time, we've developed a pretty good book of the "old chestnuts." On this one we hand off the lead role to New Orleans trombonist Colin Myers of the Jumbo Shrimp Jazz Band. With chord changes outlined by the clarinet and the banjo hitting beats 2 and 4, Colin pulls out the plunger mute to swing the line with a gutbucket strut.

After one time down, however, we experience an abrupt vibe shift to find ourselves in a classy jazz club. Doug goes to the ride cymbal and Matt lays down a walking bass line as Aurora recaps the melody on alto sax followed by Michael on accordion. When I take my turn on clarinet, Mark goes to a boogie shuffle on the banjo before Colin takes it back, building to that very same climactic high note our Friend had reached for in Quaker meeting. Still without irony, mind you, Colin brings it in with perhaps a bit more mastery and certainly a sense of funky fun.

Merry Christmas!

Ben Schenck

Panorama Jazz Band

New Orleans, LA

Credits:

Panorama Jazz Band feat. Colin Myers

Colin Myers - Trombone

Ben Schenck - Clarinet

Aurora Nealand - Alto saxophone

Michael Ward-Bergeman - Accordion

Mark Rubin - Tenor banjo

Matt Perrine - Tuba

Doug Garrison - Drums

Music by Adolphe Adam (PD)

Arrangers - Ben Schenck, Colin Myers

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