I formed four pieces. The first of these was an arrangement of Oliver Nelson's "Stolen Moments." This tune featured some excellent interplay between the trumpet and trombone sections, as well as the baritone saxophone of Joel Johnson G and pianist Doug Abrams '96. Abrams displayed a very beautiful keyboard technique, contributing greatly to the tune's overall effect.

The next offering was the world premiere of "No Cry," composed by ensemble alumnus Kurt Litton '92. This was a quite unconventional re-arrangement of a duet between flugelhornist Dave Ricks G and baritone saxophonist Ron Solto G. Tenor saxophonist Mark Messier '92 contributed a thoughtful solo, as did Abrams on piano.

The group then performed "One Road," by ex-ensemble director Jashunde Sharifi. The overall effect was a building up of sound, starting with a single saxophone, to that of the full band, and then lowering the sound level again to finish, with the single saxophone. This was a nice contrast to the piece. Other highlights were a flute/guitar duet between Ricks and Ali Azarzayegi G and an alto saxophone solo by Susan Ward G.

The ensemble then closed their portion of the concert with "Left Over," by Albert Collins. This was very spacious, and featured Johnson's trombone as well as a tenor solo by Brian Tracey G. The piece then went into an interlude, "Meadowland," with bass, flute, and piano, and then back to the same tune. It was a very good choice for a closing piece with this ensemble, the concert showed that the current ensemble is the equal of past lineups. The upcoming months will feature the ensemble playing at various events, and they are well worth hearing.

After a brief intermission, the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra took the stage. The orchestra, directed by trumpeter and music lecturer Mark Harvey, performs both great works in the jazz tradition and Harvey's own compositions, which are often daring in their originality. The orchestra's sound varies from restrained to "free" jazz, in this concert, the sound was somewhat more structured than in past performances.

The orchestra began their performance with a Duke Ellington/John Tipton composition, "Caravan." This opened with hand drumming by Craig Ellis in an African style. Flute and trombone were added, and the sound was built up to that of the full orchestra. The overall sound was very "free," giving a certain authority to the music. Harvey's use of two bases (John Fischok) on upright and Jerry Edwards on electric did much to contribute to the powerful sound, making this a worthwhile innovation. Other highlights of the piece were an excellent saxophone solo by Ron Scard on alto, and a drum solo by Harvey Mottet using mallets. The drum solo was highly effective, with varying dynamic levels.

The next piece was "DayDream," by Billy Strayhorn. This was a slow ballad, featuring absolutely masterful alto sax work by Andy Cheatham. Cheatham's playing was highly expressive, and he used the altimino register of the saxophone to great effect. The overall sound of this ballad was very beautiful, with good balance between Cheatham's sax and the rhythm section.

For a change of pace, the orchestra performed an excerpt from "Crossing," Harvey's ambitious composition which was inspired by mistings on the Colombian Rainforest. The excerpt was very fast, with spirited vocalization by Jerry Edwards. This vocalization was in the "free" and performed at an energetic pace. The excerpt presented a nice contrast to the preceding ballad. Harvey then brought vocalist Donna Hewitt-Didham on stage to perform George's "Someone to Watch Over Me." Hewitt-Didham was very expressive, and showed a good range and beautiful voice tone quality. Joy Kuyver contributed a nicely executed muted trombone background behind the vocals, as well as an excellent trombone solo. This ballad was utterly beautiful.

The closing recue was "Zippy Manuscript," another of Harvey's compositions. The "Zippy" in the title refers to the cartoon character, and Harvey humorously noted that it was an appropriate work for performance in a presidential campaign season.

This piece began with a musical "conversation" between the bass clarinet of assistant professor of music Evan Ziporyn and Harvey's trumpet. This led to a frantic section of free jazz, which led in turn to a more structured section featuring the low brasses playing against the saxes and trumpets. This was followed by another free jazz section, climaxing in a trombone solo by Dave Harris. Harris used this time to produce many different sounds, several of which sounded quite humorous. This gave way to a tenor solo...