Josh Goldberg plays the alto saxophone as a part of the MIT Jazz Collective.

The jazz bands gave their winter concert Friday night in the traditional style. The Concert Jazz Band, directed by Everett Longstreth, opened with a standard collection of swing tunes. The Festival Jazz Ensemble, directed by James O'Dell, closed the program with its own standards, more contemporary, but ordinary nonetheless. Between the two, the MIT Jazz Collective broke the big-band monotony with similar music, but on a smaller scale that allowed it more stylistic flexibility.

The rhythm section of the Concert Jazz Band had a hard time finding the groove. Michael Pratt '96 opened the first tune, "Everybody's Comin' Up Rosas," arranged by Louis Bellson, with a drum lick at twice Longstreth's tempo. The band stumbled over its entrance but recovered quickly, though Pratt continued to deliver an erratic beat throughout the set, often seeming to struggle with bassist Raj Sodhi '95 for control of the tempo. Though he displayed technical proficiency, particularly during a snappy solo in "Splankin,'" arranged by Neil Hefti, Sodhi frequently rushed the tempo.

The winds had some rhythmic difficulties as well, but hung together harmonically. In one tune, "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," arranged by Duke Ellington, the instrumental blend was balanced and tuneful, even perceptive. The MIT Collective proved that it could temper its energy to deliver a soft, mellow dynamic. A few able solos peppered the simple program, and Aaron McCabe '97, on trumpet, John Runnuck '97, on alto sax, and Associate Provost for Institute Life Samuel J. Keyser, on trombone, shone through the lazy swinging fog with a few moments of creative lucidity.

The MIT Jazz Collective, a sextet comprised mostly of players from the two bands, played between big-band sets. Although the standard head-solo-head form of their three tunes ("Milestones," by Miles Davis; Charlie Parker's "Diverse," arranged by Solomon Douglas '96, the Collective's pianist, and a Douglas original, "Nature of the Beast") suffered from the same lack of originality plaguing the rest of the night's program, it provided a good forum for some impressive solos. In particular, Josh Goldberg '96 demonstrated his alto sax facility in solos that took a step beyond exercise to the edge of experiment. With at least two-and-a-half years of campus performance ahead of them, he and Douglas promise plenty of treats for the MIT jazz listener's ears.

The Festival Jazz Ensemble's repertoire, though largely composed of works written for this band, still fell into a rut of conservatism. Even to someone with fairly limited exposure to jazz, the concert offered little that was unlike what one finds in the average performance of the MITJazz Collective.

The instrumental blend was balanced and smooth, making it all the more unfortunate that the program kept them boiling over one raucous riff after another.

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