

Coming Home

Justin Kauflin Music/Qwest 2018

Press Release

Release Date September 14, 2018

Home is where you hang your hat, or so the old adage goes. For Justin Kauflin, critically acclaimed and accomplished jazz pianist and composer, the last few years home has been many places. Originally from Virginia, Kauflin's touring schedule has taken him across the nation and abroad expanding and growing the idea of home. Kauflin lost his sight when he was 11 years old, but his travels are still a visual experience. Through the sounds and feelings of a city or space, he can see vibrant and captivating scenes of moving psychedelic colors. On the forthcoming album, Kauflin invites others to experience the world from his perspective as he sonically paints the homes he has found throughout his global travels.

Coming Home will be Kauflin's fourth release, and second with the tastemaker imprint Qwest Records. With this release, he ventures into new sonic territory bringing in more modern influences of synths, electric guitar, and bass. Kauflin said, "I've always loved music that had a good groove to it, whether it was swing or funk. With Corey Fonville's help, we got into all sorts of great feeling grooves that I can't wait to share."

From the start, recording Coming Home was electric. Quincy Jones and Derrick Hodge produced the album at Quincy Jones' Westlake Studios (Michael Jackson, Madonna, Frank Ocean). Kauflin was joined by Chris Smith on acoustic and electric bass, Corey Fonville on drums and percussions, and Alan Parker on acoustic and electric guitar. The musicians had a blast bringing the album to life. Kauflin recalls, "Derrick was in there with us bringing such positivity and encouragement. I feel as if I was able to be more authentically me because Derrick was there to give me that confidence. He was an incredible catalyst for much of how the songs took shape. And if that wasn't enough, to have Quincy overseeing the proceedings and giving his guidance and experience brought everything together in such a beautiful way."

The album is 13 tracks that resonate emotions and transport the listener across space and time.

The lead single "Coming Home," due out August 17, opens the album and evokes Kauflin's southern sensibilities. He comments "This song serves as an invitation to join me as I share how I experience the world around me through colors and vibrant ever-shifting textures and shapes. Alan Parker's acoustic guitar inserts that down home feeling from my home in Virginia." Another standout is "Lost," Kauflin mentions, "As exciting as traveling the world has been, there have certainly been times where I've felt disconnected and out of my element. This is not just a feeling that is connected to where I am physically. This also delves into how I feel emotionally at times. Life itself can leave one feeling quite lost." The album also includes an ode to his time spent living in Brooklyn with the cover of John My Beloved. An impromptu on-the-spot session with Derrick Hodge created Somethin' Somethin'. A tribute to Kauflin's favorite food, fried chicken, most famously found in his home state on the track, Country Fried. Pendulum is about New York, and the feeling that at times it is the greatest place on earth and at others, overwhelming. And Strawberry Fields as solo and band-accompanied tracks, Kauflin comments "I've always found the idea of an imaginary place where one can find refuge to be incredibly attractive. It is such a perfect marriage of harmony and melody and it conjures up this barely out of reach sensation, as if the place for which I'm looking is just right around the next corner." He continues, "When I know what I'm really looking for is actually inside."

Justin Kauflin is a pianist extraordinaire and an undeniably rare talent. He is an alumnus of the William Paterson University jazz program, mentee, protégé and bandmate of legendary Clark Terry (winner of the 2010 Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement in Jazz), signed to Quincy Jones' management artist roster and label, and featured in the critically acclaimed film Keep On Keepin' On which chronicled Kauflin's friendship and mentorship with Clark Terry. He has appeared on The Queen Latifah Show and the TODAY show and invited to perform at the

Library of Congress. Kauflin has toured with Quincy Jones on a few world tours and is currently playing at international jazz clubs and festivals.

Justin Kauflin is planning a tour to support the new album. He is excited to get back on the road and create new experiences with his music. He comments, "We had a great time in the studio, but I'm confident that each of the tracks will take a whole new life once we get a chance to take them out and play them in front of audiences. What will happen on tour will be a combination of what we created for the album and the energy we feel from the crowd."

Liner Notes

Ever since losing my sight completely, the way in which I experience my surroundings has been quite unique. Instead of everything going black, what I see in my mind's eye is extremely colorful and textured. Every moment is filled with an almost psychedelic swirl of blues, greens, reds, purples and gold against an expansive, seemingly endless backdrop of blacks and grays. On top of that is how the world around me influences those colors. When I enter a room, hear a sound or word, or listen to a live band, the spectrum of colors and textures in my mind shift slightly to associate with what I'm hearing. Needless to say, my world has become no less colorful since I went blind at 11. If anything, it has become more vibrant.

When I set out to write music for this project, my goal was to "paint" a picture with sound. It's my attempt at reverse engineering my visual experience into a sonic pallet, where the instruments and timbres are the different colored paints. The title "Coming Home" deals with the many ways I've experienced "home," globally, and the compositions serve to illuminate the various emotions attached to each unique location. For instance, Country Fried and Coming Home focus on my fondness for my hometown of Virginia Beach. John My Beloved is a beautiful song by Sufjan Stevens which perfectly encapsulates the way I feel about Brooklyn. The past few years have broadened my horizons considerably and each track is a glimpse into how the world has become so much more vivid to me.

Musicians:

Justin Kauflin, piano & keyboard
Corey Fonville, percussion & drums
Chris Smith, acoustic & electric bass
Alan Parker, acoustic & electric guitar

Producers:
Quincy Jones
Derrick Hodge
Justin Kauflin

Tracks:

1. Coming Home (Justin Kauflin)
2. Looking Forward (Justin Kauflin)
3. Pendulum (Justin Kauflin)
4. Transition (Justin Kauflin)
5. Lost (Justin Kauflin)
6. Country Fried (Justin Kauflin)
7. John My Beloved (Sufjan Stevens)
8. Present Day (Justin Kauflin)
9. Strawberry Fields (John Lennon)
10. Somethin' Somethin' (Justin Kauflin & Derrick Hodge)
11. Somethin' Somethin' Revisited (Justin Kauflin & Derrick Hodge)
12. Carousel (Mulgrew Miller)
13. Strawberry Fields Solo