

JUSTIN KAUFLIN

www.justinkauflin.com
justin.kauflin@gmail.com

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SHORT BIO

Justin Kauflin is a “jazz pianist who favors a clarity of touch and ideas...his writing is balanced tempering post-bop intricacies with the assurances of the gospel church” -New York Times. After losing his sight age 11, Kauflin gravitated towards playing jazz piano, despite having a background in classical violin & piano. He received top honors at jazz festivals across the U.S. and performing jazz professionally by age 14, most notably with the Jae Sinnett Trio. In 2008, he graduated summa cum laude from William Paterson University, NJ where he was taken under the tutelage of the legendary trumpeter, Clark Terry (winner of the 2010 Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement in Jazz) and performed in his ensemble. He continued to garner numerous awards such as the VSA International Young Soloist Award, selected as a semifinalist in the 2012 Thelonious Monk International Piano Competition, and voted “Jazz Artist of the Year” in VEER Magazine. Kauflin is featured in, as well as composed the film score for, the Oscar short-listed documentary, "Keep On Keepin' On." Justin Kauflin is signed for management by impresario and music icon, Quincy Jones and is a Yamaha Artist.

QUOTES

"Make sure you have enough time to absorb all the beautiful things in Justin's talent...his timing, rhythm, technique and exactness...See if you'll agree with me. He's a monster on the piano! And, one of the greatest people I know"
-Clark Terry

"What I liked about Justin was he'd done his homework. God gives you the right brain, everyone's got emotion, but you gotta practice, you gotta put the left-brain work in. You need musicality AND discipline." -Quincy Jones in The New Yorker

"Simply beautiful cat...you can feel it in every note he plays" -Quincy Jones
"His spirit and spirituality shine through his playing....beautiful!" -Mulgrew Miller

"Kauflin's strengths are a concern for touch and dynamics, a willingness to explore harmonic depth, swing, and a romantic's experiential hunger toward repertory. He can take a simple motif like the Beatle's 'Day in the Life' and make a swinging concerto out of it" -Los Angeles Times

CD REVIEWS

COMING HOME

"Kauflin's execution, his ability to ripple waves of notes from the keyboard flawlessly and evoke colorful meadows of sound is unequivocally superb"
-DownBeat Magazine

"Kauflin's new CD, Coming Home, came out this month, and it is, not surprisingly, another stellar achievement by a musician who is not only technically brilliant and intellectually innovative, but who has a gift of artistic expression that allows his bright, optimistic spirit and love of life to shine through" -VEER Magazine

"Coming Home" is wonderfully wrought, infused with scrumptious colors and rippling jazz textures. If you're into cool jazz with nuanced hues and tantalizing melodies, then Coming Home is not to be missed.

SYNESTHESIA

Justin's playing is not just precise technically but absolutely crystalline in execution, and he holds nothing back intellectually. Rather than show off, like so many jazz pianists today (even good ones), he is more concerned with creating

musical structures that have walls, ceilings and floors. In his own composition Lost, he is not above tossing in a quote from the Beatles' Eleanor Rigby, but only if it fits and helps him bridge the gap between point A and point B. He does not cite others' work unless it has a structural function. -Jazz in Europe (4.5 stars)

Thomas Fonnesbaek, a Danish jazz bassist, teams with American piano virtuoso Justin Kauflin on his new release titled Synesthesia. With just two instruments, in this case double bass and piano, there is always a danger of the music becoming too minimalistic but those pitfalls are avoided as these players are tremendous musicians playing off the other with elegance and pizzazz. Synesthesia is an excellent jazz album, very fluid and melodic with exceptional performances from both musicians. Highly recommended.-ONLINE REVIEW 5 Stars

SILENT NIGHT - Solo Christmas Project

"Sometimes, life takes unexpected turns, & we often find ourselves in painful situations that we never could have prepared ourselves for. We all have different "curve balls" & some may have more than others...however, I truly believe that with the right attitude, the very thing that was supposed to destroy you can become the very thing that makes you. For me, it was the multiple aneurysms I've had that forced me stop & focus on what's truly important in life...For my dear brother Justin Kauflin, it was losing his sight that forced him to stop, rely on his relationship with God, & pursue a life creating music that would inspire others. I'm SO proud of Justin for creating this absolutely stunning Christmas album as a representation of his journey to find peace in any situation he encounters...I also always love to see our artists collaborating with each other, so it makes my soul smile to hear Jacob Collier featured on the title track, "Silent Night"...Well, anyways, I hope that during this holiday season (especially when things may not always be 100%), you can try to find purpose in your pain & use it as fuel to encourage those around you...So, thank you Justin for gifting us with your music & encouraging us to Keep On Keepin' On! - QUINCY JONES

DEDICATION

#1 JAZZ WEEK (top 10 for 9 straight weeks)

"Kauflin develops a voice all his own. It is a voice that is mature, distinct and confident" - DownBeat Editor's Picks

"Kauflin favors a clarity of touch and ideas ...His writing is also balanced, tempering post-bop intricacies with the assurances of the gospel church" Nate Chinen, New York Times

"His classical training is apparent in his delicate touch, clear articulation, and ability to unspool long, graceful, improvised melodic lines" - Jazz Times

“Kauflin’s sensitive playing gives his music a transcendent calm that is transformative at its best ... he can show off if he wants to, but puts those technical skills to work to the service of the music” BlogCritics

“At the center of the album is a 3-part suite ... inspired by Kauflin’s deep Catholic faith ... these were joyous works containing some of Kauflin’s most exuberant playing...” Jazz History Online

INTRODUCING JUSTIN KAUFLIN

DEBUT Self-produced album

“With Introducing, Kauflin has immediately established himself as a stellar jazz player, composer, leader and producer. It is rare for a young musician to produce an album that displays the kind of maturity in evidence here. He has a touch and imagination that is immensely appealing - Jersey Jazz

“The young pianist has a touch that can only be characterized as “sparkling” and he takes a rhythmic approach that pushes boundaries yet remains wholly coherent and accessible at all times” - All About Jazz

“Introducing is a testament to his remarkable artistry, wisdom and faith. His sense of faith in himself, the power of music, as well as in God shines through on every track. So does his deep sense of humility and abundant passion for life” -TR Magazine

“Musically speaking, 20-something jazz pianist Kauflin is an old soul. It’s a fine showcase of Kauflin’s impressive musicianship in a variety of styles... and testimony to his composing and producing talents” Virginian-Pilot (5 stars)

PUBLICATIONS

2006 - The Development of Jazz Education in the United States: Its Expansion and Key Contributors - An overview of social, cultural, economic, and/or political concepts that carries through and relates to all of jazz history

DISCOGRAPHY

AS LEADER / SOLO —

2024 - Justin Kauflin Trio: Live at Sam First (vinyl, digital)

2019 - Christmas Candy (EP)

2018 - Coming Home (CD)

2017 - Silent Night (CD)

2015 - Dedication (CD)

2014 - Justin Kauflin: Live at EDYE (EP)

2010 - Introducing Justin Kauflin (CD)

AS CO-LEADER —

2023 - Danish Rain (Thomas Fønnesbaek & Justin Kauflin)

2021 - Flow Freely (Jacob Collier & Justin Kauflin)

2020 - Standards (Thomas Fønnesbaek & Justin Kauflin)
2017 - Synesthesia (Thomas Fønnesbaek & Justin Kauflin)

AS GUEST ARTIST —

2017 - Oscar with Love (Mack Avenue)

AS SIDEMAN —

2023 - BeeDubyah (Billy Williams Group)
2023 - Acceptance (Eddie Williams Quartet)
2023 - After | Life (Brian McCarthy Nonet)
2022 - Bypass (Chris Brydger Quartet)
2022 - Sun Song (Chris Brydger Quintet)
2020 - Sharing (Fønnesbaek Trio)
2018 - Americana Groove Project (Jae Sinnett Quintet)
2017 - Offbeat (Katie Thiroux Quartet)
2017 - The Better Angels of our Nature (Brian McCarthy Nonet)
2016 - Safe in Sound (Songevity)
2015 - Echoes (Jennifer Gamill)
2014 - This Just In (Brian McCarthy Quartet)
2014 - Subject to Change (Jae Sinnett Trio)
2013 - When Trees Speak (Jimmy Masters Quartet)
2013 - See Dream Blues (Songevity)
2012 - Still Standing (Jae Sinnett Trio)
2012 - CT and WP: A Perfect Match (Clark Terry Ensemble)
2011 - Old School Loyalty (House & Sinnett)
2010 - Theatre (Jae Sinnett Trio)
2010 - Roxy Coss (Quintet)
2009 - An Evening with the Jae Sinnett Trio (DVD)
2008 - Equilibrium (Ethan Haziza Quartet)
2005 - The Sinnett Hearings (Jae Sinnett Trio)

COMPILATIONS —

2021 - Healing Grace
2017 - Music to Inspire
2015 - Keep On Keepin' On Soundtrack
2013 - A Quincy Jones Christmas

FILM SCORE

DOCUMENTARIES, TRAILERS, PROMOS, ADS —

2023 - Unforgettable Taste - Nespresso Ad Campaign (Commercial)
2022 - 12 Notes on Life and Creativity by Quincy Jones (Trailer)
2021 - Reflection - A Walk with Water. Full-length documentary by E. Brennan
2016-2023 - There with Care. Promotional videos (Paula Dupre Pesman)

2015 - Keep On Keepin' On. Full-length documentary (Radius, Absolute Clay)

MOVIE CONTRIBUTIONS —

2023 - Full Circle (Josh Berman, Mark Crawford)

2022 - Blue's Big City Adventure (Nickelodeon)

TV/FILM/RADIO INTERVIEWS & APPEARANCES

2015 - Keep On Keepin' On (documentary)

2015 - The Today Show

2015 - The Queen Latifah Show

2015 - NPR Story Corps

2016 - NPR Song Travels with Michael Feinstein

2018 - Quincy (documentary)

ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS

1. Candy (Justin Kauflin Trio Live at Sam First)
2. Lost (Coming Home, Synesthesia)
3. Skybound (Synesthesia)
4. Hope (Silent Night)
5. Chorale (Silent Night)
6. Anticipation (Silent Night)
7. Somethin' Somethin' (Coming Home)
8. Somethin' Somethin' Revisited (Coming Home)
9. Present Day (Coming Home)
10. Country Fried (Coming Home, JK Trio Live at Sam First)
11. Transition (Coming Home)
12. Pendulum (Coming Home)
13. Coming Home (Coming Home, JK Trio Live at Sam First)
14. Thank You Lord (Dedication, JK Trio Live at Sam First)
15. Mother's Song (Dedication)
16. Lasting Impression (Dedication)
17. Up and Up (Dedication, Justin Kauflin Live at EDYE)
18. Where are You (Dedication)
19. No Matter (Dedication)
20. Tempest (Dedication)
21. Epiphany (Dedication)
22. The Professor (Dedication)
23. For Clark (Dedication)
24. B Dub (Dedication)
25. Elusive (Dedication)
26. Exodus (Introducing Justin Kauflin, Justin Kauflin Trio Live at Sam First)
27. Three for Glasper (Introducing Justin Kauflin)
28. Lucid Thoughts (Introducing Justin Kauflin)
29. Dreams Change (Keep On Keepin' On)

- 30. Becoming the Mentor (KOKO)
- 31. Darkest Hour (KOKO)
- 32. Childhood (KOKO)
- 33. JK Original Blues (KOKO)
- 34. Rainy Day (KOKO)
- 35. Reflection (KOKO)
- 36. Significantly Worse (KOKO)
- 37. Suspended (KOKO)
- 38. Turning Point (KOKO)
- 39. Traveling (KOKO)
- 40. Kandice (There with Care)
- 41. Community of Care (TWC)
- 42. Meaningful Connections (TWC)
- 43. Caring for Families (TWC)
- 44. Delivering Care during Covid (TWC)
- 45. Continuing the Care (TWC)
- 46. Care Makes a Difference (TWC)
- 47. Continuing the Care 2 (TWC)
- 48. Mom's Song (Justin Kauflin Live at EDYE)
- 49-77. Score for Reflection - A Walk with Water
- 78. 12 Notes on Life and Creativity (Trailer score)
- 79-100. Score for My Sister Liv
- 101. Unforgettable Taste (commercial score)

PERFORMANCES AS LEADER

USA —

- MO | Starkloff Benefit
- MO | JK Trio at Jazz St. Louis
- CA | Bach D&D, Half Moon Bay
- CA | Libretto, Paso Robles
- MO | Clark Terry Centennial Jazz St. Louis
- CA | Live recording - Sam First Records
- CA | Thelonious Monk SF Jazz
- VA | Music in McLean Concert Series
- CA | Lewis Family Playhouse
- NYC | Mezzrow Jazz Club
- CA | Museum of Making Music
- CO | Dazzle Jazz Club, Denver
- OH | Blu+ Jazz
- NY | The Jazz Forum
- CT | The Side Door
- MA | Scullers Jazz, Boston
- CA | Sam First, Los Angeles
- VA | Winter Blues Jazz Festival, Williamsburg
- CA | Alvas Showroom
- CA | Contrapuntal Hall, Los Angeles

WA | Icicle Creek Arts Center, Leavenworth
PA | WCR Concert Hall, Reading
VA | The Tin Pan, Richmond
TN | Story 2018, Nashville
CA | Bacchus' Kitchen, Pasadena
OH | Rubber City Jazz Festival, Akron
CA | Filoli Jazz
CA | Oscar with Love, San Francisco
UT | John Clayton's Jazz Show
MI | Gilmore Keyboard Festival, Battle Creek
WA | Upstream Music Festival, Seattle
AR | Walton Arts Center
NYC | Club Bonafide
NJ | WPU Jazz Room
CA | Montalbon Theater
NYC | Django Jazz
NY | Bard College
NJ | Ridgewood Library
NYC | Bar Lunatico
MA | Berkshire Gateway Jazz, Boston
NYC | Bobo's
NYC | Settepani's
NJ | Morris Museum
NYC | Top of the Standard
NYC | Whitney Museum
NJ | Drew University
CA | EG Conference, Carmel
MO | We Always Swing, Columbia
VT | St. Michaels College
WDC | NEA Jazz Masters KC
ID | Lionel Hampton Jazz Fest
CA | Blue Whale
CA | Queen Latifah Show
WA | The Triple Door, Seattle
CA | SOhO Music Club
CA | Monterey Jazz Festival
WA | D'mitrious Jazz Alley, Seattle
CO | Vail Jazz Festival
NJ | Bickford Theater
CA | Encore 2016
VA | Old Dominion University
NY | Rochester Inst. Tech
CA | Wallis-Annenburg
NYC | Subrosa
CA | EDYE Broad Stage
CA | Jazz at A-Frame
RI | Roger Williams University

NYC | The Jazz Standard
NYC | Miles Cafe
WDC | Kennedy Center Jazz Club
WDC | Bohemian Caverns
WDC | Twins Jazz Club
CO | Baur's
CO | Wheeler Opera House
WDC | Library of Congress
WDC | Westminster Jazz
VA | JAM INC
VA | Westminster-Canterbury
NYC | Baruch College
NY | Jacob Burns Center
NYC | Rockwood Music Hall
VA | Havana Nights, VA Beach
VA | Contemporary Arts Center
VA | Jazz on Taz, Norfolk
VA | Temple Beth El
TX | N. Texas Jazz Festival
WDC | Kennedy Center Millennium Stage
WDC | Kennedy Center Terrace Theater
VA | Main Street Jazz, Suffolk
VA | Chantilly Jazz Festival

EUROPE —

Denmark | Thisted Jazzklub
Sweden | Horby
Denmark | Hillerød
Denmark | Syaneke
Denmark | Koge
Denmark | Vordingborg
Denmark | Kolding
Denmark | Assens
Denmark | Skanderborg
Denmark | Aalborg
Netherlands | Harderwijk
Italy | Teatro Garibaldi
Italy | Teatro Ristori
Italy | Teatro Sangiorio
Italy | Jazz Club Ferrara
Italy | Sina Brufani
Czech Rep | Anežský klášter
Latvia | Dzintari Concert Hall
UK | Pizza Express Live, London
Netherlands | Catharinakapel
France | Duc des Lombards, Paris

Austria | Treibhaus
Germany | Jazzahead! Showcase, Bremen
Germany | Cinema Arthouse Blue Note
Netherlands | Junushoff Theater
Denmark | Dansk Jazz Historie
Denmark | Kerteminde
Denmark | Karrebaeksminde
Denmark | Askov Hoskole
Denmark | Bangsbostrand Kirke
Denmark | Audonicon
UK | Wigmore Hall
Netherlands | Theater de Meervaart
Italy | Blue Note Milan
Sweden | Fasching Jazz
Sweden | Malmo Jazz
France | International Jazz Day, Paris
Sweden | Nefertiti Jazz
Germany | Unterfahrt
Switzerland | Montreux Jazz Club
Denmark | Copenhagen Jazz Fest
Germany | Bix Jazz
Austria | Porgy and Bess
Netherlands | Bimhuis
Germany | Moments Musikclub
Germany | Jazz Ahead!
France | Jazz a Vienne
Rep. of Georgia | Griboyedov Theater
Rep. of Georgia | Balanchivadze
Netherlands | Lanteren Venster
Poland | Klub Zak
Czech Rep | Brno Filharmonie
Belgium | DeSinger
Great Britain | Ronnie Scott's Jazz, London
Norway | Baerum Kulturhus
Ireland | Guinness Jazz Festival, Cork
Ireland | National Concert Hall
Ireland | The Black Box
Switzerland | Salzhaus Brugg
Denmark | Jazzy Days
Croatia | Academy of Music
Ireland | Kilkenny Arts Festiva
Italy | Time in Jazz Fest Pattada
Italy | Time in Jazz Fest Berchidda
Germany | Schloss Elmau
Switzerland | Dracula Club
Italy | Umbria Jazz Festival
Latvia | Rigas Ritmi Festival

Denmark | STARS DK
Denmark | Jazzhus Montmartre
France | Rhyme du Jazz
Spain | Jamboree Jazz, Barcelona

ASIA —

UAE | Abu Dhabi Festival
UAE | Q's Bar and Lounge, Dubai
Indonesia | Java Jazz Festival
S. Korea | SK Gym
Japan | Blue Note Tokyo
Japan | International Forum, Tokyo
Japan | Green Arena, Hiroshima
Japan | GS Arts, Miyazaki

SOUTH AMERICA —

Brazil | Teatro Coliseu, Sao Paulo

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS —

Dominican Republic | DR Jazz Fest

CANADA —

Ottawa | Oscar Peterson Tribute
Ontario | Bravo Niagara!
Toronto | Royal Conservatory
Belleville | Belleville Film Festival

JAZZ CLINICS & CAMPS

VA | Governor's School for Performing Arts (Adjunct faculty)
IN | Notre Dame Jazz Workshop
HI | Jazz Maui Summer Camps
CO | Vail Jazz Workshops
CA | Monterey Jazz Next Gen (Adjudicator)
ID | Lionel Hampton Jazz Workshop
WA | Centrum Jazz Clinics
WA | Icicle Creek Elementary Jazz Workshop
VA | VCU Jazz Clinic
VA | Governor's School Masterclass
CA | USC Jazz Clinic
NJ | WPU Jazz Room Workshop
VA | RJS Educator Series, Richmond
AR | University of Arkansas Jazz Clinics
CA | NAMM Accessibility Demo, Anaheim
Dominican Republic | DR Jazz Fest Workshops
Latvia | Riga Jazz Fest Workshop
Rep. of Georgia | Telavi Music School

Denmark | Termansens Masterclass
Denmark | Ribe Jazz Camp

JAZZ CLINIC REVIEWS —

VCU Jazz — “...It was clear from the start that Justin had goals to accomplish within the session, offering performance and dialogue that he believed would be most effective with university-age students; and he targeted perfectly ... they made our band room seem like the center of the jazz universe for those 90 minutes” -Antonio Garcia, Director VCU Jazz

Governor’s school for the Arts — “Justin did a fabulous job with the students and I couldn’t have been more pleased with the master class! He is a natural teacher with his honesty, sensitivity, temperament and ability to inspire...They appreciated the thoughtful comments and practical advice, and felt SO inspired after the clinic!” -Liz Barnes, Director

Trinity Episcopal IB Music — “Trinity students often have the benefit of witnessing music-making at the highest level by visiting professional musicians like Kauflin. ...It’s valuable that students get to interact with the artists so that they realize they are regular people ... an artist like Justin who is only a few years older than the students, has a particular resonance”

PRESS

2023 - DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE - Justin Kauflin’s Live Adventure

2021 - VAIL DAILY - Justin Kauflin’s ascent to world renowned pianist built on blind faith

2020 - JAZZ TIMES - A Chat with Justin Kauflin

2019 - PUBLIC BROADCASTING OF LATVIA - Justin Kauflin “There is always someone better”

2018 - JAZZ BLUES NEWS - Interview: Without any soul, the greatest idea can fall flat

2017 - JAZZ IN EUROPE - Justin Kauflin on tour in Europe - Facing Life’s challenges

2017 - MINT LOUNGE - A spontaneous encounter with a jazz genius

2016 - LOS ANGELES TIMES - Jazz pianist Justin Kauflin draws from faith to his swinging interpretations

2015 - THE NEW YORKER - Protege. Justin Kauflin jams with the Greats

2015 - NEW YORK TIMES - A rare musical mentorship captured with heart and soul (Keep On Keepin’ On review)

2015 - NEW YORK TIMES - Something in common with his mentor

