

DEDICATION

Jazz Village 2015

Press Release

"Elusive" begins the proceedings in fine style -- soaring unison lines between Kauflin and rising star guitarist Matt Stevens' graceful, Latin-tinged flights. Kauflin builds his solo with careful logic, letting the notes fly sparingly, but with persuasive forward motion, each landing in the right spots for maximum effect. The brisk swinger "Up and Up" finds Kauflin flashing the imaginative elan of his bebop forebears while maintaining a bittersweet lyrical quality. The lovely, almost sanctified "Mother's Song" brings together the inspirations of European classical music and American gospel while the beautifully ruminative closer "Thank You Lord" accentuates the gospel quotient, lent extra savor by the delicate, harp-like nylon-string acoustic guitar of Etan Haziza. While Kauflin has incredible technique, there is plenty of focus on the tunes themselves--no unessential notes heard. He is sparing in his touch -- a quality rarely found among young pianists and likely linked to his apprenticeship with Terry. Kauflin declares, "It was a conscious decision not to make Dedication a blowing session," jazz musician terminology for an album with endless freewheeling solos. The album is "All originals and seven out of the 12 are dedications."

"The Professor" is for his late professor and teacher, Mulgrew Miller; "Elusive" is for Virginia pianist and teacher John Toomey, another early mentor; "B Dub" for high school friend and drummer, Billy Williams, "Lasting Impression," for Jae Sinnett, a Virginia drummer and teacher, "Mother's Song," for his mom and "mother figures" including jazz piano teacher Liz Barnes, and "For Clark" is of course for Clark Terry. The middle three compositions, "Epiphany/Tempest/No Matter" are a suite about his Faith (Kauflin is a practicing Catholic). -Matt Merewitz, Fully Altered Media

Liner Notes

When first conceptualizing this project, I realized there was so much for which I am extremely grateful. It was then that I decided to dedicate this album to all the people who gave of themselves selflessly in order to help me along this journey.

First and foremost, this album is dedicated to God. He is at the center and the source of the music I create. At the same time, I offer this music up to Him in praise and thanksgiving. The music I make is a direct reflection of who I am, and I would be nothing without Christ as the source of my inspiration.

I'm truly grateful for my incredible family and friends. I am who I am, and where I am because of their love and support.

As a perpetual student, I have so many wonderful teachers for which I am incredibly grateful. Thank you Suzanne Schreck, Virginia Koun, Liz Barnes, Jeff Smith, Chris Brydger, Woody Beckner, Jae Sinnett, John Toomey, Jimmy Masters, Harold Mabern and David Demsey.

I am also eternally grateful for every second I was able to spend with the great Mulgrew Miller. Words cannot adequately express the gratitude I feel to have been in the presence of such a gentle and humble spirit.

And, Cee Tee, thank you for sharing your beauty and joy with the world. I couldn't possibly thank you enough for everything you've given, but I will certainly try my best through my music and my life. Thank you, I love you, and God bless you.

PERSONNEL

Justin Kaufflin, piano & keyboards

Billy Williams, drums

Chris Smith, acoustic bass

Matt Stevens, electric guitar

Etan Haziza, acoustic guitar

PRODUCERS

Quincy Jones & Justin Kaufflin

RECORDING ENGINEERS

Helik Hadar & David Davis (*EastWest Studios*), Rob Ulsh (*MasterSound*)

MIXING ENGINEER - Chris Allen (Sear Sound, NYC)

MASTERING ENGINEER

Bernie Grundman (*Bernie Grundman Mastering*)

PHOTO by Rory Anderson. **COVER DESIGN** by Chris Kaufflin

LABEL - Jazz Village/Qwest