



SAM
TAYLOR

LET
GO

TERELL STAFFORD
JEB PATTON
NEAL MINER
WILLIE JONES III

As I write this, I am thousands of feet above on a flight from my home in Harlem, New York to Italy. What a journey, to be here now. Out of the cabin window, the countryside, roads and architecture all seem too small to be real. Our vast ocean appears behind sheets of clouds, a vivid endless blue. Filling me with a beautiful wonder is the brilliant light and spirit of the woman by my side. How precious is perspective? (In my case, the perspective of time along with the view from thirty thousand feet up in the sky.) In the months that have passed since the session day for this recording, *Let Go*, life has been full of the unexpected. Along the way there have been invaluable new experiences and lessons. More than that, the validation of a virtue I have long held true in my heart as I live this life of music: music is an act of giving.

I read somewhere that the fundamental nature of everything is the want to be open and free. Does this not hold true for music and art? Music gives voice to an experience, to memories both personal and collective. It is an expression of love and respect to the women and men who played, lived and transitioned in its name. Music inspires hope, a reason to carry on and overcome. The listener can be moved to create and share their own beauty and joy. In our spirit, our soul, our DNA, name it as you wish, a collection of lives lived, a cosmic connection to a time and place long ago with a people who had their own challenges and triumphs. As is true today, they also had their own songs to express their experiences. The power of music is as deep as the history of humankind is long.

If all this is true, I wonder what else can and must be true? Living a life of music is also a journey of generosity and letting go. This is something my love has taught me. As a careful and thoughtful listener, she believes the musician surrenders to the

music, interprets the song and shares that with others. To surrender, to be tender and giving is a show of strength, an act of defiance. This is an empowering idea. Our world faces such heartache, fear and profound grief. How do we meet that everyday as individuals and as a society? Tenderness and loving kindness could be the most powerful tools we have.

In my own way, this recording is an act of defiance. I invited my musical heroes to come together, to bring their powerful voices into a space, surrender and let go. Terrell, Jeb, Neal and Willie were masterful. The space, a studio that echoes with jazz history, made the day that much more meaningful. I haven't the words to express my gratitude. My hope is the music communicates that clearly and fully.

The morning of the recording session, I wrote myself an intention. It reads: Today is but one day. You will show up calm, centered, present and with a slight smile on your face. You deserve to be here, this is your time, your place, your destiny. Remember to enjoy the moment, be true to your values as a person and a musician. Take good, deep, joyful breaths - fill the room with a warm, big sound. Feel the beat, swing hard with purpose, honoring the spirit of those who came before. Music is an act of giving. Let go.

As always, I hope this music brings you joy, fills your heart and moves your feet.

SAM TAYLOR

Harlem, New York City

July 2022

Thank you Terrell, Jeb, Neal and Willie for your musical brilliance, generous spirits and patience; Cory Weeds for your true friendship and trust; Tom Lazarus for your masterful ear and humor; Julian Garcia for the wonderful artwork and generosity. Most of all to, Maia, my dream come true. I love you.





1. **LUMINESCENCE** 5:57
B. Harris (Barchris Music)
2. **LET GO** 4:39
S. Taylor
3. **ANGEL FACE** 6:26
H. Jones (Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc.)
4. **GETTIN' TOGETHER** 6:13
B. Gonzalez (Orpheum Music)
5. **OUT OF THE PAST** 5:51
B. Golson (Time Step Music)
6. **PRISONER OF LOVE** 4:05
R. Columbo & C. Gaskill (Morris-Edwin-H-Co Inc.)
7. **HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY** 7:43
J. Van Heusen (Onyx Music Corp.)
8. **PHILLY NEW YORK JUNCTION** 6:22
J. Magnarelli & J. Swana
9. **YOU'RE NEVER FULLY DRESSED
WITHOUT A SMILE** 5:09
C. Strouse (Charles Strouse Publishing)
10. **BYE BYE BABY** 3:40
J. Styne (Music Sales Corp.)

Sam Taylor – tenor saxophone

Terell Stafford – trumpet

Jeb Patton – piano

Neal Miner – bass

Willie Jones III - drums

Executive Producers: Sam Taylor and Cory Weeds

Produced by Sam Taylor and Cory Weeds

Recorded at Van Gelder Studios, Englewood Cliffs, NJ on January 31st, 2022

Engineered by Maureen Sickler

Mixed and mastered by Tom Lazarus

Cover and back cover photo by Anna Yatskevich

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