



## Jason Palmer - Fair Weather

### **Musicians:**

Jason Palmer - Trumpet

Leo Genovese - Piano

Joe Martin - Bass

Kendrick Scott - Drums

Having grown up in the Boston area, I know what it is like to live in a city that's musically in thrall to New York. There's the small feeling of abandonment as each year another crop of young musicians make the trek to NYC to see if they can cut it with the world's best. This underlines the central fallacy of many musical and artistic narratives. Because, of course there is no meaningful metric with which to judge art other than the personal. You can't measure yourself against the best, because music, and especially improvised music, is a non-representational art form without parameters. What you can do is to search for a home for your music to grow, or to build your own home—to carve out a space to nurture your music and help others do the same.

There are a number of exciting venues in Boston but the oldest and the one with the most flavor is Wally's Café. Wally's has been hosting live jazz nightly since 1947, and it has a sense of history that few venues have. Almost every weekend over the past 19 years, Jason Palmer has been leading the band at Wally's.

There is a clarity and honesty in Jason's playing that I find unmistakable. Jason says that if it wasn't for his extended residency, he doesn't think he'd still be playing music today. It is at Wally's that Jason found the space to build a world view and the technique to express it. In his words, it's "done wonders for my playing, composing, confidence, patience, etc. The residence there has given me a more solid reason to continue to do the work in this music that's required to get better. I've been able to retain consistent bands and write and arrange for them, and I always have an audience." This record shows how clearly devoted Jason is to the tradition of jazz without being beholden to it. This isn't statement music. Free of gimmicks, this is music whose integrity and honesty is the statement.

If you're familiar with Newvelle's first season, then you already know the iconoclastic fearless musician, Leo Genovese. Leo seemingly can find the closest melodic distance between two disparate points in record time. His technique is prodigious and he can take corners at speeds unavailable to many professional musicians, but he often chooses to go

right through the wall to get to where he needs to be. Leo likes to tear holes in the fabric of the song to let the light peek through at odd angles and illuminate something that everyone else was missing. Leo reminds me of the stories about Zen masters who answer a question with a swift wrap upside the head, but then...enlightenment.

It's not an overstatement to say that Kendrick Scott and Joe Martin are among the most in-demand rhythm section on the planet. Despite their huge technical abilities, it's clearly their tone that sets them apart from the crowd. Individualistic and full, it is a tone born of clarity rather than crafted by an idiosyncratic urge to stand out. Like all the greats, they can sound only like themselves but can play with anybody.

The repertoire on this record falls right into place. Arrangements of some lesser known standards (Jason calls them "derangements") are accompanied by a couple of originals that complement the melodic drive of these tunes. Jason's writing on this record runs contrary to some of the more rhythmically and harmonically complicated compositions that he's been honing at Wally's. His choice to play the simple and true on this record, and the way the band coalesces around this choice, speaks volumes about the discoveries of a life of musical investigation. It's not how far you go but how deep you dig that matters.

- Elan Mehler