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NEWS

**Taylor Eigsti**  
*Let It Come to You*  
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With Taylor Eigsti's new CD, *Let It Come to You*, the pianist-composer-bandleader takes another giant stride forward as a significant new voice in the jazz world, and at 23, he stands tall among a select few of his generation who are in the midst of establishing themselves as the jazz stars of the future.

With this, his sophomore outing and follow-up to his 2006 breakout Concord Jazz debut, *Lucky to Be Me*, Eigsti says that this now is "the record that I've always wanted to make." Indeed, *Let It Come to You* reveals Eigsti as an adventurous artist who, while steeped in jazz tradition, is also committed to advancing it. As he writes in the CD's liner notes, his compositions "provide a glimpse of the new type of music that I am currently gravitating toward and convey the emotional concepts behind their inspiration."

In the wake of *Lucky to Be Me's* eye-opening success, Eigsti's talents and future promise was revealed. The pianist was featured on the covers of both *Jazziz* and *Keyboard Magazine*, in addition to being recognized in the *DownBeat* Critics Poll for two years running. He was also profiled in his own BETJ television special. Featuring such top-tiered support players as Christian McBride, Lewis Nash, James Genus, and Billy Kelson, *Lucky to Be Me* garnered two GRAMMY nominations: one for Best Instrumental Composition for his song "Argument" and the other for Best Instrumental Jazz Solo Performance on "Freedom Jazz Dance." The CD, which was released in March 2006, spent 23 weeks on the National Jazz Radio Airplay charts, peaking at No. 7. It ended the year in the top 15 most-played jazz albums on radio.

*Let It Come to You*, Eigsti's second CD for Concord Jazz and his sixth overall release, is an impressive 11-song collection of imaginatively refreshed standards (including classic Cole Porter and Duke Ellington tunes), so-called "new standards" (including a Pat Metheny song and a cover of "Not Ready Yet" from the pop band, The Eels) and four remarkable originals (three of which form the impressive "Fallback Plan Suite" that concludes the album). Co-produced by Eigsti and Chris Dunn, the CD features the pianist's working band—longtime collaborator Julian Lage on guitar (who was also a key contributor on *Lucky To Be Me*), Reuben Rogers on bass and Eric Harland on drums—with such special guests as, Joshua Redman on tenor saxophone, and Edmar Castaneda on Colombian harp.

"Concord has given me a lot of artistic control, both in the ways I wanted to re-envision standards, and also in approaching new compositions," Eigsti says. He writes in the CD liner notes: "I wanted this record to be a combination of much of the fun music and arrangements of jazz standards that my group has been performing live (songs like "Caravan," "Fever," "Deluge" and "I Love You") and my own compositions, which primarily reflect the concept of acceptance toward the things in life that were—and are—out of my control."

Growing up in Menlo Park, California, Eigsti started playing piano at an early age and was quickly labeled a child prodigy. He began his stage career at age 8 opening for his friend and



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piano mentor, David Benoit, and at age 12, Eigsti shared the stage with Diane Schuur and also opened for Diana Krall and Al Jarreau. In subsequent years, he had the opportunity to record and/or perform with such jazz stars as Dave Brubeck, Bobby Hutcherson, James Moody, Ernestine Anderson, Kevin Mahogany, Patti Austin and Red Holloway, among others, which established him nationally—and internationally—for his imaginative improvisation and electrifying rhythmic sensibility. Eigsti has been featured on Marian McPartland's NPR *Piano Jazz* series twice, once in the studio and again at the 2005 Tanglewood Jazz Festival. In a 2003 review of his *Resonance* (Bop City) release, *DownBeat* also heralded: "Eigsti is a jazz piano whirlwind with a light touch, a fluid sense of improvisation and a gift for wrapping his creative flights in solid melodies."

*Let It Come to You* is named for a ballad that Eigsti composed, and the leader experiments throughout the CD with different instrumentation (including flute and saxophones) as well as recording multiple layers of his piano playing. "I always liked the concept of a rock band where there was a rhythm and a lead guitarist," Eigsti says. "That's what I set out to do with the piano, especially on 'Let It Come to You,' to create overdubbed background textures. I call it rhythm piano, with feel, funk, rock, R&B and classical elements in the mix."

Several of the tunes are studio first takes: Eigsti opens the album with swinging exuberance through Cole Porter's "I Love You" ... then later, puts a new Afro-Cuban spin on Juan Tizol/Duke Ellington's "Caravan," with Lage delivering a stunning prelude on guitar with a whammy pedal, and the leader, in-turn delivering an extraordinary cadenza. Eigsti and Lage share a duet on Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Portrait in Black and White," which the pianist says was approached "with an air of mystery in mind." Another first take is the gusty jaunt through Pat Metheny's "Timeline," dedicated to the late Michael Brecker. Redman guests—taking two dynamic solos and trading at the end with Eigsti. Other re-imagined covers include Wayne Shorter's "Deluge" and Eddie Cooley-John Davenport's "Fever" where the pianist met Castaneda for the first time in the recording studio. Eigsti says that they jammed for an hour and came up with an ecstatic melody that "is roughly like 'Fever.'" He adds, "With Edmar's Colombian sense of rhythm, he taught me an entirely different way of approaching 3/4 time."

As for the new tunes Eigsti offers here, the first is the multipiano title tune followed by his ambitious multilayered "Fallback Plan Suite," which features Dayna Stephens and Ben Wendel on tenor saxophones and Evan Francis on flutes. The three parts are "Less Free Will" (summed up, Eigsti says, by the notion that you can't control everything), "Not Lost Yet" (about "getting through weird stuff that you can't control") and "Brick Steps" (an image that serves as an assurance to him even when "things are going very badly").

Eigsti says that his intent for *Let It Come to You* is to express that "the best things in life—and also the worst things—often come unexpectedly, without any prior knowledge or control over the outcome." "Realistically, the only thing we have control of in our lives is our own sense of self and our personal happiness. I understand now that true happiness occurs when we let the world around us take the shape that it is naturally supposed to take, and when we are fully immersed in the present moment. In my opinion, life is a 'fallback plan' for whatever else we were planning."

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