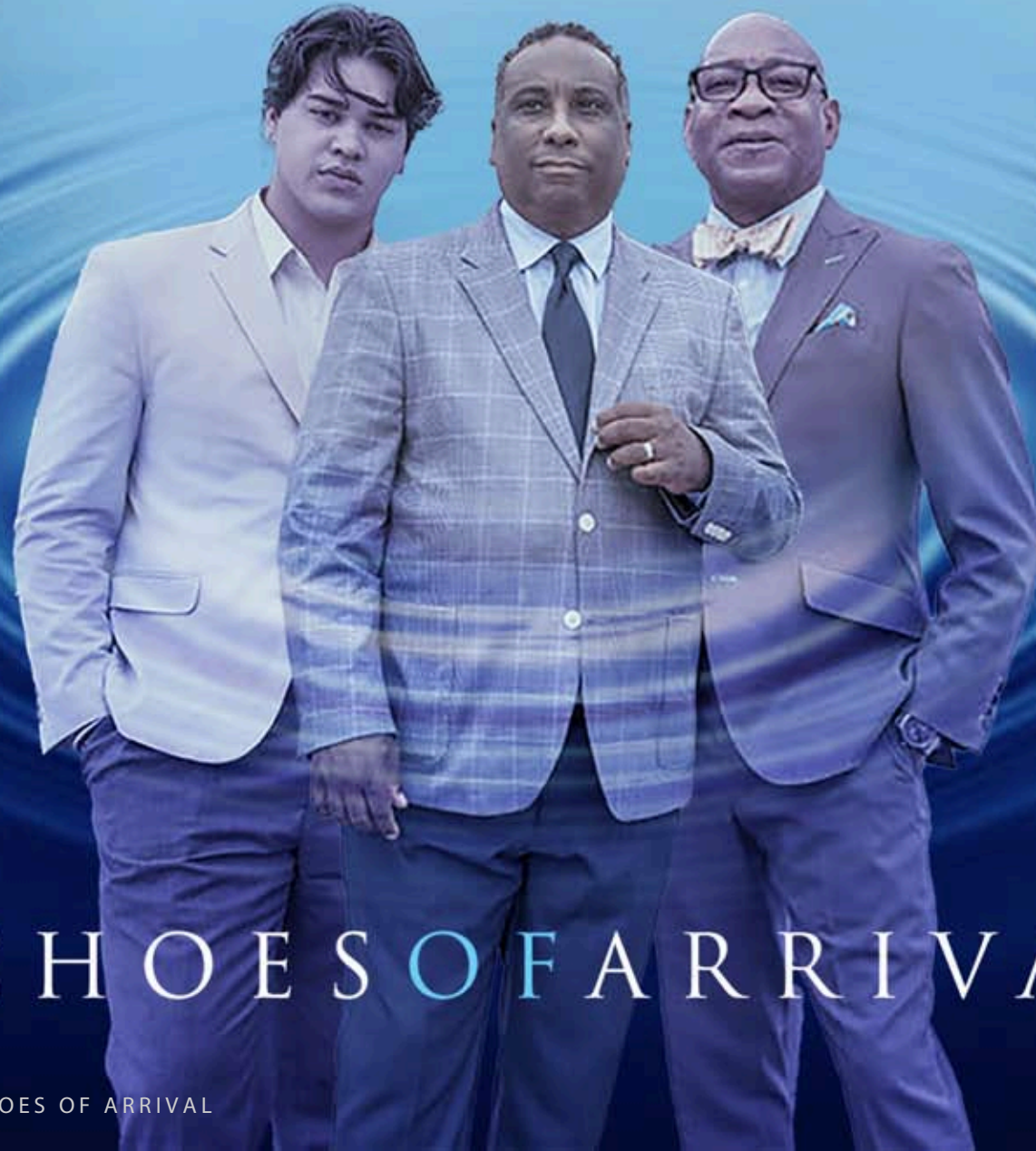


ERIC BYRD TRIO



ECHOES OF ARRIVAL

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Eric Byrd piano / Fender Rhodes / vocals **Alphonso Young, Jr.** drums **Will Hazel** acoustic bass

- 1 **BLUES FOR J.C.**
(ERIC BYRD) **4:34**
- 2 **FRIDAY NIGHT AT WESTMINSTER CHURCH**
(ERIC BYRD) **5:56**
- 3 **SILVER AND GOLDIE**
(ERIC BYRD) **7:02**
- 4 **THE PLAN (JOB 12)**
(ERIC BYRD) **6:11**
- 5 **CAXIXI**
(DOMINIC JACKSON) **5:42**
- 6 **SAVE YOUR LOVE FOR ME**
(BUDDY JOHNSON) **6:03**
- 7 **THIS IS FOR ALBERT**
(WAYNE SHORTER) **6:16**
- 8 **YES SIR, THAT'S MY BABY**
(WALTER DONALDSON) **5:19**
- 9 **SHADE OF THE CEDAR TREE**
(CHRISTIAN McBRIDE) **4:54**
- 10 **ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL**
(ARTHUR ALTMAN / JACK LAWRENCE) **5:19**
- 11 **WHAT ARE YOU DOING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE**
(ALLYN / MARILYN BERGMAN / MICHEL LEGRAND) **6:47**
- 12 **HERE COMES THE BOW TIE MAN**
(ALPHONSO YOUNG, JR.) **3:18**
- 13 **KISSING MY LOVE**
(JAMES GADSON) **4:36**
- 14 **IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL**
(HORATIO SPAFFORD AND PHILIP BLISS / TRADITIONAL) **2:34**





The Eric Byrd Trio would like to thank all of our friends and families for 25 years of support. This band has survived musical and non-musical challenges; we remain having stories to tell. Will has lovingly pushed us without apologies into territories unknown. Those secrets are on full display with this project.

This band continues to be what I've always wanted: a group of talented musicians whose sum is greater than the individual parts. Every song was composed and arranged for group interpretation. This has never been nor will it ever be a leader with sidemen: I am most proud we are a collective.

You might find it interesting that the vocals and piano were recorded at the same time, in the same room, in the moment, microphone bleed and all. What you are hearing is what you are getting: three musicians lending their voices to that feeling at that time in spontaneous compositional fury! We hope you find it enjoyable!

So much more I would like to say, but it would all revolve around gratitude - both for you and the boys in the band. 25 years in and I still feel like we're at the beginning of something special and new, thanks to you.

Lastly, this recording occurred 6 months after I suffered what my doctor said was a catastrophic injury to my right hand. I am still not able to straighten two fingers as I type this. But with 2 crooked fingers, 6 straight fingers, two thumbs and a full heart, I am pleased to report I am playing the piano with as much energy as I ever had.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
To Him be the glory - great things He has done.

-Eric, March 2025

Eric Byrd Trio

Echoes Of Arrival

Liner Notes by Willard Jenkins

For his eleventh recording session as a leader, pianist-vocalist-bandleader-composer Eric Byrd continues in the rich tradition established by such icons of the piano-vocal trio heritage exemplified by such historic practitioners of the form, ranging from pioneers Fats Waller and Nat Cole to Oscar Peterson's occasional Cole-inspired vocal forays helming his trios, to the more recent ancestor Andy Bey.

This date marks a turning point in the Eric Byrd Trio evolution as he and his longtime drum partner Alphonso Young, Jr., who has been such a steady, productive hand, and deeply complimentary partner across the previous ten Eric Byrd Trio recordings, are joined by newcomer bassist Will Hazel, about whom our leader is quite enthused. "Will Hazel joined the band a year ago. When we found ourselves needing a bassist, we are lucky he lives in the DMV, where there are so many great musicians available," Byrd says of the DC/Maryland/Virginia region where the trio resides. "Alphonso and I both became keenly aware of the unique opportunity we were in: in the tradition of Miles and Blakey, and even later Branford Marsalis a decade or so ago, I became more attracted to the idea of who we could find that is a great player but also younger, someone who would be open to mentorship and growth. Will is a special talent, and he'll continue to grow and refine, which will force Al and I to adjust in a musical way, to provide space."

With Hazel anchoring the proceedings on bass, *Echoes of Arrival* boasts an attractively varied set of standards, Byrd's originals, and at least a couple of tunes that might best be described as standards-in-the-making. These include selections like Wayne Shorter's alluring "This Is For Albert" – another of the late composer's subtle melodic masterpieces – and Christian McBride's infectious "Shade of The Cedar Tree," written in honor of another ancestor of Shorter's generation, the influential pianist-composer Cedar Walton.

"This repertoire is where we are right now," insists Byrd. "We've always composed and arranged standards in our own unique way, but everything is a step up here. We love swinging, so there's just simple, comfort food bluesy stuff on here. "This Is For Albert" is here simply because it's fun to play. "Shade of the Cedar Tree" is challenging to play, so we put it in 3 to give it a unique approach."

The standards here include Buddy Johnson's classic plea "Save Your Love," with an arranger's hint of "Maiden Voyage" in its opening chords. The piece is also delivered as an apt vehicle for Will Hazel's bass solo. "Yes Sir That's My Baby," the 1925 Walter Donaldson-Gus Kahn chestnut proves an apt feature for Byrd's warm vocal approach. "All or Nothing at All," Frank Sinatra's big 1939 hit, is given a particularly assertive rhythm section lift, courtesy of the arrangement's robust bass/drums intro, which leads to one of Byrd's vocal high points on the album, sung with particular gusto. "What Are You Doing The Rest of Your Life" is a ballad vocal feature in which Byrd invests wells of passion, and it includes one of Hazel's most pungent bass solos. "That tune is our attempt at broaching an approach of playing ballads without a strong, steady pulse," Byrd suggests, as in "trying to let the melody dictate when and if we move. All the songs on here are songs with approaches and attempts at playing music in a way we might not have done previously," Byrd says, suggesting the fresh, new attitude in his trio that Hazel's arrival on bass apparently signals.

Originals on this record include Eric's up-tempo blues "Friday Night at Westminster," his joyous uplift of one of DC's hallmark weekly jazz sessions, at Southwest DC's Westminster Church, where it is a guarantee that "they're swinging down at the church," as Byrd testifies. "Silver and Goldie" boasts a slightly urgent theme, Byrd's lovely touch on keys building his potent solo. "The Plan" is one of Eric Byrd's forays into the gospel realm, with its lead vocal on "the hand and the plan of the Lord", eliciting one of Eric's highlight piano solos of this set. "Kissing My Love" is another gospel-ish line with a true hump in its back, followed by Byrd's apt benediction on these proceedings, his solo piano evocation on the closer in a manner that suggests 'let us go forth from this fellowship of swing in the proper spirit.'

"I made no overdubs with this recording," Byrd asserts. "As an artist I wanted to stay true to what I was feeling right at that moment. I'm not against overdubs at all, but for me it was very important to record – 'warts and all' – to make a statement about myself: "here I am, this is what I'd like to say, and this is how I said it when we recorded the music in that particular moment. Twenty years ago I would have obsessed over what I played on every solo. Now that I'm older I am more secure in what I played in the music. It's less about the solo and more about the overall band conversation, less self-focused, more of an emphasis on this collaboration with my brothers," is how Eric Byrd details the truth of his band expression at what he clearly views as a pivotal moment in his evolution.

Asked what he hopes Echoes of Arrival will ultimately say about the Eric Byrd Trio, 2025 edition, about his artistry and approach and his ongoing development as an artist, Byrd asserts "I hope it says we have grown, we have honored the tradition and the artists we've been influenced by, and we're very hopeful this record opens new doors for us. I am also very thankful that, as we enter our 25th year as a band, we are 25 times better than where we started. This is the project I've always wanted to make. We've invested a lot in this project because we believe in it, and we know it is necessary for where we are right now. I'm optimistic Echoes of Arrival will find an audience and that it takes us places we've never been. We remain humble and honored to be in this music. Everything we've done feels like it's a setup for this project," Byrd details his trio journey, "so I plan on riding this record until the wheels come off... or until we record the next one."

eric byrd
trio

The Tunes

This album means a lot to us as it is our first project with our new bassist Will Hazel. While a lot of this music took shape before he joined the band, it certainly evolved into something he was able to put his fingerprints upon. After we started working together and Alfonso started to do his thing, these are the songs that we decided we would record and document this new edition of a 25-year-old band.

In January of 2025, the band took a weekend away to figure out just exactly what we were going to do. We had a lot of song options, and so it became difficult to try to pare them down. But I think we have arrived at a program of music that showcases the many different sides of this band. We have all shown an interest in a lot of different styles of improvisational music. And so, I think you get that on this recording. I don't personally feel like the music is too scattered, or we jump into too many pools of music.

Blues for JC is a song written for the great pianist Joey Calderazzo, who composed the song called the *Mighty Sword*. This is just an excuse to write a song to open up a show, and it is recorded here exactly the way we play it live.

Friday Night at Westminster Church, One of the best and most important gigs in the DMV is the Friday night jazz series at Westminster church in Southwest DC. There ain't nothing wrong with the Blues. It's fun to mention greats like Wes Biles but wonderful audience members like Miss Barbara. She held my oldest son, Jason, and stopped him from crying when he was a baby 22 years ago, and we have been family ever since.

Silver and Goldie is the name I call my wife, and I wrote this song just to celebrate our time spent together. I wanted to write a song that had distinct sections to it, similarly to a Lyle Mays composition, *Slink*. It's also fun to write a melody line carried by the bass clef.

The Plan is a paraphrase from the 12th chapter in the *Book of Job*. I always loved Ahmad Jamal's *Poinciana*, and so the vibe of this song, at least compositionally, comes from there.

Caxixi was written by Dominic Jackson, a former student of mine. I fell in love with it the first time I heard it and immediately stole it for the band.

Save Your Love For Me, and the arrangement of it was introduced to me by the great vocalist Tessa Souter, who played me a recording of Kenny Werner playing it that way. We make the bridge kind of a gospel thing, but then return to the *Maiden Voyage-ish* A sections

One of the things this trio has done over 25 years is to make sure that everything we record is unique to us. So when we play a standard, we try to put a unique spin on it so that it becomes uniquely our repertoire. I could not find any trio versions of **This is for Albert**, and that made me want to record one all the more

Yes Sir That's My Baby has been recorded a bunch, but our version comes out of the Nat Cole bag. The king is tops, and so his arrangement is good enough for us.

Shade Of The Cedar Tree is one of those modern-day standards that is very challenging to play. Our version is in three, and that's fun to play as well. When we recorded this, I was supposed to solo first, but Will forgot and took the first solo! So what you are hearing is the only take we did this song in this particular arrangement.

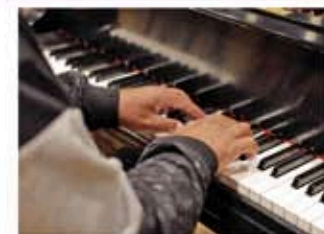
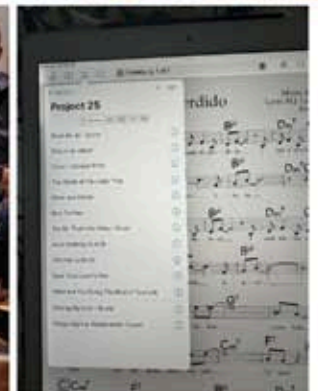
I love Kurt Elling and wanted to have a song that takes a standard but combines it with a groove. **All or Nothing At All** gives us a chance to do that.

The Branford Marsalis Quartet, in my opinion, is one of the greatest jazz bands of the last 40 years. What I love most about them is their ability to swing so hard and yet also play a ballad so tenderly. **What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life** is our attempt at exploring the vulnerability of the band by not always having to play in time, but rather in plain time to a collective pulse that may vary from phrase to phrase.

Alfonso sent a voice note of himself singing the melody to **Here Comes the Bow Tie Man**. What makes this even more entertaining is that either Al cannot sing, or he cannot sing and stay in one key! So the melody is Alfonso singing in a couple of different keys, and then us all battling each other in the key of F, which is sort of like *Freedom Jazz Dance*

Kissing My Love is just another opportunity to play the Blues, sing the Blues, and have a good time doing it.

The Session



www.ericbyrdtrio.com

All compositions are listed under Byrdlicious Music
All rights reserved. Publishing/ASCAP unless otherwise composed and published
All compositions are arranged by Eric Byrd, Alphonso Young, Jr. and Will Hazel
Recorded at Tonal Park Studios, MD, March 15 - 16, 2025
Engineered, Mixed and Mastered by Don Godwin
Produced by Don Godwin and The Eric Byrd Trio
Photography by Nick Moreland
Graphic Design by Christopher Drukker
Alphonso endorses and uses exclusively BW Cymbals and Canopus Drums



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