

I feel that I have been creating this album my entire life: it is filled with, or more accurately, drenched in, my abiding devotion to the piano, animated with a lifelong enthusiasm for composing, and inspired by my ongoing love of nature. My hope is that you will be uplifted and inspired by this twenty first century jazz with its influences from different cultures, genres and eras. This music is centered on the beauty of life that we are surrounded by daily, and meant to be timeless and essential listening for our complex lives. Enjoy! Lisa Hilton January 9, 2022

I have been a fan of blues inflected jazz since my teen years. *Ernie's Blues* has stunning chords alongside loose bluesy passages – I really love how Luques and Rudy sound on this one! Written by sax musician/composer Ernie Wilkins, it's an example of how I prefer to compose too - crafting melodic lines, but allowing room for improvisation.

I took piano lessons in middle and high school, and was fortunate that my teacher introduced me to the syncopated rhythms of mid - century masters such as Bartók, Prokofiev, and Kabalevsky. *Retro Road Trip* has a similar energy to their music, but this tune also has a distinct vintage American vibe too.

When I was growing up, my mother would play her beloved jazz standards on our upright piano, but the music often puzzled me: How do you dance *Cheek to Cheek*? Why were there *Three Coins in a Fountain*? Where was *Chattanooga*? Years later, those romantic standards Mom would play filtered into my two love songs here: *Nightingales & Fairy Tales* and *So This Is Love*.

The exotic rain forests of the Abel Tasman National Park in New Zealand have a mysterious energy. In *Too Hot*, I was curious if I could reproduce that vibe by modulating in different keys, (also called modes). Modal jazz produces a unique musical ambience and was used fluently in the past by Miles Davis, Bill Evans and others.

*Unforgotten Moments, Half Forgotten Dreams* seems to express the last two years – moments never before experienced that will not be forgotten, sandwiched in our psyche with previous dreams from the “olden days” of 2019.

*Stepping Into Paradise* invites us to appreciate, or step into, each moment as a form of paradise. Musical ideas that drift, shift and swing effortlessly makes this tune one of my favorites.

Living in Southern California, Latin music is as much of a part of our culture as our outdoor lifestyle. *Santa Monica Samba* is not a samba, but it's a good - mood tune written after witnessing a seemingly endless West Coast sunset. I added a little phrase inspired by the composer/pianist Horace Silver who lived near there for many years.

I began “writing” music with names like *Fairy Dance* when I was about five years old. Later on as a teen, I would play what was to become *Seduction*, for my encouraging friends, which eventually grew into the complete composition here. It is still one of my favorites to play!

*Temporary Lullaby* was written for my daughter: I had been contemplating that all life is temporary, so it is essential to savor each “lullaby” of time.

*More Than Another Day* was influenced by my favorite composers: Miles Davis, Antonio Carlos Jobim and Cole Porter. I admire Miles for the creativity of his best - selling album, *Kind of Blue*, which introduced the “cool” jazz style - music played with a less frantic or “cooler” approach, with written arrangements and classical influences. Jobim had intriguing harmonic ideas and timeless melodies. Porter, a true musical genius, wrote many beloved songs, but I favor his subtle ways with rhythm and note placement.

I have always loved the piano and composing – they allow me freedom to create abundantly, communicate personally and explore musically. I am often asked what pianists I am most inspired by - I admire Bill Evans, Horace Silver, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Brad Mehldau and Yuja Wang, but I feel more influenced by great composers of all eras, spending countless hours every year investigating their music.

I am also motivated by women with remarkable musical life stories like Clara Schumann: a piano virtuoso and composer who toured extensively, financially supporting both her demanding father and her mentally unstable husband, composer Robert Schumann. Lil Hardin: a successful jazz composer, pianist and band leader at a time when there were few women in jazz, she also taught music theory to her husband, trumpeter Louis Armstrong. Famed composer, lyricist and singer, Joni Mitchell should also be noted for being an innovative guitarist, a bandleader and music publisher. Women have always been creative leaders as composers, musicians, bandleaders and instrumentalists, and culturally we are indebted to their artistic legacies. Their stories should be told and their music heard in theaters presenting opera, classical music and jazz around the world.