

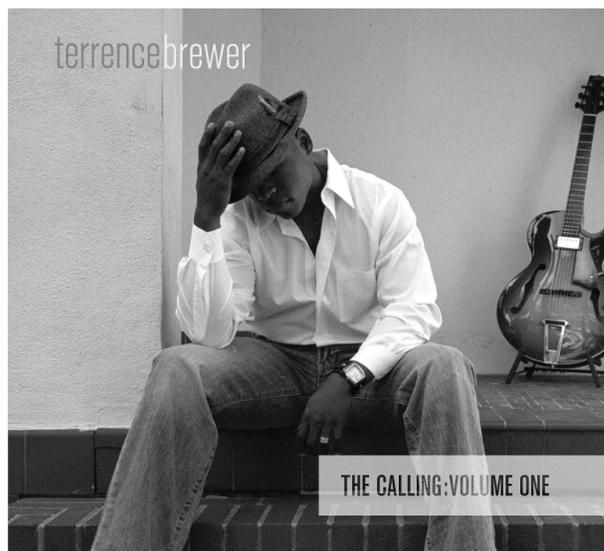
terrence brewer

album notes: the calling

When ever I tell someone I'm a musician there are usually several questions that follow, "What lead you to play music?", "Why did you decide to become a musician?", "Do you come from a musical family?", and other variations of these questions. Well, I don't come from a musical family (I mean they love music and I have an uncle who was a Trombonist and percussionist in college, but that was before I was born) and I definitely did not *decide* to become a musician. I have an unexplainable drive inside of me that I've been aware of since I was 14 years old; it compels me to write and perform music. Fads, hobbies, and various non-music related jobs have come and gone, but my passion for music never wavers. So when I decided to start my own independent record label and I began the process of producing and recording these two CD's, the title seemed more than appropriate...The Calling.

I have always loved the writing and performing aspect of music, but I enjoy the business side as well. For this project, I took on the task of being the sole producer including hiring the bands, scheduling rehearsals, researching studios, and booking studio time. In addition, I involved myself with all things associated with the recording process, including overseeing the mixing and mastering; I also composed all 17 compositions and arranged the pieces for the specific groups found on the two recordings. I've always taken charge of my own music career, acting as my own manager, booking agent, and publicist; now with the release of these two albums, the intensity of these jobs grew exponentially. I have continued to perform at venues and private events throughout the San Francisco Bay Area on a nightly basis while working on this project and maintaining my 40-hour/week "day job" as the Office Manager for an advertising agency in Alameda where I live. Combining all these components challenges me everyday; however, I find them all rewarding and worthwhile. I am very grateful to the musicians who lent me their talents for this project and I am very proud of the outcome – I hope you enjoy **The Calling: Volume One and Volume Two**.

Volume One: This album is groove based; complex odd-meter grooves, simple grooves, grooves with a Latin flavor, and a couple slow grooves thrown in for good measure. Along with me on guitar, **Volume One** features **Ravi Abcarian** (Kahlil Shaheed, Oaktown Jazz Workshop) on Acoustic Bass, **Ben Stolorow** (Oba Oba, Mistruda, The Jazz School) on piano, and **Micah McClain** (KeHoe Nation, Blackwell) on drums. The first composition, **Murray's Law**, is inspired by a David Murray quote I read in *Down Beat Magazine* (or maybe it was *Jazz Times*) a few years ago. I forget the exact quote, but it was something to the effect that young jazz musicians do not write their own material anymore and if they are writing their own material, they must be too afraid to play and record those tunes. What resulted from my astonishment at Murray's



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statement was a tune based on a minor groove played by the piano and acoustic bass (and later opened up for a drum solo) that harmonically runs the gamut of altered minor chords. The main melody twists its way into the bridge and then shifts the tonal center from minor to major, accented with group hits and punctuated with bass and drum fills. **True To Form** begins with a nod to Herbie Hancock, one of my favorite composers. The intro, which is restated between soloists, is derived from Hancock's composition Maiden Voyage. The main melody and subsequent chord changes are more 'Pat Metheny-like' in their structure and complexity; mixing continually shifting chords with a lyrical and fluid melody line. The subtle pulse laid down by drummer Micah McClain drives the next composition, **The Way**. McClain uses brushes and mallets to give the song an open feel while keeping the pulse and groove. Syncopated patterns in the bass and piano set up the two main themes, then the guitar states the main melody lightly over the top. In my opinion, Pianist Ben Stolorow's lyrical yet rhythmic solo is a perfect compliment to this composition's harmonic quality. **All the Kings Horses** is the first 'swing' composition on the album; it is a minor blues based waltz that sometimes gives the illusion of a being based on a major motif more so than a minor one. **Ray of Hope** begins with a loping minor based 7/4 groove played by bassist Ravi Abcarian. This bass line is pushed by a driving drum pattern, while the melody is very open and simply stated. The next section alternates between 6/4 and 4/4 and resolves itself into a heavy backbeat section with a bass solo at the inset. The guitar and piano both get the opportunity to solo over the 7/4 groove making their way through the 6/4-4/4 transitions and leading ultimately to improvisation over the backbeat section. Abcarian and McCain are solid as they lay down the essential foundation in this groove driven number. **Dedication**, an up tempo swing composition, begins with a pulsing two and four 'pedal tone' in the bass; the pedal tone continues under the first half of the melodic statement. The band then flows into a swing section for the second half of the main melody and the bridge. The guitar and piano solos are accompanied with a rhythm section feel similar to the main melody, and then the bass and drums "trade eights" before the group returns back to state the main theme. The ballad **Cat Nap (for Cathy)** is a 64 bar AABA composition. The A sections are based on a major chord structure with a simple melody. The bridge shifts the tonal center to a 4-bar minor chord progression that restates itself and then shifts back to the major chord progression to restate the A section theme again. Guitar, piano, and bass improvise over a form that continually implies a 'double time' feel. **Just Like Old Times** is an up-tempo Latin tinged composition with piano and bass laying the foundation at the top. Odd-meter syncopated group lines transition the tune into a Bossa Nova style bridge. Guitar and piano improvise over an extended version of the composition's main theme and bridge, which then leads to the drum improv over a harmonized guitar, bass, piano line. **The Hands of Man** is a complex meter composition in which the melodic line and subsequent groove are accented every few measures with a drum interlude. After exchanging a few phrases, the entire band shifts into a sparse bridge section followed by the last drum interlude before piano and guitar improvisation. McClain then takes a few bars of solo over a 7/4 line played by guitar, bass, and piano. The composition concludes with a restatement of the main theme and bridge. **Vari-8-Shun**, an up-tempo swing number, is the last composition on **Volume One**. The intro is a call-and-response theme with the piano, bass, and drums calling and the guitar responding. The main melody continues to swing with the drums participating in a call-and-response theme with the rest of the band. Everyone comes together on the bridge while the guitar and piano play a harmonized melodic statement to finish out the melody. Guitar and piano improvise over an extended version of the main statements chord changes followed by an accompanied then unaccompanied 32 bar drum solo.

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The Calling: Volume Two

This record features **Wil Blades** (Mother Bug, O.G.D.) on Hammond B-3 Organ, **Eric Drake** (Space Invaders) on tenor sax on three tracks, and long-time friend and musical comrade Error! Contact not defined. (Charlie Hunter Trio, Dave Douglas) on drums. This album, produced to feature some of the more soulful, bluesy, and backbeat rich compositions begins with one of the group's favorite tunes, **Lately**. Syncopated group hits and a sparse drum groove help get this track rolling. Sax and guitar weave their way through the first portion of the melody and then the group opens up into a 'shout chorus' style bridge. Sax, organ, and guitar solo over this composition's minor blues form leading to a condensed restatement of the main theme and drum solo to finish the piece. **A.D.D.**, an up-tempo swing tune, cooks along with a sparse opening phrase,

moves into a steady swinging B section, and then quickly shifts into an odd-meter interlude. The interlude finds the guitar, organ, and drums linking three different lines over the top of one another and then coming back together to proceed into the improv section. Phillips brushwork on this composition gives this tune a unique flavor. **Chrystal Clarity** is a ballad whose opening feel is a nod to John Coltrane's Lonnie's Lament. Tenor sax and guitar harmonize on the main melody. The group proceeds into a 12/8 Afro-Cuban feel on the bridge, which leads to a harmonic shift placing the group in a new tonal center to finish the main theme. Tenor sax, organ, and guitar all improvise over an extended version of the main theme keeping the minor harmonic sound. The next composition, **Peaches and Cream**, is a minor blues that is driven by a syncopated opening line played by the entire ensemble. The main statement is an 8-bar phrase played over the top of the rhythm section's pulsing swing feel. Organ and guitar solo over the minor blues chord structure and then the group switches gears with a slow 'shout-chorus' style 4-bar phrase for the drum solo. On the main theme of **Sunrise Sunset**, I modified chord changes to the classic Cole Porter composition Night and Day to come up with a new harmonic structure that was reminiscent of the original piece, but stood on it's own as well. The melody finds guitar and sax playing a swinging line that alternates between unison passages and tight harmonies. The bridge contains a descending minor chord passage with the guitar and sax playing a 2-bar phrase that repeats in three different keys with a different alteration of the minor chord each time. From a chord progression standpoint, **Baby Cakes** is the most challenging piece on the record. It is an up-tempo composition and the complex chord changes move at a quick pace. The A section of the piece moves from major to minor and travels through seven different keys in 8-bars. The B Section is built around an 'A' minor pedal tone with a shifting inner harmony while the melody is a two-bar repeating phrase played by the guitar. The last two measures of the B section feature an offbeat syncopated rhythm played by the ensemble with a hard honning line played in the melody

