

DAN CAVANAGH AND JAMES MILEY, ON GRAND PIANOS, PARTNER WITH RENOWNED DRUMMER JOHN HOLLENBECK ON THE INSPIRED NEW ALBUM *ANOTHER LIFE*

Original compositions by Cavanagh and Miley, plus an expansive take on Lorde's "Royals" and a Radiohead/Jerome Kern mashup

Releasing Oct 21, 2022 on S/N Alliance (Japan)

Imagine the possibilities for voicing and orchestration afforded by two pianos — two hand-crafted Shigeru Kawai SK3 grands, to be precise — when played by such accomplished masters of the keyboard as **Dan Cavanagh** and **James Miley**. On ***Another Life***, their new album for duo piano, synths, and the extraordinary GRAMMY-nominated **John Hollenbeck** on drums, Cavanagh and Miley are in the finest virtuosic form, not only as players but also as sound designers and forward-thinking artists. What was originally intended as a launching pad for an arranging project for big band, Cavanagh recalls, seemed to cry out for documentation in its own right: a two-piano group with additional electronics.

Spurred in part by the pandemic, Cavanagh and Miley found themselves in their respective corners adding further sonic dimension to *Another Life* with Logic and MIDI, using synthesizer packages to thicken and color the timbres, accentuate melodies and bass as well. “The electronics pieces took place over time,” says Cavanagh, “with James and I sending versions back and forth over a few months. It was, in some ways, a very group-compositional process.”

At that point, Cavanagh adds, “we decided it would be great to add percussion or drums. James and I both love John Hollenbeck’s drumming and have for years, and his compositional prowess certainly added to the focus of the project (all three of us are composers).” With his unerring beat and approach to sound and dynamics, Hollenbeck perfectly suits the repertoire that Cavanagh and Miley bring to light on *Another Life*. “Once John sent us his drum tracks,” Miley recalls, “we re-envisioned the electronic aspect of the project, dropping synths from five of the nine tunes entirely. The end result sounds as if we all dropped into the studio and recorded live as a trio. That’s all John.”

Miley further specifies some of the electronics that were employed: Logic Studio with Arturia’s Analog Lab IV, Mini-V and Stage 73, Spectrasonics Omnisphere, and Apple’s own Sculpture plug-in. “The sub bass on ‘Stealing Amsterdam,’ ‘The Dawn Wall’ and ‘Another Life’ is just a subtly tweaked stock patch from Apple’s workhorse ES-1 analog synth plugin,” Miley reveals. “Who knew?”

What anchors the set, however, is the authoritative acoustic piano playing that Cavanagh and Miley each bring to the table. With formidable technique and beauty of tone, these fine improvisers take flight, divvying up plentiful soloing space in these welcoming compositions. By way of identification: Cavanagh solos first on the opening mashup, Miley second; on “Stealing Amsterdam” and “Evening Falls” it is Miley first, then Cavanagh. On “Kapo’i” it is Cavanagh only.

In addition to the three pieces by each of the co-leaders and a wholly spontaneous duo improvisation, there are two finely executed pop arrangements: “Royals” by Lorde, marked by its gloriously sludgy bass tones, and “All the Things in Their Right Places,” which juxtaposes Radiohead’s “Everything In Its Right Place” with Jerome Kern’s ubiquitous jazz standard “All the Things You Are,” taking each tune to new places harmonically.

“I was very honored to be asked to play on this project,” Hollenbeck says. “Dan and James had clear concepts, great charts, and pristine recordings, so it was up to me to try to make this sound like a band — a normal objective for any drummer, but it took on new meaning here. I tried to treat it like a live session, going through all the tunes in a day as if we were playing them live. I’m now looking forward to doing exactly that with the guys, as soon as possible!”

About the Artists

James Miley is Professor of Music at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, where he coordinates the jazz and improvised music program and teaches classes in composition, music for visual media, and music theory/history. As a pianist, he can be heard on Bug’s *The Gadfly; Pieces*, by the Hashem Assadullahi Sextet (with Ron Miles); and *Pulse*, by Dan Cavanagh’s Jazz Emporium Big Band (all released on Origin/OA2 Records), as well as with the improvisational music group *Trio Untold* on PJCE Records. James is a recipient of the IAJE/ASCAP Gil Evans Fellowship in Jazz Composition and a founding member of the Radiohead Jazz Project. His compositions and arrangements for big band have been performed worldwide.

Dan Cavanagh is Professor of Music for the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington. He has written or arranged for the Latin GRAMMY-winning AfroBop Alliance, the legendary Patti LaBelle, and a wide range of classical and jazz performers across North America and Europe. He has released four CDs as a leader, including *Pulse* (big band) and *Heart of the Geyser* (piano trio) on OA2 Records, and two with vibraphonist Dave Hagedorn, *Horizon* and *20 Years*. His writing continues to be commissioned, programmed and recorded across the world.

John Hollenbeck, Professor of Jazz at McGill University’s Schulich School of Music, has translated the traditions of jazz and new music into a fresh, eclectic, forward-looking language of his own invention, intellectually rewarding yet ever accessibly vibrant. He is widely acclaimed for his work with his flagship groups the Claudia Quintet and the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble. His awards and honors include six GRAMMY nominations, the 2012 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, the 2010 ASCAP Jazz Vanguard Award and a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship.

=END=