

“Dedicated”

John Klopotoski, guitar

Rave Tesar, piano/keyboards

Bill Tesar, drums

Songs:

1 – Doxy (6:15)

(Sonny Rollins, PRESTIGE MUSIC)

2 – Old Folks (6:56)

(Willard Robison/Dedette Lee Hill, WB MUSIC CORP)

3 – Nobody’s at Nobody’s (6:18)

(Rave Tesar, Rave Tesar Music, BMI)

4 – Bretton Hall (5:05)

(John Klopotoski, Boptist Music, BMI)

5 – I’ve Never Been In Love Before (7:17)

(Frank Loesser, MPL Music Publishing Co)

6 – Little Girl Blue (2:48)

(Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart, WILLIAMSON MUSIC CO.)

7 – Danse Norvegienne (5:46)

(Jean Reinhardt/Edvard Grieg, JEWEL MUSIC PUBLISHING CO INC.)

8 – Invitation (7:15)

(Bronislau Kaper/Paul Francis Webster, BMG GOLD SONGS/WEBSTER MUSIC CORP)

Total time 48:07

Recorded at:

Tedesco Studios, Paramus NJ, September 16, 2016

Production: John Klopotoski and Rave Tesar

Recording engineer: Tom Tedesco

Mixing/Mastering: Rave Tesar/Studio X

Cover Design: Jeannine Cuevas

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For more information and notes please visit www.johnklopotoski.com.

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Writing about this project is not easy as my first association with the title "Dedicated" is to my mother, Edith. I lost her shortly after this session took place, and for me the music will most likely always be a repository of the extreme range of feelings that I was experiencing during that time. There was much sadness and grief to be sure, not to mention shock, but my mom was well enough until shortly before she died to be a great encouragement to me, and this bolstered my purpose and faith in the project. In fact, she was quite insistent that I make the recording, even though she was ill in a nursing home in New Jersey. So with her encouragement I went ahead with plans to get together with Rave and Bill at Tom Tedesco's studio.

But as I consider the title it seems that I need to include all of our parents as dedicatees. I've known Rave and Bill for many years, and performed quite a bit with Rave when we were younger and our parents would come to hear us in person. Their reactions went from extreme pride from my parents, to Rave's mom dubbing us "The Counterpoint Kids," and Charlie Tesar giving us his blessing, which still means a lot to me. They enjoyed our playing and gave us great support so this music is for them, with gratitude for everything.

The recording reflects music that interested me at the time, or had some connection to what Rave and I were preparing. In order, "Doxy" is on this CD as a result of hearing Rave play with saxophonist Jerry Vivino in a quartet at Shanghai Jazz in New Jersey in August of 2016. It was an easy choice though, because I idolize Sonny Rollins. I brought my son John David and Jerry treated us both like members of his family, I can't thank him enough for the fuss he made over

us! (We have known each other for many years and are both 'homies' originally from Paterson NJ.) At any rate, the second tune they played was "Doxy" and the group (with Sue Williams on bass and Frank Pagano on drums) sounded excellent. I then got together with Rave to play duets a few nights later and we started with "Doxy." It felt very comfortable and led to us choosing it for this recording. Next up is the standard "Old Folks." This is a great tune that we have all played for quite some time and the feel and lyric fit our general theme.

We then have two original tunes, "Nobody's at Nobody's" by Rave, and "Bretton Hall" from myself. I first heard Rave's tune on his "You Decide" trio CD and immediately dug it and hoped that we could do it together at some point. "Bretton Hall" is a jazz line composed over the structure of "Back Home in Indiana," I wrote this as an assignment for Warne Marsh during the time I was studying with him and have always had great memories associated with it.

Next we have "I've Never Been In Love Before," the Frank Loesser classic from "Guys and Dolls." Rave and I both did our preparation and this includes studying the lyric if one exists, and this lyric had more direct resonance for me after losing my mom than before. I had some powerful experiences when she passed, and one was a feeling of being exposed to an intense love that I had not ever experienced before. I'll leave it at that, but it is something that I will not forget.

"Little Girl Blue" is specifically dedicated to my mom. She was born in September, her birthstone was the sapphire, and her favorite color was blue. This arrangement is mostly

from transcriptions of Johnny Smith versions although not exactly, and I played it for her in her room at the nursing home as part of a group of four solo pieces. There was a lot of intense feeling between us that night and I tried to recapture it here.

"Danse Norvegienne" is a rearrangement of a rearrangement. I took it from Django Reinhardt's tune based on the piano composition by Edvard Grieg, however our version is much slower than Django's. When I got home to California and was first listening back I remembered my mom teaching me to dance as an awkward teenager and this sort of slow tempo was the only speed I would agree to! But I spent many a happy hour in 2016 listening to and learning from Django, and had first discovered him when I was 17. His story and work are compelling to me as a jazz musician, and especially as a guitarist.

Finally we have "Invitation," it is to me a great jazz standard and was the first tune Rave and I performed in public in 1975. He came up with the closing tag back then and I remembered it, and Billy adds great galloping energy and swing to the track. Rave switches over to a Hammond organ, we are considering it a preview and plan to do more recording in the future with him playing organ.

In closing, I can't say enough about my bandmates. They are both high-character men with great integrity, and very skilled players with years of experience separately and together. Billy plays with beautiful swing and drive, and excellent taste throughout. Rave has always done amazing things with me, and his playing of two keyboards in an L-shaped configuration may top the list. More than the extraordinary physical feats that he can accomplish though, he plays with beauty,

swing, and nuance from beginning to end. I'm lucky to have them with me and they feel like extended family.

There are two other members of my team that I want to recognize: first Tom Tedesco, we could not have done this recording without him. He is an excellent engineer, highly regarded and deservedly so, and creates an environment that is conducive to jazz recording. And I am very grateful to my partner and 'creative', Jeannine Cuevas. Her companionship and support are invaluable to me, and her cover and label designs are really beautiful. This project owes a lot to her touch.

John Klopotoski
Oakland, California, March 2017.