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-Nate Chinen, *The New York Times*

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Listed in the 2012 and 2013 *DownBeat* Critics Polls - Rising Star Arranger



ezra weiss press

## **Ezra Weiss – Press/We Limit Not the Truth of God**

“This album is a raw statement and commentary of the times in which we live. This album is an emotional and musical roller-coaster ride, provocative and full of risk. This album is a musical version of Edvard Munch’s “Scream” combined with the calm of Monet. This album is one of the most provocative I’ve heard. I love this album and hate the fact that it needed to be made. Highly recommended.”

-Andrew Read, *Jazz in Europe*

“The piece brims with triumphant joy, vividly depicted by Weiss’ choral arrangement.”

-Matt Micucci, *Jazziz*

“Music that plows through a sea of dark emotions on the way to defiantly proclaiming that truth will prevail. This is a strong and inspiring work that could provide catharsis and hope to someone overwhelmed by the world we currently live in.”

-Jerome Wilson, *All About Jazz*

“The music provides a healthy primer on contemporary orchestral jazz, with moments that evoke bands led by Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, Maria Schneider, and even current rising stars like Miho Hazama. In their pithy solos, reedmen John Nastos and Renato Caranto make a strong case for further investigation of the Pacific Northwest jazz scene.”

-Martin Johnson, *JazzTimes*

“There have been periodic powerful social commentaries throughout jazz history, with examples such as Billie Holiday’s *Strange Fruit*, John Coltrane’s *Alabama* or Max Roach’s *Tryptic*. This album is being suggested as a worthy addition to that group... One of the most powerful and ambitious social comment albums ever released, and remarkable throughout.”

-Keith Black, *Winnipeg Free Press*

“One of those sets that’ll wind up being passed down to future generations, Weiss knows how to eloquently state his case, with swing and style for all.”

-Chris Spector, *Midwest Record*

“Richly textured sections close things out on Wayne Shorter’s “Footprints” which show rich ideas audibly as well as intellectually.”

-George W. Harris, *Jazz Weekly*

“For this monumental project, he has gathered some of the best Northwest jazz musicians to bring a vibrant vision, combining jazz and classical motifs that both soar in their beauty, and express a foreboding unease when necessary.”

-Jeff Krow, *Audiophile Audition*

“High marks for Weiss’s intrepid compositions and arrangements, and for the band and soloists.”

-Jack Bowers, *All About Jazz*

“The music has an inwardness that suggests a man reflecting on his own time through the lens of posterity... It’s an emotional record that requires and repays patient listening.”

-Brian Morton, *Jazz Journal*

“Someday, his works will be jazz standards but, today, we get to hear them soon after the conception.”

-Travis Rogers, Jr., *The Jazz Owl*

## **Ezra Weiss – Press/Before You Know It [Live in Portland]**

“What lifts this above the postbop norm is some growl and fury in the horns (Farnell Newton on trumpet, John Nastos on alto sax, Devin Phillips on tenor). And after they warm up the joint, he closes with a really lovely ballad.”

-Tom Hull, *The Best Jazz Albums of 2014*

“Leader, pianist, arranger and composer Weiss has laid down his marker. Not many will surpass it.”

-Lance Liddle, *Bebop Spoken Here*

“It's not easy to be a ground breaking, genre pusher, but experimentally leaning piano man Weiss keeps his eye on the ball and his crew on message as he tackles his first live recording...”

-Chris Spector, *Midwest Record*

“It shows that the Big Apple does not have a monopoly on resident hot jazz talent...”

-Jeff Krow, *Audiophile Audition*

“Far from hoarding the spotlight on his album, Mr. Weiss shows a huge respect for his fellow band members, writing sensitively for the whole ensemble and creating a sound that is richer than it would have been had he hogged the spotlight. His melodies are engaging, memorable and thoughtfully placed.”

-Kelly Koenig, *NY Jazz Examiner*

“Pianist/composer/arranger Weiss offers a brilliant performance, on this, his first live recording. Based in Portland, Oregon, the polished, inventive jazz artist's evocative compositions take the listener on a journey. And his touch on the keyboard is magical.”

-Paul Freeman, *PopCultureClassics.com*

“An unselfish player, Weiss crafts an amazing album where the center of attention is rarely his, preferring to let the members of his audacious sextet take center stage. Nevertheless, Weiss can't escape the reality that it's the quality of his music, that truly shines here and makes *Before You Know It [Live In Portland]* such a memorable musical experience.”

-Edward Blanco, *All About Jazz*

“John Coltrane's 'Alabama' was an inspired choice and the result is the most satisfying and exciting version of the song since Coltrane's original recording.”

-Scott Yanow, *Jazz Inside*

“From such moments of attentive beauty to the blister and tear of “The Crusher,” *Before You Know It* is a vivid live embodiment of Weiss' journey thus far. But more than that, it speaks to the spirit of unity that perhaps only music can evoke. It speaks to his vision as a composer and his love for melodies, underlining the reality that he really is one of today's most captivating and inspiring young talents.”

-Jordan Richardson, *Canadian Audiophile*

“From the first notes, it is clear that this is going to be one of the best live albums of the year.”

-Travis Rogers Jr., *Music Life and Times*

“It's jazz for the purist; the sound is studio clean and the energy is opening night of a world tour high.”

-Carl F Gauze, *Ink 19*

“This release can be seen as simply a blowing session, but the compositions and arrangements of Weiss make it so much more than that... A more dynamic and incisive group of musicians would be hard to find.”

-Scott Albin, *JazzTimes*

“Weiss, an inclusive and versatile pianist/arranger, much lionized by peers as a formidable jazz composer, has assembled a pride of young musical lions from the burgeoning Portland jazz scene and provided them with the kind of extended landscape for innovative exploration that brings into sharp focus the dynamism, skillful innovation and modernism of great sixties classic sextets: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley and Horace Silver.”

-C. J. Bond, *JazMuzic.com*

“It is clear from the very beginning of this record that pianist Ezra Weiss, its leader, has an extraordinary rapport with his ensemble. Throughout its interesting repertoire the players shape the music in the most convincing way and to maximum expressive effect... Melodies are negotiated with breathtaking motivic beauty. Mr. Weiss' music becomes more spacious and expressive as the musicians display a profundity that is affecting and so appropriate to the musical stories of each of the tunes.”

-Raul Da Game, *jazzdagama.com*

“On *Before You Know It*, pianist / composer Ezra Weiss provides convincing evidence for the continued health and well-being of good old, straight ahead, gimmick-free modern acoustic jazz. The archetype for Weiss' beefy band and punchy charts would include Art Blakey's expanded Jazz Messenger lineups, some of McCoy Tyner's larger groups from the early-to-late 1970s, or perhaps some of Slide Hampton's septets and octets. Yet, Weiss' sound is utterly contemporary, exploring a wide variety of modern jazz styles in a consistently appealing fashion.”

-Dave Wayne, *All About Jazz*

## **Ezra Weiss - Press/Our Path To This Moment**

"A bold, inspired figure in the contemporary jazz arranging scene."  
-Josef Woodard, *DownBeat*

"This is jazz orchestral music of the highest order—with the essence of Ellington and jazz scores for movies like Jerry Goldsmith's *Chinatown* and David Amram's *Manchurian Candidate*. A cliché-free concept album with sophisticated zeal."  
-Marc Meyers, *JazzWax*

"Just the right ratio of compositional thoughtfulness to expansive, yet understated, big-band verve."  
-Lisette Corsa, *Jazziz*

"Weiss traces the contours of the big band format with the sublime *Our Path to this Moment*, a culmination of a dozen years of desire... This record takes the compositional spirit to the stars with an intelligent and entertaining sense of evolution."  
-Jordan Richardson's "Top Albums for 2012," *Something Else!*

"Composer / arranger Ezra Weiss epitomizes "contemporary" in the best sense of the word... It is Weiss's burnished arrangements that entice the ear, as he paints a series of entrancing sound-pictures that are progressive in nature while well-grounded in the musical essentials: melody, harmony and rhythm. *Our Path to This Moment* embodies one more forward step for contemporary big bands, one that is remarkably engaging by any measure."  
-Jack Bowers' "Big Band Report," *All About Jazz*

"Weiss' approach to composing bristles with clarity and purpose that promote enduring trust and interest in the listener... This work defines Weiss' maturity, presence, and stature as a formidable jazz composer."  
-C. J. Bond, *Jazzmusic.com*

"One of today's young masters."  
-Bruce Crowther, *Jazz Mostly*

"What is immediately apparent in listening to Ezra's CD is the dynamic range and lyrical power of his compositions."  
-Jeff Krow, *Audiophile Audition*

"This is one of the most significant jazz albums of the year so far."  
-Jeff Simon, *The Buffalo News*

"There are some deep ideas here as Weiss takes the luxury of time and explores them in depth."  
Carl F. Gauze, *Ink 19*

"The star here is the post-modern writing of Weiss."  
-Bob Karlovits, *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

"Clear, focused, direct, intuitive and brightly accessible..."  
-Alan Young, *Lucid Culture*

"Gifted with innate musicality..."  
-Ridhu, *AltSounds*

"Weiss and his charges have a wonderful pure music date for the serious listener that just wants to fall back into a pillow/cloud of great sounds that dismisses the travails of the real world for an hour."  
-Chris Spector, *Midwest Record*

"Though a long journey for Weiss to get to this point, with *Our Path To This Moment*, the trek comes to quite a pleasurable conclusion."  
-Edward Blanco, *All About Jazz*

## **Ezra Weiss - Press/*The Shirley Horn Suite***

“At the heart of the album is Weiss’ lone original instrumental, “Blues for Shirley,” which moves from wistful to life affirming. Although Weiss may have never met Shirley Horn, he clearly “knew” her emotionally and spiritually in ways that few artists would have dared to share so intimately.”

-Jonathan Widran, *Jazzlz*

“Over the course of four CDs and a decade on the Portland and New York jazz scenes, still-youthful pianist Ezra Weiss has proved to be a reliably elegant and increasingly economical straight-ahead player and composer... The limpid instrumental trio pieces here frequently achieve a reflective beauty that will enchant any fan of mainstream piano jazz, while the lovely original songs featuring veteran Northwest chanteuse Shirley Nanette... don’t clone Horn’s sound, but share her measured, relaxed swing and emotional depth.”

-Brett Campbell, *Willamette Week*

“From every perspective, this is a deep, thoughtful and gorgeous album. It’s an intimate tribute to a beloved ambassador of jazz, and deserves to be heard.”

-George Fendel, *Jazz Scene*

“This performance places Weiss among the elite musicians on the jazz scene today.”

-D. Oscar Groomes, *O’s Place*

“This album is a splendid uniting of four great musicians... \* \* \* \* ½ “

-Tim Taylor , *Audiophile Audition*

“A mix of originals and standards, his fifth album as leader is a sophisticated work, with some fresh compositions and terrific performances.”

-Bruce Lindsay, *AllAboutJazz.com*

“It’s hard to ask more of a tribute than what Ezra Weiss has done in his well-conceived salute to the late, great Shirley Horn.”

-Ken Dryden, *AllMusic.com*

“Both the delicate touch and the full emotion of the music prevail throughout the album as a whole.”

-Oliver diPlace, *Jazz from Many Angles*

“This is, in fact, one of the strongest jazz performances I’ve heard (yet) this year. My favorite of the 9 tracks is “Blues For Shirley” – again, it’s Ezra’s “unrushed” approach that makes it such a killer tune.”

-Rotcod Zzaj, *Improvijazzation Nation*

“The ambiance is dusky and consistently mindful of Horn’s use of understatement... *The Shirley Horn Suite* is a consistently rewarding salute to Horn’s legacy...”

-Alex Henderson, *The New York City Jazz Record*

## Ezra Weiss - Press/Get Happy

"Ezra Weiss is a fine, fine jazz pianist, an American original from Phoenix, Arizona, and his skills are awesome and perfect. He can take a jazz motif and bring out all of its lovely hues and shades. His playing approach is straight-ahead, and his melody phrasing is excellent... This is a CD to savor over and again with its imaginative freshness... Every musician and singer on this CD is topnotch, and each performance by all concerned sparkles with vitality and charm."

- Lee Prosser, *jazzreview.com*

"Placing his economical, inferential piano amidst a rotating cast of sensitive horn players and singers, Weiss dwells on frustration and heartbreak. He also allows a few rays of unbridled hope, but seems more at ease in the gloom. The slowly spiraling 'For Heather' and resolute 'Don't Need No Ticket' bookend the set with stirring emotion."

-Forrest Dylan Bryant, *JazzTimes*

"The title of Get Happy should tell you that 28-year-old pianist EZRA WEISS likes standards, but they're just a starting point: the writing here — arrangements and original compositions — keeps this straight-ahead date fresh at every turn."

-*The Boston Phoenix*

"Weiss gets in his share of memorable solos, but his arrangements tell the story as much as his pianism does -- and the mood is consistently pensive whether Weiss is embracing original material or turning his attention to well known standards such as Rodgers & Hammerstein's 'You'll Never Walk Alone,' Rodgers & Hart's 'Blue Room,' and Jule Styne's 'It's You or No One.'"

- Alex Henderson, *All Music Guide*

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-Dick Bogle, *The Skanner*

"The third release by New York-based pianist/composer Ezra Weiss is a sophisticated and optimistic conceptual statement about the search for happiness through original composition, clever references, intimate and nuanced playing, and updating the Great American Songbook with fresh arrangements."

- Eyal Hareuveni, *AllAboutJazz.com*

"If this is what Weiss does with the standards, by all means, let's Get Happy with him. Weiss shows sophistication with the right amount of enthusiasm and as he matures even more, we should see fine things from him."

- Kyle O'Brien, *Jazzscene*

"Young pianist/composer Ezra Weiss intimates years of maturity and an astute comprehension of the jazz vernacular on this affable and stylish effort. In effect, the pianist injects a personalized spin into fabled standards to complement his original works. Weiss's rather optimistic take on progressive jazz is akin to that proverbial breath of fresh air. Unpretentious, and at times dainty yet forceful when required, Weiss takes his sweet time building a theme. No doubt, he doesn't overemphasize and chooses his notes wisely."

- Glenn Astarita, *ejazznews.com*

"It's a mix of original work and material from the Great American Songbook (that means classics from Rogers & Hart and others) that together construct a riff on happiness—just the thing for Clevelanders facing another winter. It's easy and melodious without being predictable."

-Laura Kennelly, *Cool Cleveland*

"Pianist Ezra Weiss is a happening 28-year-old composer... His solo run through the title track (the Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler standard) is a dissonance-filled quickie and a bit of a fun throwdown."

-Karl Stark, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Ezra Weiss is a young pianist who has earned a substantial reputation in the New York area and now his reputation is spreading thanks to CDs such as this... The leader's piano is everywhere, subtly supportive and soloing powerfully and imaginatively, his vivid and complex treatment of 'Get Happy' ably demonstrating his comprehensive grasp of the long tradition of jazz piano."

-Bruce Crowther, *Swing2bop.com*

"We've enjoyed and reviewed Ezra's fantastic piano works before, and were mightily impressed then- as are we on 'Get Happy'... An album that jazz collectors everywhere will want to add to their collection. We rate this work as MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, in the strongest terms possible."

-Rotcod Zzaj, *Improvjazzation Nation*

"On his new CD, Get Happy, pianist Ezra Weiss shows himself to be a swinging musicologist, finding new angles on standards by George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers, while displaying a knowing way around a groove on his originals."

-Michael Harrington, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Weiss' 'For Heather' offers his most impressive ensemble writing. The quintet of Weiss, bassist Corcoran Holt, drummer Jason Brown, tenor saxophonist Kelly Roberge and trombonist Andy Hunter sounds larger than it is. With dissonant intersections, tempo and mood changes, strong motivic development and a lyrical trombone solo, the piece shows why it impressed the ASCAP judges last year."

-Owen Cordle, *News and Observer*

"Super, young lion piano man tears the roof off the sucker with a set about happy, whether original or chestnutcover... Under 30 and already a well decorated player, Weiss is one serious newcomer that's well on his way. A wildly tasty set that opens the ears in the most delightful way."

-Chris Spector, *Midwest Record*

## Ezra Weiss - *Press/Persephone*

"Weiss is representative of a postmodern generation of young composers for the small jazz ensemble (Ryan Cohan, John Hollenbeck, Anthony Wilson are others) that is interested in going beyond the headsolos-head format to more elaborately developed forms."

-Thomas Conrad, *JazzTimes*

"Two pianist-composers who lead small bands - Randy Weston, a veteran jazz master who grew up in the bebop era, and Ezra Weiss, who's still in his twenties - are responsible for this month's winning spins. Despite their obvious differences, both have forged highly personal styles for themselves and their groups."

-George Kanzler, *Hot House Jazz*

"The album has a fine balance, the brighter tunes bringing in a surge of joy, the darker ones not clouding the horizon but revealing some fine material that draws the listener into its pith."

-Jerry D'Souza, *AllAboutJazz.com*

"As a writer, pianist Weiss, not yet 30, has a distinctive persona, bop-rooted but with a contemporary perspective. His attractive, deceptively simple pieces have character, the ensemble voicings beautifully balanced, the performances' proportions right; nothing's overdone. . . . It's his writing which lifts this fine session to another level."

-Ray Comiskey, *The Irish Times*

"The title track is totally gorgeous. . . . Both drummers (who alternate tracks) are more than just time-keepers, and they ensure that Weiss' compositions have that element of strong swing that eludes some classical/jazz mix efforts. Sonics are also first rate."

-John Sunier, *Audiophile Audition*

"On his new album, 'Persephone' (Umoja), the pianist Ezra Weiss proves himself a confident composer and arranger in the progressive mainstream."

-Nate Chinen, *The New York Times*

"Some of the finest (& most intricate/inspiring) jazz you'll hear in 2005 is on this new CD. . . . Mr. Weiss 'digs deep', exploring territory that blues may once have inhabited, but keeps his compositions firmly rooted in jazz forms! I rate this as MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for anyone who wants to hear what 'tomorrow's music' is going to sound like."

-Rotcod Zzaj, *Improvjazzation Nation*

"Ezra Weiss' second studio album shifts with as much light and color as an autumn landscape shrouded by the rays of a harvest moon."

-Celeste Sunderland, *All About Jazz New York*

"[Weiss] is aware that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts which is the essence of good classical chamber music playing and great small group jazz playing as well. It's ultimately also the essence of being a good composer too."

-Frank J. Oteri, *NewMusicBox.org*

"*Persephone* is a release that should be heard by everyone, but especially by those who believe and say, 'Today's musicians are just playing the same old stuff.' I say, 'Oh yeah? Listen to Ezra Weiss.'"

-Dick Bogle, *The Skanner*

"There are sessions that 'sound like' iconic Blue Note and Prestige sessions, while others are like them. Pianist Ezra Weiss' *Persephone* clearly belongs in the latter category. . . . This is DARN good stuff, fans- bright, not just 'straight-ahead' but *looking-ahead* hard bop played with humble spirit and sparkling élan."

-Mark Keresman, *JazzReview.com*

"This is a composer's pensive set, with empathic, superlatively accomplished players. It makes me long to hear these guys jam after hours. Ambitions to record a set entirely of new originals always should be informed by this much thought."

-Robert R. Calder, *AllAboutJazz.com*

"I didn't see this remarkable CD on anybody's 'best of' list, and yet it stands as a perfect statement on how young musicians are dealing with the past to 'make it new.' . . . Weiss sparkles on piano throughout-amazingly so, considering the grand melodies and full arrangements."

-Thomas Staudter, *The Gazette*

"Don't be fooled. He's only playing a few notes, but boy they're the right ones."

-Neil Tesser and Mark Ruffin, *Listen Here! Radio*

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-Scott Yanow, *All Music Guide*

## Ezra Weiss - Press/*The Five A.M. Strut*

"This is not only a great first outing but also one of the more enjoyable recordings of the year. We can only hope that Weiss can keep the standard this high for many years to come."

-Duck Baker, *JazzTimes*

"Portland, Ore.-based pianist Ezra Weiss plays and writes with such remarkable forethought and reach on *The Five A.M. Strut*, it's sobering to think that this was recorded just a year after he finished school."

-Greg Buium, *Downbeat*

"*The Five A.M. Strut* is out of this world..."

-Steve Morse and Steve Greenlee, *The Boston Globe*

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-Dick Bogle, *The Skanner*

"Rarely does a young graduate of a jazz-studies program show the kind of maturity and imagination Ezra Weiss does in *The Five A.M. Strut*. The 23-year-old pianist has put together an expert band to play an all-original set that sparkles throughout."

-Jay Harvey, *The Indianapolis Star*

"This sextet date shows Weiss to be a triple threat; he is skillful as a pianist (Horace Silver, McCoy Tyner, and Cedar Walton are obvious pianistic influences) and he is also talented as a bandleader/arranger and a composer."

-Alex Henderson, *Allmusic.com*

"Newcomer Ezra Weiss, a pianist/composer, comes out of the gates blazing on this sextet recording.... An auspicious debut from the young pianist/composer."

-Dan McClenaghan, *All About Jazz*

"For a jazz piano debut CD collection, this is a knockout of a winner.... Every musician in this collection is topnotch. Every solo is flawless. If you want to hear one of the finest young jazz pianists to come along in a while, catch the debut CD by Ezra Weiss."

-Lee Prosser, *Jazzreview.com*

"It's hard to pin down what makes Weiss' music so distinctive. Perhaps it's that even in the ballads, the tone is upbeat, the outlook positive. The way Weiss writes - passionately, wittily and with respect for his fellow musicians - attests to his talent and appetite for creativity, and suggests a long, enjoyable career."

-Carlo Wolff, *Metroland* and *Cleveland Scene*

"Weiss grew up listening to the likes of Ray Charles, Cannonball Adderly and Carmen McRae, and his music reflects both the soulfulness such influences would suggest and a knack for tart harmonies and clever, eclectic twists."

-Marty Hughley, *The Oregonian*

"Richly evocative and set in extended forms, reminding one at times of Duke Pearson, tunes like 'One for Wendell,' 'A Time for Healing' and 'I Regret' are possessed of a heartfelt urgency all too rare in an artist his age."

-Tim DuRoche, *Willamette Week*

"A sextet with a sexy jazz spirit that woke me up about as well as the 'spresso did.... Absolutely tight playing, from cover to cover... fans the world over will dig this."

-Rotcod Zzaj, *Improvjazzation Nation*

"While many of the tunes are very melodic, I especially dug 'The Clown Feature' - which Weiss originally wrote for a student circus and which reminded me of the San Francisco-based former circus band Kamikazi Ground Crew."

-John Henry, *Audiophile Audition*

"Taking full advantage of the tethered freedom offered jazz by the second great Miles Davis Quintet, Mr. Weiss aggressively addresses the hard bop/post bop paradox with confidence and finesse. This is the assertive spirit, characteristic of the youthful Weiss, which permeates this recording."

-C. Michael Bailey, *All About Jazz*

"If jazz is to escape the iron grip of traditionalists who buy only records with piles of harmonic scales swirling around fauxbop riffs on forgettable tunes that lack any melodic suspense, the research and development that musicians like Weiss are doing is essential."

-Chuck Graham, *The Tucson Citizen*

"He's a thoughtful writer of tunes, which are always a little dark around the edges, even the bumptious titletrack; they come across as highly personal statements..."

-Nate Dorward, *Cadence*