

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



**Pianist BRANDON GOLDBERG  
Proudly Announces His Debut Recording  
*LET'S PLAY!* (Available April 12, 2019)**

**Featuring Brandon Goldberg** (piano, compositions, arrangements), **Ben Wolfe** (bass), **Donald Edwards** (drums)  
& Special Guest **Marcus Strickland** (tenor saxophone)

**NYC CD Release Celebration – March 25 @ Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola**

“When Brandon plays the piano people become delighted with his music, not just jazz appreciators but people, folks. He is a people’s champion. I know, because I have seen him and heard him on several occasions-always knocking out the crowd.”

– **Pianist/Composer Monty Alexander**

What you experience when hearing pianist **Brandon Goldberg** (who turned thirteen in early 2019) on his debut album, *Let's Play!*, is a refined gift, sculpted by years in the woodshed, inspired by pianists recognized by one name, Monk, McCoy, Chick, Bud and others, imbued with a pure love and joy for this music and nurtured by a supportive family - all fortified by the Florida sun!

What one hears frequently when talking about the young Mr. Goldberg, is, “he plays sooo great . . . for any age! . . .”. In fact **Wendy Oxenhorn** (head of the Jazz Foundation of America) stated that, “Brandon’s phrasing and his bigger-than-life -genius makes it hard to believe he is only 13. When he was 10 and performed at our Apollo concert, I went on stage after and asked to see his drivers license because after hearing him play and speak, I thought he had to be 44! Brandon is an old soul who will keep this music alive in the new world.” And, the legendary pianist **Monty Alexander** added emphatically that, “this is a masterful performance for this twelve year old, and not because he’s a twelve year old but because he’s Brandon. Along with all of the cleverness, the sophistication and the tasteful choices, this young man is swinging—swinging hard. Brandon is as affecting as any other new artists appearing on the scene today. I am a fan.”

Equal parts hard work, talent (an other-worldly talent!) and passion are the ingredients for success, and precisely what you have in Goldberg. “I started playing the piano to play the songs I liked in preschool,” he explains, “and my grandma introduced me to a lot of music – Andrea Bocelli at first, then Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack, which led me to check out Tony Bennett with Bill Evans.” Classical studies followed and by age eight Goldberg was studying at The University of Miami and the Litchfield Jazz Camp & Festival. Along the way Goldberg also studied formally and informally with Matt Wilson, Avery Sharpe, Paul Bollenback, Ira Sullivan, Shelly Berg, Chuck Bergeron and Don Braden. He went on to make appearances on the Harrick Connick Jr. show, “Little Big Shots” with Steve Harvey, sitting in with the aforementioned Monty Alexander at Jazz @ Lincoln Center, a performance at several Tedx Talks, and performing Haydn’s Piano Concerto No. 11 with the South Florida Youth Symphony. Regarding Florida, Goldberg follows in the footsteps of many other prominent jazz musicians the Sunshine State has produced, including Cannonball and Nat Adderley, Archie Shepp, Junior Cook, Arturo Sandoval, Ira Sullivan and Marcus and E.J. Strickland.

In conceptualizing *Let's Play!* Goldberg took great care in the selection of music, and his band. “I really love this band. I've got a special connection with both Ben Wolfe (bass) and Donald Edwards (drums) and I'm so honored to be able to call them my friends and sidemen. Dan Miller, who I met at All County Honors Band in Miami, introduced me to Ben when I was starting to put together a band for my record. Ben and I got along immediately. He helped me put the rest of the group together and suggested using Donald on the record (who then nine-year-old Goldberg had played with while sitting in with the Mingus Big Band), and I'm so glad he did. Then, we reached out to Marcus Strickland to play on a few tracks - I was so excited when he said yes! I am so happy to have these incredible musicians on my debut album and I really feel like we all have a special connection on and off the bandstand. I call Ben every two or three days and we talk on the phone for a good half hour. He's always there to help me out with any questions I have musically and he's a really great guy to talk to. I am really into drums and cymbals and that kind of stuff so every time I hang out with Donald I get to geek-out with him. It's such a fun group to play with and I hope you can hear our excitement in the music.”

Brandon elaborated on the band's repertoire, "Back in January 2018 as the recording process continued, I started to really hear our sound as a trio. I had checked out Ben and Donald's records before the recording to know what this trio would sound like and I chose tunes and picked music based on their sounds, and then we figured out, together, what works and what doesn't. I've got a pretty simple way of picking my set lists; I want to play what I would go out and hear as a listener. I want to hear original music along with their interpretation of standards. There is some amazing music out there with all these complex time signatures with these obscure melodies, but I just want to hear and play some music that feels good, meaning music for the heart, not just for the brain. As a trio, we definitely play a few complex charts with constantly changing time signatures, but at the end of the day, they still feel pretty good, and somebody can listen to our music and enjoy themselves without necessarily having to be in a specific state of mind. The music on *'Let's Play!'* reflects and represents what I consider to be my path; being part of a community of musicians bringing our voices to the music, and giving it a new life."

***Let's Play!*** (available worldwide on April 12) **is the premiere album from an energetic, swinging new force on the piano, with a hopeful and happy side note that he happens to be thirteen! Hopeful and happy, because this means we have decades of new music to look forward to from this young artist.**

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**More on the music on *Let's Play!* with Brandon Goldberg (and with excerpts from the album's liner notes by Bob Blumenthal):**

"I knew going in that I wanted to do all of the writing and arranging," Goldberg says. "This was my first chance to put my spin on the music, to display my voice." He has succeeded in a variety of ways, none more striking than his approach to the music of Thelonious Monk. "The more I check out Monk, the more I understand," he notes, and proves the point in two performances that are Monkian in the best sense. On "Well, You Needn't," he avoids the common and frequently overused strategy of reharmonizing familiar material, choosing instead to re-accent the Monk classic in a manner that reveals rhythmic lessons learned. The Goldberg-composed contrafact, "You Mean Me," one of two quartet tracks that displays exactly why Strickland's star has been in ascent for many years now, is rhythmically-reminiscent of "I Mean You" and filters the standard through Goldberg's fertile imagination. The result? A funky, down-home blues that the band has a blast with. "I realized that I should do to one of Monk's tunes what he did to jazz," Goldberg explains.

The other original compositions, "The Understream" (with Goldberg on piano and keyboards, plus Edwards in a featured role) and "McCoy," show other dimensions of the budding composer. "I've always written music, but 'McCoy,' the oldest piece of mine on the album, is the first thing I really felt proud playing," he notes. The piece was inspired when Goldberg presented McCoy Tyner with an award at a Jazz Foundation of America event, and then heard Tyner play a typically dynamic version of "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit." That piece is recalled in this performance, together with a bass introduction by Wolfe that captures the spirit of Tyner's longtime Coltrane Quartet partner Jimmy Garrison.

Other highlights on *Let's Play!* include his solo reading of Duke Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood", complete with the bold introductory figure that the composer employed in his 1962 encounter with John Coltrane. It frankly puts most other versions to shame in terms of both technique and conception. "No one plays 'In a Sentimental Mood' like Coltrane and Ellington played it," Goldberg emphasizes, "and the decision to build a performance off that introductory figure came to me in the moment when I performed in an Ellington concert." He also offers up a lovely version of Ellington and Tizol's "Caravan", with the melody in A section voiced over a tension-building chordal vamp, and an introspective solo from Goldberg on Fender Rhodes. Many jazz musicians have tapped Lennon-McCartney for gems such as "Blackbird", and Goldberg's garden-fresh arrangement is just pure soul food for the ears – put it on repeat and enjoy!

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