

TRUE

Rob Mullins

Live album 2012

Production Credits/Information

Produced by Rob Mullins

Track 1 Rock Paper Scissors 7:19 (Mullins)

Track 2 Sonata Pathetique Movement II 6:58 (Beethoven)

Track 3 Sixth Gear 5:36 (Mullins)

Track 4 My One True Love 4:30 (Mullins)

Track 5 TRUE 4:48 (Mullins)

Track 6 See Jane Run 4:20 (Mullins)

Track 7 Escher's Etude (Live Quartet Version) 6:59 (Mullins)

Track 8 Nightside 6:23 (Mullins)

Track 9 Goodbye Sun 7:36 (Mullins)

Performers

Rob Mullins-piano, composer

Joe Anderies-soprano and tenor saxes, alto flute

Bijou Barbosa-upright bass

Mike Marlier-drums

Production

Recording engineer:

Bob E. Burnham

Mix down engineer:

Rob Mullins

Mastering engineer:

Carmen Grillo for

BIG SURPRISE STUDIOS

Piano Tuner:

Reid Schaefer

Liner Notes by

Scott Yanow

Photos by
Kaitlin Grey Photography

Album art design and direction by
Robert Holt

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Artist website: www.planetmullins.com

Dedicated to: Paul Appelbaum and Drew Daniels-two great friends who left too soon.

Special thanks:

All the members of my family and extended family that have managed to stay off Facebook and have somewhat normal lives, Paul Appelbaum for his great fan support to me for more than 30 years. You are truly missed!

To Robert for being a continuing source of amazement in my life-it is too rare that one gets to experience the genius of one you can call a TRUE friend. To Max March who is hero to many and stranger to those not inworld.

Love you much Max. To Kevin and the staff at Dazzle-you guys are a class act.

To all fans everywhere around the planet and the galaxy-please continue to rock on because there is value in human beings playing in front of other human beings on real instruments. To Keith Taylor and Custom Taylored Studios-thanks for still being there.

To Muse, Megan, Shirley, Kako, Melissa, Barbara-five women I simply cannot live without.

To the Schwartz family, Fullerton College, Greg Woll, Pierre's Fine Pianos, Keyboard Concepts, Roland and Dave Rivard, Brad Harse, Light It Up Blue Aspen and Jill, Ron and Rita, Susan at Laguna Arts Fest. To Michele, Jeff, Colleen, Ken, and all the Denver fans. To the great musicians who played on this record and the fantastic players that I still perform with including Hubert, Tierney, Bernie, Doug, Russell, Jimmy, Joel, and Brian. To Louis for understanding this math and carrying it on to future generations.

To everyone in media, thank you for your very existence. Please spread the word! -Rob Mullins

Liner Notes by Scott Yanow

Throughout his career, Rob Mullins has performed a wide variety of music while being consistently creative and distinctive. He was born in Oklahoma but grew up in Denver where he started playing piano when he was 14. A professional at 16, he built up a career (first in Denver and eventually in the Los Angeles area) as a highly versatile keyboardist, bandleader, composer and educator. Mullins has performed several styles of jazz, pop/jazz, smooth, r&b, funk, classical, and music that falls in between. Whether playing with Spike Robinson, the Crusaders, Kirk Whalum, Branford Marsalis, Ronnie Laws, the Rippingtons, Diane Schuur, Dave Grusin or (most recently) Hubert Laws, he can always be relied upon to infuse the music with his high energy, enthusiasm, impressive musicianship and joyful personality. Recent recordings include Storyteller, the single "A Winter Wish" (a full album with the same name will be coming out during the holiday season of 2012), his 911 Anniversary album from 2011, and a solo piano CD, The Edge Of Dreams.

TRUE is Rob Mullins' 27th album as a leader and a major statement in straight ahead jazz. "I am well known for using computers to create music," says Rob, "but I felt that my listeners, especially new ones, needed to be reminded about what live music sounds like and how good it can sound. We recorded the whole CD in one night, just three hours. Bob E. Burnham is a fantastic live engineer. Once I had a date and players set for the live show, I started writing the material. I finished the writing in a few days and chose a couple of songs from my compositional catalog that I thought these players would do a great job on. We rehearsed the material at 3 p.m. on the day of the show, and made the album starting at 7 p.m. The album was recorded at one of my favorite clubs, Dazzle Jazz Club in Denver. I chose what I felt to be the best performances from the two shows."

For the date, Mullins teamed up with three of Denver's finest jazz musicians, each of whom is also an educator. "Joe Anderies on woodwinds is one of my mentors in Denver. He was responsible for connecting me to George Russell at a crucial time in my musical youth. George had a big impact on me not returning to college and instead going on to start recording my songs. Joe is a North Texas State guy who has always encouraged me to persist with my music. I especially enjoyed playing 'Escher's Etude' with Joe on alto flute as he brings a unique voice to that song as well as to the Beethoven arrangement I did. Bijoux Barbosa is currently the first call bass player in Denver and he and Mike Marlier have been the backbone of my rhythm section whenever I visit Denver. Both are great players who lend their own touch to the material." Performing a set of Rob's

originals, the musicians sound quite comfortable, as if they have been playing these pieces together as a unit for many years. They introduce quite a few songs that also deserve to be performed by other musicians in the future.

TRUE opens with “Rock Paper Scissors,” a modern and at times dark but generally happy bebop swinger in the style of Horace Silver’s “Sister Sadie.” Mullins’ piano is driving, a transition between solos launches Anderies’ soprano, and drummer Marlier gets to have a full chorus before the colorful closing vamp. It is obvious throughout this piece and the ones that follow that the musicians were having a great deal of fun that night at Dazzle.

Rob Mullins’ adaptation of Beethoven’s “Sonata Pathetique Mvmt. II.” retains the classical melody, adds jazz chord voicings, and serves as a tour-de-force for the pianist. “I love Beethoven’s compositional sense. His sections are clear and they blend wonderfully into each other. They ebb and flow naturally and his math is TRUE.” After an impressive solo introduction that sets the mood for the piece, Mullins’ playing is thoughtful while leaving space for some virtuosic runs. Anderies’ alto flute is mostly heard playing the melody while Mullins is in the spotlight throughout this memorable performance.

“Sixth Gear” uses a complex figure played on the piano as the basis for an up tempo romp that combines funk, Latin and fusion with French and blues harmonies. On the follow-up to his earlier song “Fifth Gear,” Mullins’ fiery playing is intense yet logical, and is often echoed by Marlier’s drums. Anderies somehow manages to sound relaxed during his soprano solo, even with the shifting time signatures.

“My One True Love,” a thoughtful ballad with a very attractive melody, could catch on and become a standard in the future. One can certainly imagine it being played at a wedding ceremony. Mullins, Barbosa and Anderies on soprano share the melody statement. The melodic solos that follow add to the performance’s appeal and fit the song title quite well. “The night after recording the album, I stood outside in a snowstorm with the hotel notepad and penned the lyrics. I hope to record the vocal version of the song this year.”

“TRUE,” which was originally titled “Old School Groove,” gives the quartet an opportunity to stretch out on a funky soul jazz number in the vein of Ramsey Lewis or Eddie Harris and Les McCann. Mullins and Anderies on tenor play at their most soulful on this catchy tune.

“See Jane Run,” a witty medium-tempo original, features the quartet jamming a

beboppish blues that hints at Thelonious Monk. Mullins creates a high energy improvisation while Anderies displays his fluency on soprano along with a tone that is a little reminiscent of Steve Lacy.

“Escher’s Etude” was previously recorded by Mullins on his CD ‘Storyteller.’ This new version, which has an impossible and zany melody line, is funky while hinting at the avant-garde, and manages to be both danceable and unpredictable. A musical depiction of artist M.C. Escher’s drawing “The Staircase,” “Escher’s Etude” is mostly a one-chord vamp but also has an irregularly recurring section that is reminiscent of John Coltrane’s ‘Giant Steps.’ The interplay between Anderies’ flute and Mullins is a highlight of this high-powered performance as is Mike Marlier’s outstanding drumming.

“Nightside” (which was formerly titled ‘Very Blue’) is a medium-tempo original with unusual accents that has Anderies excelling on tenor; it is reminiscent of New York City very late at night. TRUE concludes with the celebratory and very soulful ‘Goodbye Sun,’ another song that could be on its way to becoming a standard. “This is my farewell to my mom who passed. It is my vision of her riding off into the sunset smiling like she always did when she heard music.”

Whether being soulful, hard-driving, complex or melodic, Rob Mullins and his quartet are heard at their very best throughout TRUE, Their wide-open brand of jazz is a constant delight.

Scott Yanow, author of ten books including The Jazz Singers, Bebop, Jazz On Film and Jazz On Record 1917-76

COMPOSER'S NOTES by Rob Mullins

Each time I write my notes on a new album project, I have to look back at what I've done, assess where I am currently, and look into the future and do so as honestly as possible. This time looking back I saw on the album art for “Soulscape” (1985) RME 1005 I wrote the words "for those who dare to seek and speak the truth."

Composers and musicians are always looking for truth in music. This is how we express ourselves. This is why we are constantly working on what we do because when we get better, we feel the truth in that. When our music touches people and we hear from them, we feel the truth in that.

In 2012, we live in a world where it is almost impossible to identify what is really TRUE. I have spent many years trying to understand what is TRUE and what is

not TRUE. Here is what I believe:

1. Truth exists in art. Good art will speak to you and change you if you give it a chance.
2. Truth exists in realistic self-assessment. You can change yourself in a positive way if you will face your own personal truth.
3. Truth exists in books. Read as much as you possibly can and find out what is true for you. Build your life on that.
4. Truth is essential. Without facing the truth, you may live in self - deception which is dangerous.
5. Truth trumps personality. While you may find certain things TRUE for you personally, you also need to understand what universal truth is.
6. Much if not most of what you will hear and be exposed to during your lifetime will not be TRUE. We all need to learn how to tell the difference.
6. Being too honest can hurt people so be careful when you speak your truth. Other people can lose their minds.
7. Humans bringing truth to the masses are usually persecuted, suppressed, and often killed during their lifetimes. If their truth holds, they become legendary and inspirational with time.

It is my hope that what you will hear when you listen to the music will be TRUE for you. When I listen to this music, it is the most honest sound I have ever heard or made. As I look to the future, I will continue to search for what is TRUE for me and put it into my music.”

Rob Mullins
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Washington Blvd. #107 Marina Del Rey CA 90292 info@planetmullins.com