

**GOING FOR ADDS 5/16/2018**

**FILE: JAZZ**  
**RECOMMENDED TRACKS**  
**1,3, 5, 6, 8,11,12**

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**SONIC PORTRAITS JAZZ PRESENTS**  
**FRANK RUSSELL**  
**INFLUENCES**  
 (A TRIBUTE TO BASS GUITAR IN JAZZ)

Chicago electric bassist, Frank Russell is widely respected and established as one who commands the instrument with fluidity while providing solid anchoring. With the release of "Influences", however, Russell expands his skill sets into the areas of creative conceptualist, consummate executive producer, and intuitive project producer as the orchestrator and builder of a musical metropolis cleverly masked as a CD."

Frank methodically built his structure on the same solid ground from which he, himself sprouted; as a prominent branch from the roots of seminal jazz electric bassists whom he, ingeniously, pays homage to. As a leader and visionary, Frank instinctively built a strong and experienced team of creative collaborators whom he enabled to masterfully seize his vision- nurturing it into a monumental historical, musical chronicle in tribute to the astute emissaries of The Electric bass. Frank recently broke the barriers for electric bass performance at the Chicago Jazz Festival and is a strong proponent for the wider acceptance of the electric bass among jazz purists as an under-appreciated instrument in jazz. We are honored to have been a part of his team and proud that this amazing project carries the label imprint of Sonic Portraits Jazz.

Frank Russell performed for six-years with the 21-time Grammy Award Winning group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo (as a bassist and background vocalist). He has also performed with jazz luminaries, Freddie Hubbard, Ramsey Lewis, Alphonse Mouzon, Wallace Roney, Willie Pickens, Ari Brown and many others. Frank has also recorded five CDs with Chicago guitarist Henry Johnson and is a past recipient of the Hennessy Best of Chicago Jazz Search with the Ken Chaney Xperience.

Frank's debut CD, "Covering All Bases", was released in 2005 with his sophomore follow-up, "Circle Without End" released in 2011 on the Sonic Portraits Jazz label. His current release, "Influences" features new arrangements of some of the most iconic recordings by Frank's bass heroes, revitalized with fresh new sonic treatments including; Stanley Clarke's "Quiet Afternoon", Herbie Hancock's "Actual Proof" (in tribute to bassist Paul Jackson) and Pat Metheny's "Bright Size Life" (in tribute to legendary bassist, Jaco Pastorius). Closing the recording is the title track, written and narrated by Frank Russell taking on the styles of these bassist. The recording features some world renowned musicians including; Wallace Roney - trumpet, Henry Johnson - guitar, vocalist - Dee Alexander and Robert Irving III who collaborated with the legendary Miles Davis as composer, arranger, producer, keyboardist and musical director.

**FEATURED MUSICIANS**

**Frank Russell**

- Lead, Fretless & 5-String Bass Guitars; Vocals - 5, 7, 9, 13**
- Dee Alexander - Vocals - 5, 6, 7**
- Wallace Roney - Trumpet - 1, 3, 6**
- Robert Irving III - Acoustic Piano/Fender Rhodes - 1, 6**
- Vijay Tellis-Nayak - Keys - 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13**
- Greg Spero - Keys - 3, 8, 11, 12, 13**
- Henry Johnson - Guitar - 1, 3, 6**
- Marco Villarreal - Guitar - 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13**
- Khari Parker - Drums - 2, 3, 8, 9, 12**
- Makaya McCraven - Drums - 1, 6, 11, 13**
- Charles Heath - Drums - 4, 5, 7, 10**
- Tony Carpenter - Percussion**
- Tim McNamara**
- Tenor Saxophone / Flute / Alto Flute / Bass Clarinet**
- John McClellan - Flugelhorn - 5**



**FEATURING:**  
 DEE ALEXANDER  
 ROBERT IRVING III  
 HENRY JOHNSON  
 WALLACE RONEY  
 and more

SPJ1226

MIDTEMPO FUSION  
 MIDTEMPO CONTEMPORARY  
 UPTEMPO FUSION  
 RUBATO PRELUDE  
 BALLAD VOCAL  
 BALLAD WORDLESS VOCAL  
 WORLD VOCAL  
 MIDTEMPO CONTEMPORARY  
 6/4 FEEL CONTEMPORARY  
 FUSION GUITAR  
 CONTEMPORARY ART PIECE  
 UPTEMPO FUSION  
 SPOKEN WORD THEME SONG

- 01. DECOY (8:53)** - (In tribute to Darryl Jones)  
 Composer/Arranger: Robert Irving III,  
 Published by: VitAsia Music Publishing Co/BMI  
**SOLOISTS:** Frank Russell bass guitar, Henry Johnson guitar,  
 Robert Irving III Fender Rhodes Piano, Wallace Roney trumpet
- 02. AFFIRMATION (6:26)** - (In tribute to Stanley Banks)  
 Composer: Jose Feliciano; arranged by Vijay Tellis-Nayak  
 Published by: COLGEMS EMI MUSIC INC, C/O SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING  
**SOLOISTS:** Vijay Tellis Nayak piano, Frank Russell bass guitar,  
 Frank Russell fretless bass
- 03. ACTUAL PROOF (7:30)** - (In tribute Paul Jackson)  
 Composer: Herbie Hancock; arranged by Greg Spero  
 Published by: Hancock Music Company  
**SOLOISTS:** Greg Spero-piano, Henry Johnson guitar, Wallace Roney trumpet
- 04. ROSALIND'S DREAMS INTRO (1:18)**  
 Composers: V. Tellis-Nayak, F. Russell  
 Published by: Four Franks Sound
- 05. ROSALIND'S DREAMS (6:49)**  
 Composers/Arranged by Frank Russell, Vijay Tellis-Nayak  
 Published by: Four Franks Sound  
**SOLOISTS:** Vijay Tellis Nayak piano, Frank Russell bass guitar, Vijay Tellis Nayak synth
- 06. TUTU (6:26)** - (In tribute to Marcus Miller)  
 Composer: Marcus Miller; arranged by Robert Irving III  
 Published by: Thriller Miller Music C/O WB MUSIC CORP.  
**SOLOISTS:** Wallace Roney trumpet, Dee Alexander scat, Henry Johnson guitar,  
 Robert Irving III keys, Frank Russell bass guitar
- 07. LADYSMITH SING OF JOY (2:04)**  
 Composer/Arranger: Frank Russell  
 Published by: Four Franks Sound  
**SOLOISTS:** Vijay Tellis Nayak synth, Frank Russell bass guitar.
- 08. BRIGHT SIZE LIFE (6:37)** - (In tribute to Jaco Pastorius)  
 Composers: Pat Metheny; Arranged by Greg Spero  
 Published by: Pat Meth Music Corp  
**SOLOISTS:** Tim McNamara sax, Frank Russell bass guitar, Greg Spero keys
- 09. QUIET AFTERNOON (5:08)** - (In tribute to Stanley Clarke)  
 Composer: Stanley Clarke; Arranged by Frank Russell  
 Published by: Clarkee Music C/O Songs of Universal, Inc  
**SOLOISTS:** Frank Russell bass guitar, Tim McNamara flute
- 10. PERETUAL (6:44)**  
 Composer: M. Villarreal  
 Published by: VILLAREAL MUSIC/ASCAP  
**SOLOISTS:** Marco Villarreal guitar, Vijay Tellis Nayak keys
- 11. HILLS (5:24)**  
 Composer: Greg Spero  
 Published by: GREG SPERO MUSIC/ASCAP  
**SOLOISTS:** Frank Russell bass guitar, Greg Spero keys
- 12. SHELVY MEETS LILLIE (5:38)**  
 Composers/Arrangers: Frank Russell, Greg Spero  
 Published by: Four Franks Sound  
**SOLOISTS:** Greg Spero keys, Tim McNamara sax, Marco Villarreal guitar
- 13. INFLUENCES (5:32)**  
 Composers/Arrangers: Frank Russell, Greg Spero  
 Published by: Four Franks Sound  
**SOLOISTS:** Frank Russell bass guitar, Greg Spero keys, Marco Villarreal guitar



**CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR  
FRANK RUSSELL  
INFLUENCES**



**APRIL 2018 CD REVIEW**

To figure out the motivation behind veteran electric bassist, Frank Russell's new album, *Influences*, all you have to do is play the final, title cut, where Russell recites a list of his, well, influences that include the cream of the 70's-80's fusion players: "Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, [his friend] Daryl Jones, Paul Jackson, Stanley Banks." Just a few bars into "Decoy," I am transported back into the golden era of fusion bass, when Pastorius, Clarke, and Alphonso Johnson led the way toward players like Jackson, Miller, and (personal fave) Gerald Veasley. Everything is in place: the sharp, insistent, muscular, voluble, scattling Russell bass chatter; the shimmering synth comping from Miles-vet Robert Irving III; the clarion clarity and insistent, Miles-like presence of

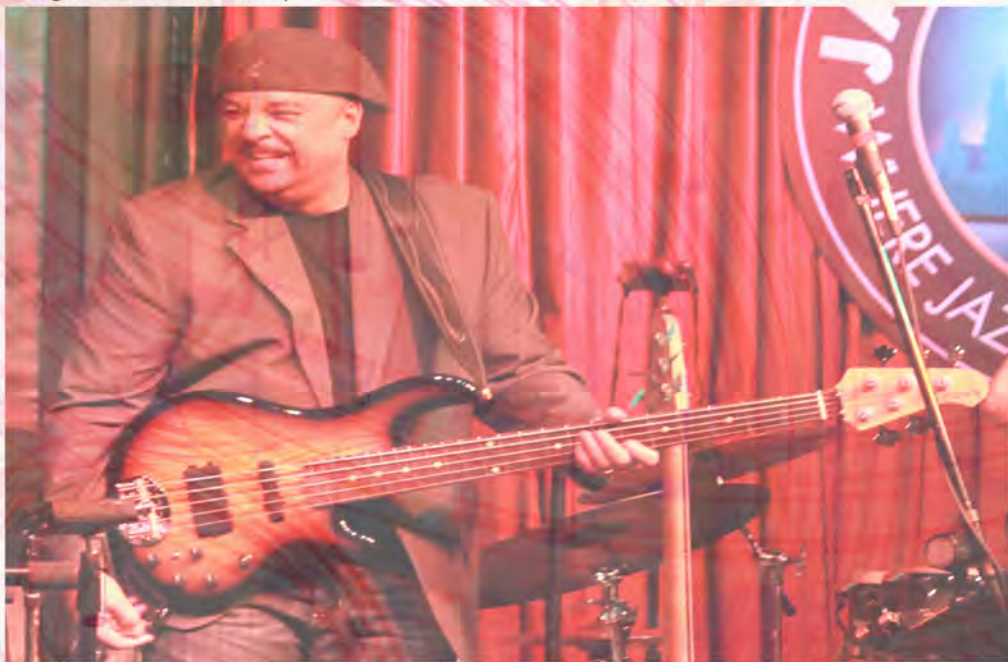
(who else?) Wallace Roney; the tapping and dramatic fills from Makaya McCraven. Irving's exquisite acoustic piano and Henry Johnson's lightly-picked but loquacious guitar runs help recreate what many of us liked about that 70's period, when two worlds, electric and acoustic, fused. Russell's new album shamelessly celebrates this time, providing richly textured performances and production that remind us how much jazz benefited from that period.

As witnessed by the celebrated jazz fusion program at Columbia College, and testified by young musicians turned on by Robert Glasper and Christian Scott's *Stretch Music*, fusion-ist sounds are making a comeback. People like Frank

these newbies where Glasper's ideas, at least, were germinated. *Influences* covers the gamut from classic Fusion to more enlightened Smooth Jazz. Russell's impeccable chops and production savvy make this album less a tribute and more a celebration. Each piece has nuances that tie the performances to the sophisticated studio works that dominated the original era. The guitar plays a huge part of the comeback. Besides the assortment of Russell's double-tracked Lakland basses on many tunes, the voluble contribution of Marco Villarreal dominates a significant portion and Chicago's Johnson adds tasty notes during three songs. Almost as a nod to that "other" guitar, Villarreal gets to show off on his composition "Perpetual." Memories of fusion guitar heroes come to play here, as Russell takes a relative back seat to the arpeggios.

Besides "Decoy," the title cut provides goose bumps of memory for fusion lovers. Essentially a jam, Russell lays down a funky beat while tap dancing over it, pushed by frenetic synth work from keyboardists Greg Spero and co-producer Vijay Tellis-Nayak, with energetic support from McCraven. After a Russell solo and additions from Spero, Villarreal enters the fray with expressions that reflect the angularity of Dean Parks and Scott Henderson.

Throughout, Russell waxes eloquently in whatever language is employed. Check out his exquisite expression in Spero's composition "Hills," that support-cast presence in "Perpetual," and the understated, rock solid underpinning behind McNamara and Tellis-Nayak on Jose Feliciano's "Affirmation," which should be touted on any smart Smooth Jazz station. The same could be said about "Quiet Afternoon," a relatively placid piece featuring McClellan on flute, embellished by Khari Parker's intricate but slightly restless drumming.



Besides "Decoy," "Tutu," and "Influences," this reviewer was drawn to the dynamic playing on "Hills," where Villarreal shines as an avatar of late 80's fusion guitar and McCraven mirrors Dennis Chambers as a drummer you can't ignore. Repeated listening to *Influences* reveals the depth and experience of its performers, a nod to the production expertise of Russell and Tellis-Nayak. Unless one is averse to the world of fusion or to the quality of its representatives, *Influences* will be a gift that keeps on giving to the tasteful jazz fan and an incentive to young jazz fans to check out those influences for themselves.

**PEER REVIEWS**

*"The songs Frank selected, and the arrangements of them are very unique and engaging, as well as the original compositions. I can honestly say that it's because they are groovin' HARD! his band is another milestone in his career. His fan base should double when they hear this CD, because he is clearly grooving on all cylinders!"* **HENRY JOHNSON**

*"This album is Frank's heartfelt tribute to the influences these great players had on him. He has been very wise in choosing some songs that were not originally bass features. This has allowed him to bring verdant arrangements to the songs that are well known vehicles for great artists on instruments other than bass guitar. This music on the record is filled with creativity, chance taking and love. All traits that Frank and my favorite bass heroes displayed in their playing and on their recordings."* **DARRYL JONES**