



## Bassist Mark Wade Releases Solo Record *Songs From Isolation*

Bassist **Mark Wade** has gained international recognition with his trio and their 2015 debut recording *Event Horizon* and 2018 follow up *Moving Day*. The popular New York bassist is a three-time Downbeat Magazine Reader's Poll finalist.

For his 2020 release, *Songs From Isolation*, Wade steps out on his own to present a unique solo project. The five selections included in this offering are comprised of music performed solely on the acoustic and electric bass. Each song is accompanied by a music video. Wade produced the music and videos at home during the Covid-19 lockdown in New York City in Spring 2020. The result is a deeply personal expression of music-making that breaks new ground in Wade's musical evolution.

The pandemic brought an end to live music around the globe and forced musicians to use technology to keep their creative juices flowing and continue to perform. While many musicians have taken to combining remotely recorded tracks to create a virtual "band," Wade sought a different approach: "I thought this would be the time to try a solo bass project. It's something I always had in the back of my mind and wanted to try - but I never seemed to find the time for. It's a great challenge for any bass player to have to carry the whole show on their own. This project has been a great creative outlet for me at a time when there wasn't much happening."

To create the music for this visual album, he draws on the full range of sounds that the acoustic and electric bass can produce. Wade creates the sound of a full ensemble by using the acoustic bass in its traditional role, playing melodies, grooves, and solos. He adds the texture of percussion by hitting the body of the bass in different ways. Bowed bass parts at various times add a cello-like quality to the sound. Wade further expands the sonic landscape by adding electric bass to the mix, a first for his recordings. "My first love was the electric bass, and I've always seen myself as both an electric and acoustic bass player." His approach on the electric is varied. He sometimes comps like a guitar player, plays upper register harmonics, or solos with different delays and distortion applied to the sound.

The music, however, is only half the story. The videos that accompany each song are an integral part of the project and new form of expression for the artist. "When we went on lockdown, I decided to dive into the process and learn some higher-level video techniques." The use of video became part of the process of interpreting the music itself. Growing up on MTV and music videos, he was always amazed at how his perception of a song changed from hearing it on

the radio to seeing it on video. Video can help impart a certain feeling toward the music. Wade finds this process “fascinating.”

***Songs From Isolation*** begins with “Hours Til Dawn”. The tune that shifts between a straight-eighth feel and swing feel in 3/4. The melody is played with the unusual pairing of unison acoustic and electric bass in the upper register while Wade’s bowing provides a signature cello sound at key moments. “To me, this song makes me think of the sensation of flying or floating through air,” Wade says, and the video reflects this idea by prominently displaying scenes of the sky, sometimes even superimposing a summer sky indoors through visual effects.

“Intents and Purposes” is less a traditional jazz form and more of a collection of four musical vignettes, stitched together with common visual elements. In the opening vignette, electric bass harmonics and a poignant bowed bass solo create an ethereal mood. Wade improvises over four distinct areas, sometimes with the bow and sometimes with the more typical jazz fingerstyle sound. Visual effects keep the viewer give air of uncertainty.

In the whimsically titled “A Conspiracy of Lemurs,” the camera follows Wade around his neighborhood absorbed by his smartphone. This tune features a deep funk groove and slick melody, pairing electric and acoustic bass. Wade trades solos with himself on both basses and viewer gets a close look at how the rhythm parts are created.

“Blues in Isolation” is an all-acoustic bass affair filmed early in the New York City lockdown. It features a heavier visual style paired with a slower, quirky groove over a blues form. Wade’s bowed bass interjects with backgrounds and melodies to help uplift this swinging offering.

In “Nothing Like You”, Wade is joined by his wife, vocalist **Teri Leggio Wade**, in paying tribute to the late **Bob Dorough**. They perform Gil Evans’ arrangement of the 1967 Miles Davis release **Sorcerer**. This particular arrangement was always a favorite of Wade’s, and the fit for this set was obvious as Evans’ original version does not include piano. Teri Leggio Wade’s vocals channel Dorough’s panache on this short, quirky tune while Wade’s bowing fills in for the horn parts that frame the vocal line. Filmed on the couple’s wedding anniversary, this lighthearted video reveals some rapid costume changes by the performers.

Mark Wade was born on December 29, 1974, outside Detroit in Livonia, MI. He moved to New Jersey as a child. He began his path in music by teaching himself to play the electric bass at the age of 14. He attended New York University, studying with renowned bassist **Mike Richmond**, who encouraged him to take up acoustic bass for jazz and to hone his bow technique and sight-reading abilities in order to better play European classical music. He received a B.A. in music with a concentration in jazz in 1997.

Wade considers Richmond, whose extensive resume includes work with Stan Getz, Jack DeJohnette, Lee Konitz, and Mingus Dynasty, a major influence, along with Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, Scott LaFaro, Michael Moore, and Red Mitchell.

Wade has spent nearly 25 years as a professional bassist in New York City and has performed in many of the great New York concert halls and clubs, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Blue Note, Birdland, and many others. He has also played in Europe and the United Kingdom. In 2012, Wade performed with jazz great Jimmy Heath as part of his "Four Black Immortals" East Coast tour. He has played with other notable jazz artists such as James Spaulding, Eddie Palmieri, Conrad Herwig, Harry Whitaker, Pete McGuinness, Peter Eldridge, Don Byron, and he appeared on The Today Show with Stacey Kent. Wade is a faculty member of the jazz department at Lehigh University.

***Songs From Isolation*** will get its debut performance as part of a streaming concert series from the Centre for Jazz and Popular Music in Durban, South Africa on August 12th, 2020. The album will be released worldwide on AMP Music & Records on September 18th, 2020.

## **Songs From Isolation (AMP Music & Records)**

**Street Date:** 18 September, 2020

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