

Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL

The Twilight Fall

Browntasaurus Records

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This album, the first full-length release from Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL, represents a collection of 10 original big band compositions, the complexity of which is often masked by the lyrical melody-driven orchestration style of its in-demand leader. The Twilight Fall is a uniquely singular entity meant to be digested as a whole and Chelsea has included a "Compositional Narrative" in these liners so listeners can read first-hand how she conceives this musical journey.



Highly regarded composer, arranger, and conductor Daniel Jamieson was asked to write this album's liner notes. He is a highly acclaimed figure in the large ensemble community in North America and abroad, and his depth of knowledge of both Chelsea and this style of big band orchestration made him an apt choice for this recording's commentary. Below he thoughtfully dissects the album.

Not Just An Album, But A Life Cycle...

By Daniel Jamieson

When the topic of young, talented composers arises, Chelsea McBride's name is always part of that discussion. This is what inspired me to reach out to her in 2013, when I needed someone keen to learn to assist me as a copyist for my own projects. She eventually came to study composition with me for the better part of a year, and has been my right hand ever since. I'm sure many teachers will echo these sentiments about their students, but it has been a true pleasure watching her own artistry grow over the years. Just two years ago, she won the Toronto Arts Foundation "Emerging Jazz Artist Award", the first of its kind, and I feel sure that marks the first in a long line of accolades this young composer will be awarded in coming years. At the time of this writing, I had not heard any of the works recorded on this CD until after the mixing process was complete and was struck by how much each song envelops fresh musical thoughts and ideas.

The Twilight Fall is much more than a collection of individual songs. It is a timeline, a life-cycle, and a journey unto itself. Part of my goal with these liner notes is to illuminate many of the thoughtful mechanisms Chelsea employs as not just a composer -- but as a primordial story-teller. This recording is an aural expedition through life, from birth to death. Each tune has its own narrative and Chelsea is known, during her live shows,

for taking time to frame each song accordingly, often asking her audience to close their eyes and envision a scene before the band launches into the musical gestation of those words. For example, on the reprise of "Ambleside", she states: "You are young again, on a flat white beach as it rains out of a low sky. You are alone, but never lonely", and then continues to weave a storyline that acts as a backdrop for the music to come. Such narratives are typical fare for this record as each track takes you on a journey through time and space, starting at birth with "Ambleside" and journeying the listener forward in time from track to track all the way to "Something Simple" which -- as Chelsea states -- "and finally, at the end of a long journey, you are 73. And you are home".

Compositionally, each track is influenced by a fascinating variety of source material -- from sci-fi space operas, to a day on transit, to the death of a best friend -- demonstrating a level of emotional depth and technical sophistication of someone well beyond Chelsea's years. Musically, many of the tunes are very challenging to execute, setting the bar exceptionally high for her players. Chelsea's musicians form a hand-picked cross-section of some of the finest 20-somethings in the Toronto jazz community, many of whom are all coming up fast in that city's vibrant scene, standing side by side a handful of award-winning veterans to round out her team's cross-generational roster. On this recording, the soloists in particular show great proficiency in bringing the imagery of each composition to life, all while still adding their own personal touch.

Let's take a closer look at this recording:

The Twilight Fall

01) Ambleside (2:45) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Chelsea McBride (tenor sax), Alex Samaras (vocals)

Ambleside opens the recording gently, boldly setting the tone for the entire disc, dispensing entirely with any flashy flag-waving intros typical of the genre. In Chelsea's Compositional Narrative she states "you are ageless, on a flat white beach... you are simply - alone". That forlorn feeling of aloneness pervades the entire track, enhanced by the concisely restrained work of the gorgeous duet between Chelsea's tenor sax and Chris Bruder's piano that seamlessly transitions into Alex Samaras' voice. On my first listen, I quickly glanced to see who wrote the lyrics and was pleasantly surprised to find that Chelsea herself had penned them, adding to the depth of the narrative. The piece ends with an unanswered question left to be explored throughout the remaining tracks.

02) Intransitory (7:35) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Colleen Allen (alto sax), David Riddel (guitar), Geoff Bruce (drums)

Orontonians will immediately recognize the 3 opening tones of Intransitory as the same bell-tones subway travelers hear daily while using the Toronto Transit Commission's underground metro system. This tune, like any train ride, is always in

motion. After Chris Bruder's dancing piano intro, I recognized Colleen Allen's robust tone right away, paired with David Riddel's delicate guitar. Chelsea's use of short, biting note sequences before larger melody statements is particularly provocative. The tune as a whole combines angular, melodic minor melody and modal harmony superimposed over an ever-shifting odd meter (much of the tune changes meter every few bars, deepening that feeling of propulsion). Colleen's tasteful solo fits the vibe of the piece extremely well while David's energized guitar solo galvanizes the ensemble to new heights. The tune builds through Geoff Bruce's frenetically powerful drum solo concluding softly, again with the subway's 3 tones -- now played dissonantly -- bringing the momentum to an end.

03) The Twilight Fall (9:11) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: David Riddel (guitar), Brownman Ali (trumpet), Colleen Allen (alto sax)

The album's title track The Twilight Fall is one of the most strikingly vivid tunes on the recording. In live shows, Chelsea often asks her audience to first imagine a 6-year old version of themselves falling through a purple sky with orange clouds, and then envision themselves in the middle of a rather unsettling, bordering on terrifying scene, surrounded by a broken down Ferris wheel, an abandoned carousel and presented with the machinery that controls these artifacts (depicted beautifully on the album cover by artist Arthur Ikuta). This track is curiosity running headlong into madness, and I encourage the listener to close their eyes and imagine that scene while listening. Starting deceptively as a contemporary jazz waltz, whose melody is passed from saxophones to a small collective of flugel, alto, tenor and guitar, I particularly enjoy the creative use of trombones after the initial opening statement. The tune's focus jumps between minor keys unexpectedly, gradually settling into a serene bossa-nova-like groove setting up a thoughtful solo by David Riddel on guitar. But the serenity quickly comes to a close and chaos starts to rain down from all instruments, heralding Brownman Ali's solo trumpet entry. What begins as a chaotic rubato exchange between soloist and orchestra quickly increases in energy and tempo through Chelsea's use of a circus-like waltz. Listen for the haunting voices throughout this section. The final statement of the melody concludes with a beautiful exchange between Colleen's brightly-tinted alto and Brownman's dark-toned trumpet. The track fades slowly, leading the listener to the next stop on their journey.

04) Smooth (or What I Should Have Said Instead) (7:39) by Chelsea McBride

Solo: Chelsea McBride (tenor sax)

Head-bobbing from the start, it was evident that Smooth was influenced by artists such as Stevie Wonder, Kurt Elling, and Vince Mendoza. The funky bass clarinet lines and ultra-groovy sax soli help illustrate the story of a broken but optimistic heart looking to rekindle lost love. In the Compositional Narrative Chelsea writes "... and you

find yourself trying to make amends with the one person you wanted to see least". Listen for the clever lyrics, Alex Samaras' deft execution of the words, and the strong group saxophone work, building to Chelsea's soulful tenor solo. As one of the few tracks that features Chelsea on saxophone, her ability to tone-paint, shape, and colour throughout her solo is on display in spades. One last verse to wrap the track up and the tune concludes with a final mighty proclamation of "smooth!" from Alex backed by strong brass work. I found this track to be one of the highlights of the CD.

05) Spirits (3:45) by Chelsea McBride

Solo: Alex Samaras (voice)

Contrasting Smooth, which was written from the perspective of a 21 year old -- in Spirits, the listener is now 27 and filled with "crushing existential dread". This track continues the story of Smooth utilizing a Broadway style 'playoff' to begin the track, before quickly veering away from the funky vibe of the previous track into more darting, shadowy minor development. Listen for the exciting counterpoint between the brass and drummer Geoff Bruce.

06) Arrival Of The Pegasus (7:58) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Chris Bruder (piano), William Carn (trombone)

Chelsea's Compositional Narrative would have you imagine yourself as a 39 year old about to introduce your daughter to an inspiring force in your world -- science fiction. As Battlestar Galactica fans around the globe will already know Arrival of the Pegasus was written as a tribute to the moment the Battlestar Pegasus arrives to save the Galactica in S03E04. This track's notes are a tip of the hat to the show's opening theme. As an avid Trekkie and BSG fan myself, I was delighted to see Chelsea taking inspiration from this series. The tune showcases an interesting contrast between Geoff's up-tempo drum'n'bass approach and the often languid over-the-barline melodic statements, making for an energized ride. Chris Bruder is the first soloist into the fray, building thoughtful lines with his right hand. The torch is then passed to William Carn, whose feverish, maniacal expositions are exactly what this tune needs. The main theme returns, this time surrounded by dense accompaniment before coming to a fast close.

07) Foot In Mouth (9:49) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Anthony Rinaldi (tenor sax)

Foot In Mouth has the listener now at 54, re-living the "good old days". Its slickness is palpable and Chelsea's knack for writing hip even-8th grooves is impressive. Geoff Bruce's killer back-beat cross-stick, coupled with Steven Falk's nimble upright bass work drives this tune from the start, while the saxophone section delivers laid-back figures that are right in the pocket. Another head-bobbing toe-tapper from start to finish, with an interesting accelerating 3/4 section tucked into the middle of the tune as

a vehicle for Anthony Rinaldi's swinging solo. The next section features brass writing that made me think of the Beatles' horn arrangements. This section quickly concludes with a fast return to the original super-funkified groove as the tune winds down with a blistering exchange between Dave Riddel's guitar and Anthony's tenor.

08) In Dreams (5:23) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Brownman Ali (trumpet), Patrick Smith (tenor sax)

In Dreams marks the return of Alex Samaras, to continue the story at 65, now faced with the imminent death of one's best friend. This hauntingly melancholic tune sees Chelsea borrowing ideas from Disney and Broadway's rich palette, but with a contemporary jazz twist. This track makes the entire orchestra's beautiful ensemble playing its centerpiece, with the skilled woodwind section creating a stunning romantic atmosphere. Pensive vocal verses alternate with wistful orchestral melodies before Brownman Ali's flugelhorn soars briefly to the fore, just moments away from engaging tenor saxophonist Patrick Smith in a stirring 2-man exchange. Alex's vocal return builds to a grand tutti, closing off the moving narrative, as the band quietly tapers to its natural end. This tune leaves this listener's ear longing for more.

09) Ambleside (reprise) (1:50) by Chelsea McBride

Solos: Alex Samaras (vocals)

Ambleside returns with a fresh dark perspective, this time hinting at odiousness. Alex's nuanced vocalization is a standout on this short track, as is the dynamic ensemble work. This work reiterates that these compositions were intended to be heard together, as one piece with ten distinct movements.

10) Something Simple (6:28) by Chelsea McBride

Solo: Chelsea McBride (tenor sax)

Something Simple brings Chelsea's story-arc to a close, her final Compositional Narrative statement being "and finally, at the end of a long journey, you are 73. And you are home". This track is, as the title states, a joyful finale that celebrates the life-cycle depicted with one last head-bobbing straight-8th groove-based tune peppered with odd meter-phrasing amidst a singable melody. A powerful saxophone soli transitions out of Alex Samaras's vocals building steadily towards a passionate solo from Chelsea on tenor. Her solo ends with Alex's voice re-entering for a last verse, before rising once again towards the memorable concluding chorus. The closing moments of this tune, and this record feature Chelsea exuberantly interacting with her band, who clap along with her (in 7/8 no less) right up to the final moments of this journey.

This record is extremely well thought-out. The purposefulness of this young composer's intents are always at the fore, and I was continually impressed with the depth of expression on display throughout this CD. Congratulations must be given to the entire production team, whose attention to detail and fidelity is evident. Chelsea has put together a group of first-class artists whose unique voices and high-end ensemble performance serve to enhance her evocative compositions. The single most resonant ethos at work here is that although the compositions have an overarching well thought-out narrative, they also function independently of one another, and can stand alone with authority. This disc puts Chelsea McBride and her Socialist Night School on the map as a new exciting voice in the contemporary music world.

-- Daniel Jamieson | Dec 2016, New York

Daniel Jamieson is originally from Toronto, Canada. He currently works as a freelance composer, conductor, woodwind specialist, and educator, and is proud to serve as Staff Arranger for The United States Army Field Band. Daniel's commissions span a variety of styles including jazz, pop, and musical theatre. Daniel's acclaimed 2011 debut release, Sudden Appearance, featuring his Danjam Orchestra, placed him at the forefront of current big band leaders. The project was produced by Jim McNeely and featured John Riley on drums. Since then, Daniel has attained international recognition for his work as a composer, arranger, and conductor. Daniel has conducted concerts, radio broadcasts, recordings, and television broadcasts. He has collaborated with Joe Lovano, Joshua Redman, Kurt Elling, Marcus Miller, Ingrid Jensen, Anthony Hamilton, Dave Young, Guido Basso, Vince Mendoza, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the WDR Big Band, and the Metropole Orchestra.

About the SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL

Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL is a 19-piece jazz orchestra led by composer and multi-instrumentalist Chelsea McBride. This contemporary modern big band is a unique cross-generational collective of Toronto based musicians where award-winning veterans like William Carn, Colleen Allen & Brownman Ali stand next to the city's hottest jazz 20-somethings. Bandleader Chelsea McBride's complex original compositions have been called "picturesque", "cinematic" & "joyful" by media, and are influenced by the lineage of Bob Brookmeyer, Maria Schneider & Darcy James Argue. The Socialist Night School is a story-telling vehicle for McBride's evocative writing style. Chelsea is described as "a fresh new voice on the Canadian jazz scene" by saxophonist and composer Andy Ballantyne.

About Chelsea McBride

Driven by an endless need for expressing herself creatively, young composer and multi-instrumentalist Chelsea McBride has burst onto the Toronto jazz scene. Still only 24, McBride has performed at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival, Beaches Jazz Festival and the Rex Hotel. Born and raised in Vancouver B.C., Chelsea was surrounded and fascinated by music. She started playing piano at the age of 3, and saxophone throughout elementary school. By the end of high school she had already performed in competitions at provincial and national levels. In 2014, she graduated from the Humber Bachelor of Music program in Toronto, ON and was the first recipient of the Toronto Arts

Foundation's Emerging Jazz Artist award. Chelsea has additionally studied with acclaimed musicians David Occhipinti, Darcy James Argue and Mike Allen. Whether it's her big band (Chelsea McBride's Socialist Night School), her pop-fusion band (Chelsea and the Cityscape), her jazz trio (Chelsea McBride Group), or her video game cover band (Koopa Troop), Chelsea is a diverse musician who refuses to stay in one creative box.

www.CrymMusic.com for more info.

About BROWNTASOURAS RECORDS

Initially formed in 2009 as a singular home to trumpet player Brownman Ali's 7 various ensembles, the flagship release for the label was Brownman Electryc Trio's "Juggernaut", with several recordings that previously appeared on other labels being re-issued. In 2015 Brownman opened the doors to other ensembles which showcased his trumpet playing, but for whom he was not a leader. All of the ensembles on the label -- CRUZAO & BROWNMEN ELECTRYC TRIO in particular -- have been the recipients of many awards & accolades, all receiving critical acclaim.

The label is unique in that all artists receive 100% of all profits, with the label receiving exactly 0%. It is a true not-for-profit with Brownman's vision for the label to be "a catalyst for the creation of new jazz art", and not a typical capital venture as has been the goal of most traditional record labels.

The label is now widely regarded as a vanguard for new and visionary talent in the evolution of Jazz in Canada, with recent signees including Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE, Chris Lesso's MODUS FACTOR, Jason Wilson's DIVISION ONE, and now Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL. Browntasauras Records is honored to represent such world-class talent.

www.Browntasauras.com for more info.

The SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL is:

Chelsea McBride: conductor, composer, tenor sax (*solos 1, 4, 10*)

Woodwinds:	Colleen Allen	alto sax, soprano sax, flute (<i>solos 2, 3</i>)
	Naomi Higgins	alto sax, flute
	Anthony Rinaldi	tenor sax, flute (<i>solo 7</i>)
	Patrick Smith	tenor sax, clarinet (<i>solo 8</i>)
	Conrad Gluch	bari sax, bass clarinet
Trumpet/flugelhorns:	James Rhodes	trumpet 1
	Justin See	trumpet 2
	Tom Upjohn	trumpet 3
	Brownman Ali	trumpet 4 (<i>solos 3, 8</i>)
	William Carn	trombone 1 (<i>solo 6</i>)
Trombones:	Aidan Sibley	trombone 2
	Jill Richards	trombone 3
	Nicholas Sieber	trombone 4
	Chris Bruder	piano (<i>solo 6</i>)
Rhythm:	David Riddel	guitar (<i>solos 2, 3</i>)
	Steven Falk	upright & electric bass
	Geoff Bruce	drums (<i>solo 2</i>)
	Alex Samaras	vocals (<i>solos 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10</i>)

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Mixed & Edited by Nick Bonin at Bonin Sound Studio

Mastered by Nick Blagona at Psychotropic Studios

Produced by Kevin Stolz and Chelsea McBride

Executive producer: Brownman Ali

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Album layout by Brownman Ali

All songs composed by Chelsea McBride.

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THANK YOU!

I would like to thank the Socialist Night School - Colleen, Naomi, Anthony, Patrick, Conrad, James, Justin, Tom, Brown, Will, Aidan, Jill, Siebs, Bruder, Alex, David, Steven, Geoff - for your years of dedication, your tireless hard work, your enthusiasm and positive energy, and your commitment to the further development of an equal opportunity world for everyone. Without you, this music does not come to life, and I am so thankful that you all have jumped on board this crazy ride with me. To Mom and Dad and Ryan and Marty and all of my extended family: thank you for your constant support and encouragement as I recklessly pursue my dreams. To Len Kay and Marty Summers, David Fromager and Garth Bowen, Mike Allen and Alex Dean and Shirantha Beddage and Andy Ballantyne: thank you for teaching me how to make this instrument make sense. And to Jeremy Hepner, to Darcy James Argue, to David Occhipinti, to Daniel Jamieson: thank you for showing me how to convey a little of your wisdom and my emotions in this weird and wonderful puzzle of composition, arranging, and orchestration. To all the people behind the scenes on the production team and at Browntasauras – Kevin, Brown, Nick, Nick and Nickel, Andre, Arthur, Ernesto: you are an essential part of this process and it could not have come together without you, so thank you for your constant dedication and hard work and tolerance for late-night emails. To the funders, FACTOR, the Toronto Arts Foundation, the Toronto Arts Council and especially Manuel and Cheryl Buchwald: thank you for your infinite patience, your financial contribution, and for believing in me and what I could achieve. And last but not least, to my friends, colleagues, mentors, and more: thank you for your inspiration, your encouragement, your support, and the impressions you have left on me. I hope that this music leaves you feeling whole.

- Chelsea McBride

A FEW WORDS FROM CHELSEA

We spend so many hours of our lives in transit - on buses, trains, planes, in cars, constantly traveling to new destinations in search of what places can bring to us. Sometimes we travel for work, sometimes for pleasure, sometimes necessity. But we are always on the move. The Twilight Fall is the soundtrack to your traveling daydreams, the story of your life. As you move between waking, concrete places, the Socialist Night School takes you on a long distance journey to the end of your imagination -- fantastic landscapes, internal dialogue, echoes of memory -- and when your body finally arrives, we bring you home.

FRONT COVER



BACK COVER OF BOOKLET

Chelsea McBride's
SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL
The Twilight Fall

CHELSEA MCBRIDE
conductor, composer, tenor saxophone

The Socialist Night School is:

WOODWINDS:
Colleen Allen - alto sax, soprano sax, flute
Naomi Higgins - alto sax, flute
Anthony Rinaldi - tenor sax, flute
Patrick Smith - tenor sax, clarinet
Conrad Gluch - bari sax, bass clarinet

TRUMPET/FLUGELHORN:
James Rhodes, Justin See,
Tom Upjohn, Brownman Ali

TROMBONES:
William Carn, Aidan Sibley,
Jill Richards, Nicholas Sieber

RHYTHM SECTION:
Chris Bruder - piano
David Riddel - guitar
Steven Falk - upright & electric bass
Geoff Bruce - drums

VOCALS:
Alex Samaras

1) AMBLESIDE 2:45
2) INTRANSITORY 7:35
3) THE TWILIGHT FALL 9:11
4) SMOOTH 7:39
(or What I Should Have Said Instead)
5) SPIRITS 3:45
6) ARRIVAL OF THE PEGASUS 7:58
7) FOOT IN MOUTH 9:49
8) IN DREAMS 5:23
9) AMBLESIDE (reprise) 1:50
10) SOMETHING SIMPLE 6:28

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