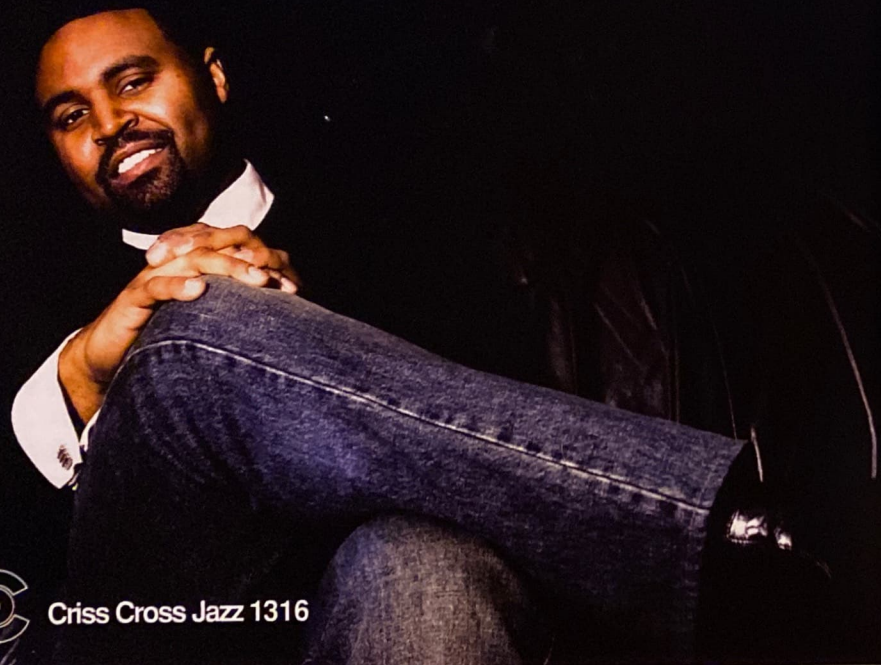


# Kendrick Scott

Walter Smith Mike Moreno Gerald Clayton Derrick Hodge

# Reverence



Criss 1316 CD

## REVERENCE KENDRICK SCOTT

1. **ANA MARIA**  
(W. Shorter) 8.36
2. **GINGERBREAD BOY**  
(J. Heath) 5.40
3. **YOU KNOW I CARE**  
(D. Pearson) 6.50
4. **METAMORPHOSIS**  
(P. Bernstein) 9.11
5. **NO YOU, NO ME**  
(K. Scott) 3.48
6. **SPEAK LIKE A CHILD**  
(H. Hancock) 6.14
7. **SHORT STORY**  
(K. Dorham) 8.42
8. **LONELY WOMAN**  
(O. Coleman) 7.02

TOTAL TIME: 56.35

**KENDRICK SCOTT** drums  
**WALTER SMITH** tenor sax  
**MIKE MORENO** guitar  
**GERALD CLAYTON** piano  
**DERRICK HODGE** bass


Produced by Gerry Teekens  
Recording Engineer: Michael Marciano  
Mixing: Max Bolleman  
Mastering: The Masters  
Recorded: December 12, 2008  
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 Criss Cross Jazz 1316



## Reverence

When **Kendrick Scott** gathered with the band heard here on **Reverence**, his **Criss Cross** debut, he was in an advantageous position: he'd just come off a three-month tour of Europe with Herbie Hancock. "Inspired" is not the right word. "Every night I saw Herbie being fearless," says Scott, a 28-year-old native of Houston, Texas, and now one of New York's most in-demand players. "Being out with Herbie kept my brain in another space." Exactly one day after the tour, Scott and his cohorts rehearsed for the **Reverence** session. The next day they entered the studio and got the beautiful results you're about to hear.

There was another advantage as well. Scott's bandmates on **Reverence** include some of his oldest friends from Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, one of America's most productive jazz laboratories, where Scott, tenor saxophonist **Walter Smith** and guitarist **Mike Moreno** developed their love and knowledge of the music, not to mention their ability to play it at the highest level.

"I always felt that Mike was ahead of all of us," Scott recounts, "the way he was thinking about music at a young age. He always had a special tone and he approaches things like a horn player. Walter I've known since we were 14, and the way he approaches the saxophone is amazing because he plays with a double-lip embouchure [lips on both sides of the mouthpiece, instead of teeth], so his tone is unique. The way he plays changes is also different, it's not always eighth-note

based, and I wanted the adventure that he provides, like a floating feeling."

Also in the lineup is bassist **Derrick Hodge**, for years Scott's partner in the rhythm section of Terence Blanchard's Grammy-winning group (which Smith recently joined as well). "Derrick's rhythmic mind is different than any bass player I've played with," Scott offers. "He hears the drums the way I would hear the drums if I were a bass player. He came from the hip-hop world and the jazz world, and now he's in the classical world too. That's what I try to do, bring different things to the table, take chances." On piano and Fender Rhodes, **Gerald Clayton** had no trouble making entry to Scott's close-knit circle. "Gerald was perfect for this project because he exemplifies what I wanted this album to do, which is emphasize music written by the masters, the people who influenced me. Gerald has a strong hold on the piano tradition but he's also moved it into a different room, with all his openness."

Prior to **Reverence**, Scott brought his exceptionally musical drumming to a number of other **Criss Cross** sessions: Danny Grissett's **Promise** [Criss 1281] and **Encounters** [Criss 1299], Walt Weiskopf's **Day In Night Out** [Criss 1300], Mike Moreno's **Third Wish** [Criss 1303] and Lage Lund's **Early Songs** [Criss 1307]. Scott released his debut album, **The Source** (2006), on his own World Culture Music imprint, which continues not only as a label but also a New York-based artist collective.



If World Culture Music represents Scott's entrepreneurial side, **Criss Cross** goes straight to his musical origins — and **Reverence** represents a full-circle arrival for him and his bandmates. "In high school, **Criss Cross** was kind of our barometer for what was going on in New York," Scott recalls. "We knew when the **Criss Cross** records were coming out and we looked forward to them a lot." When faced with the opportunity to record his own **Criss Cross** session, he chose to honor some of the classic jazz repertoire — not to mention the iconic jazz drummers — that made him the player he is today.

Wayne Shorter's **Ana Maria** leads off the session. "I sped it up, put it in 5/4 and rewrote some of the chords," says Scott, "but I tried not to get too far away from the essence of the tune. Wayne is my favorite composer. There's something about his writing — as modern and crazy as it can get, somehow he includes the blues, and it's in his playing too. I'm always striving to get to that level, not the blues as a style but as a feeling." Clayton's ethereal Rhodes colors were also an essential part of Scott's conception. "That sound is really key to me. I write my own music on the Rhodes, and I also heard it strongly when I was doing this arrangement."

Continuing with **Gingerbread Boy**, Scott pays tribute not only to its composer, Jimmy Heath, but also the late Tony Williams, who played the tune with Miles Davis on the extraordinary **Miles Smiles**. "The first time I ever heard Tony was on that album," Scott recalls. "I wanted this

to be group improvisation, to the point where you can't tell who the soloist is. We use that approach with Herbie on the road, and being around him made me realize that the future of what we're doing has a lot to do with those inter-relationships during songs, so it's not just soloistic all the time. It's more about the dialogue."

Duke Pearson's **You Know I Care** famously appeared on Joe Henderson's **Inner Urge**. "That album was the first time I heard Elvin Jones," Scott says, continuing the homage theme. "It really blew my mind, the beauty of this ballad and Duke Pearson's writing, which was ahead of its time. It exemplifies the type of lyrical writing I strive for." Clayton is heard on acoustic piano over Scott's sensitive brushes while Moreno and Smith apportion the melody, staying true to its original contour.

**Metamorphosis**, by Peter Bernstein, first appeared on the guitarist's 1998 disc **Earth Tones** [Criss 1151]. Like many **Criss Cross** titles, this one had a big impact on Scott and his friends. "It came out during my senior year in high school," he recounts. "We got the record and somebody transcribed the tune. We used to play it on our high school gigs, so I thought I'd bring it back around. There are different influences in the tune: I can hear a little Monk, a little Duke Pearson, Tadd Dameron. Pete's a great writer. Our band director used to send us out on three to four gigs a week, and Mike, Walter and I would play this together. I remember we played in downtown Houston in a building that



looked like a deodorant stick. You know what? We were on the top floor of Enron. We used to play at Enron all the time. Lavish parties. We'd be there playing **Metamorphosis!**"

What follows is a remarkable drum feature, **No You, No Me**, which is Scott's dedication to the great Max Roach. "I was inspired by Max's 'The Drum Also Waltzes,' one of the first drum solos I ever heard. It struck me in a musical way and not just a 'licks' kind of way." Scott's response is a full-fledged composition as well, with a defined melodic and harmonic structure. "From low to high, I always tune my drums F sharp, C sharp, E and F sharp," Scott reveals. "The snare is an A. I figured out that those are the pitches that resonate with me personally." Fittingly, Danny Grissett, the pianist on the track, complements Kendrick's work with dramatic F sharp minor sonorities.

If it seems hard to discern the original melody on Scott's version of the Herbie Hancock classic **Speak Like a Child**, that's because it is not there. "This is the arrangement we played with Herbie that whole three months on the road," Scott answers. "Herbie developed that arrangement for Harvey Mason, for a 2004 record called With All My Heart. We got into a real vibe with that on the tour and I couldn't let it go. I thought it would be perfect for the CD. It's basically a waltz. That one original melodic fragment — that's all it is, he left all the other parts out. I definitely wanted to say thank you to Herbie with this." In the eloquent exchanges between Smith and Moreno, one hears

another instance of Scott's group improvisation ideal, also pursued on **Gingerbread Boy**.

Scott's 15/8 arrangement of Kenny Dorham's **Short Story** presented a new challenge, and Herbie Hancock's example of fearless leadership was kept very much in mind. "It's seven and eight alternating, whereas usually if I play in 15 it might be eight and seven, or three groups of five. It was Kenny's melody that suggested this subdivision, so I had to surrender to the melody and to the song itself. Even though I was less comfortable playing it, I thought, 'You know what, this is actually cool, just let it go.' It's something I'm working toward. Derrick really held the rhythm down for me. When it goes to 4/4 for Walter's solo, it's a nice release after all those hiccups."

Scott pares down to a trio and features Smith on the finale, Ornette Coleman's evocative **Lonely Woman**. Scott's mallet textures and Hodge's sonically rich arco provide an abstract setting for Smith to thrive. "The way Derrick bows the bass is so beautiful and I really wanted it to be heard," Scott says. "Even when I go to time, Derrick still bows." The inspiration came from Scott seeing Ornette in concert during the Hancock tour. "It really touched me. The word that hit me was 'daring,' and Ornette embodied that when I heard him play 'Lonely Woman.' Walter's a huge Ornette fan too, and he did 'Peace' on his own record. The cascading lines he played, and the bowed bass, it was perfect for me. We did it in one take. I think it foreshadows the next

level that I'm trying to get to with my band Oracle."

Scott's steady touring with the major jazz figures of our day is something he wouldn't trade for a minute. All the same, he's constantly trying to carve out time for his continued development as a bandleader and composer. **Reverence** says a great deal about the kind of artist, and the kind of jazz, that Scott reveres, and the kind of complete musician he is rapidly becoming.

David R. Adler

New York, April 2009