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1. Fragile 5:40 Teriver Cheung BMI
 2. Wishes 5:55 Teriver Cheung BMI
 3. Hallowing 6:00 Teriver Cheung BMI
 4. Caught Up 8:05 Teriver Cheung BMI
 5. Skylark 7:45 Hoagy Carmichael/Johnny Mercer
(WB Music Corp/Songs of Peer Ltd) ASCAP
 6. Mocirîța 5:27 Romanian Folk Song (Public Domain)
 7. My Nocturne 7:44 Teriver Cheung BMI
 8. Prospect 6:36 Ross Pederson BMI
 9. On a Lighter Note 5:52 Teriver Cheung BMI
 10. Stay True 3:34 Teriver Cheung BMI
- Total Time: 62:38

TERIVER CHEUNG GUITAR
ANDREW GOULD ALTO SAXOPHONE
LINDA OH BASS
ROSS PEDERSON DRUMS

Produced by Teriver Cheung
Co-produced by Pete Zimmer
Recorded June 15 & 16, 2011 at Tedesco Studios, Paramus, NJ
Recording Engineer Tom Tedesco
Mixed and Mastered by Michael Perez Cisneros
Photos by Simon Yu Production
CD Design by UoU Production

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TERIVER CHEUNG MY NOCTURNE

No matter how high the technical bar has been raised for aspiring guitarists, one simple fact remains: musicality is what matters. Teriver Cheung, age 27, has found ways to transcend a chops-centric approach and create music full of breath, space and surprise. On *My Nocturne*, his auspicious debut, he reveals himself as a player of great skill but also poetic sensitivity. He can do difficult, yes: his single-note lines generate heat and friction, leaping across intervals, avoiding the obvious. But it's the lyricism, the rhythmic idiosyncrasy and above all the personal quality of his writing and improvising that makes Cheung an artist to watch.

A native of Hong Kong, Cheung came to the U.S. in 2004 to study at the University of North Texas. In 2009 he relocated to New York — not an easy place to break through in any field of the arts. But the sheer concentration of jazz talent in Brooklyn alone (Cheung's borough of residence) is in many ways a blessing. Not only does it ramp up the challenges and force one to improve; it also makes the search for qualified and likeminded bandmates that much simpler.

"Andrew Gould grew up on Long Island," says Cheung of his front line partner on alto sax. "He's about the same age as me and we've played a lot of different music together. He has a lot of energy, a great tone, and he treats things very seriously. He's always ready." Linda Oh, easily among the most compelling bassists to emerge in recent years, brings quick reflexes and a huge depth of sound to the session. "She's got so much technique, her time is unbelievable and I love the sound she gets out of the bass!" Cheung enthuses. "To me, sound is the most important thing in music, the first thing our ears respond to." Drummer Ross Pederson endows the music with texture and forward-thrust and also offers a composition of his own, the tension-filled "Prospect." "I went to school with Ross in Texas," Cheung says, "and we've been playing forever. You pass him any tune and he'll always put himself into it. I've learned a lot from him."

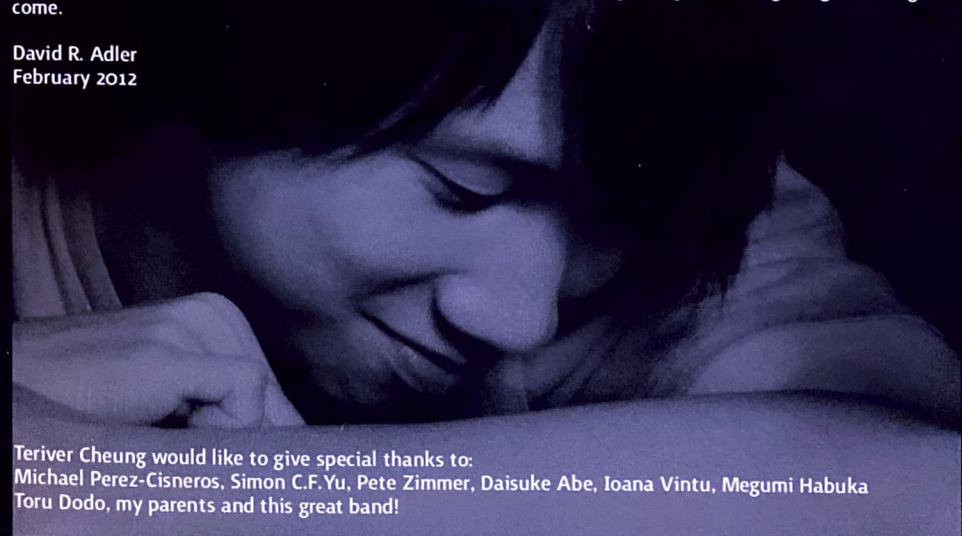
Like any serious young player, Cheung soaks up lessons from his elders as well, via recent gigging experiences with the likes of Billy Drummond and Eddie Gomez. But oddly enough, he did not pick up the guitar until age 16. He started on piano at age six, and he recalls "playing a lot of Bach, a lot of Chopin, a lot of sonatas. That music seeped into my brain and I don't even think about it anymore. The Chopin I always liked, and I played a lot of nocturnes when I was a kid. In fact, 'My Nocturne' is a Chopin-ish thing. I always have that romantic influence in my writing. I love the sound of Stravinsky, who makes me think about rhythm, texture and orchestration. I also listen to a lot of other music, not just jazz, and I try to write every song with a different concept."

It's also readily apparent how Cheung's piano studies, he explains, "influenced how I orchestrate melody and harmony or accompaniment. For example, on piano the left hand often accompanies a right-hand melody, but the same concept can still apply to guitar even though both hands work together. I try to blend melody and accompaniment in a subtle way, and I got that idea from playing piano. I think it's present on the melody of 'Wishes' and the title track."

Cheung's guitar tone is airy, enhanced with reverb, but still very grounded and tangible — you can hear the steel in his strings, the bite of his attack. "I never sit down and think about my sound," he insists, "but every day I try to get rid of something I don't like. I try to think about what to articulate and what not to." As a composer, Cheung is drawn to darker harmonies, refreshing rhythmic constructs, vibrant dynamics. We hear it in the lively 5/4 of the opening "Fragile," or the authoritative arrangement of "Mocirita" (a Romanian folk ballad), or the quick-paced trio showcase "On a Lighter Note," a study in compound melodies with a Brazilian inspiration. For nuanced interplay, "Hallowing" is a strong example, with a brushes-driven beat that offsets muscular solos by Oh and Cheung. "Caught Up," too, is a highlight in band chemistry, starting with rubato colors and counterpoint, falling away to solo guitar and, finally, moving into tempo for the rideout.

"Stay True," the finale, gets much of its knockout power from Oh's bass, and one could read the song title as a kind of mission statement. Cheung is indeed staying true, maintaining the ideals that led him across the ocean to pursue music at the highest level (a story he shares in common with Oh, it should be noted). But staying true doesn't imply adherence to rigid or narrow viewpoints. Rather, Cheung draws on a range of sounds and traditions — from Romanian folk to Hoagy Carmichael's "Skylark" — as he works toward his own musical vision. *My Nocturne* is an eloquent and spirited beginning, and a bright sign of things to come.

David R. Adler
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