

# ***EVERYTHING WILL BE***

## **Eric Brace & Last Train Home**



**PRODUCED BY ERIC BRACE AND JARED BARTLETT**

Recorded by:

Thomm Jutz (TJ Tunes, Nashville, TN), Cowboy Keith Thompson (Inglehood Studios, Nashville, TN), Jared Bartlett (5th Floor Studio, Reston VA), Kevin McKendree (The Rock House, Franklin TN), and the home studios of Scott McKnight (VA), Dave Van Allen (PA), Chris Watling (MD), Bill Williams (MD), and Laura Tsaggaris (DC).

Mixed by:

Jared Bartlett (5th Floor Studio, Reston VA)

Mastered by:

Alex McCollough (True East Mastering, Nashville TN)

Designed by:

Bill Thompson (Harrisonburg, VA)

Cover photo by:

Matthew Worden

Musicians:

Eric Brace: Lead vocals, harmony vocals (2, 4, 7, 9), acoustic guitar (3, 4, 7, 9, 11)

Jared Bartlett: Electric guitar (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10), acoustic guitar (1, 2, 11)

Kevin Cordt: Trumpet (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), whistling (10)

Jim Gray: Electric bass

Martin Lynds: Drums and percussion

Scott McKnight: Electric guitar (3, 4, 5, 10, 11), baritone guitar (4), nylon string guitar (6), keyboards (1, 3, 11)

Dave Van Allen: Pedal steel guitar (2, 3, 6, 8, 10) and Dobro (11)

Chris Watling: Tenor saxophone (3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11), baritone saxophone (5, 6, 10, 11), accordion (10)

Bill Williams: Banjo (4, 6, 10, 11), acoustic guitar (10), ukulele (5), harmonica (8, 10), harmony vocals (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10)

Everyone: Harmony vocals (11)

### ***Here are Eric's thoughts on the songs:***

#### **1/ EVERYTHING WILL BE**

(by Eric Brace)

When you tell someone "everything's going to be okay," you know you're lying, right? But if you steer yourself with open mind and heart toward the best things, the beautiful things, then you're going to capture and create moments that will make you glad to be alive, and, with some luck, you can share those moments with people you care about, and with the world. I love producer-mixer Jared Bartlett's layers of guitars and Kevin Cordt's bittersweet-yet-hopeful trumpet. Singing along is the D.C. area singer/songwriter Laura Tsaggaris.

#### **2/ LILY OF THE DAY**

(by Thomm Jutz and Craig Market)

This is by my talented pal Thomm Jutz, and is one of the best songs I've ever heard about the passage of time and the evanescence of beauty and...of everything. And while I've always loved Thomm's own recording of it, in my head I've wanted to hear it with piano in the driver's seat rather than acoustic guitar. So I called upon the great Kevin McKendree to bring to life what was in my head. A few decades ago, Kevin was a teenage blues keyboard prodigy in my old hometown of Washington D.C. where I'd heard him play, and he's now a near-legendary Nashville Cat. He played on a few tunes on the very first Last Train Home record in 1997 (most notably "Tonight"), and it's great to have him on a handful of songs on this new record. I did miss Thomm's guitar though, and so I asked him to join the fun as well. Dave Van Allen's gorgeous steel solo quotes another song about a flower.

#### **3/ LANGUAGE**

(by Eric Brace)

You know how you can't always find the words to say exactly what you're thinking and feeling? Don't blame yourself. It's a conundrum built into the nature of language. Here, drummer Martin Lynds expands his percussion language by playing bodhrán for the first time on an LTH record. That's Laura Tsaggaris adding her beautiful harmonies, and Nashville string maven David Henry layering on gorgeous cello, violin, and viola. Chris Watling's saxophone and Kevin's trumpet find a way to speak in ways that the human tongue simply cannot.

#### 4/ JUST A MOMENT

(by Eric Brace)

In early March, 2020, I was in Ireland about to launch a tour with Thomm Jutz, when Covid-19 outbreaks forced us to fly back to the U.S. without playing a lick. We returned to a Nashville that had been slammed by tornadoes, and huge chunks of my neighborhood had been shredded. Luckily, my block was spared, as was the neighborhood's spirit. Up the street from my house in East Nashville, during the warmer months of 2020, there was a weekly "pandemic talent show" of neighborhood kids. Mask-wearing folks would bring their folding chairs, set them up a good ways apart, and listen to the creative youngsters that seem to thrive around here. It was held in the front yard of a not-yet-a-teenager named Luke, a budding trumpet player, and his afternoon practice sessions often caught my ear. I wrote this and first recorded it in 2020 (as I feebly attempted to learn home recording techniques), but felt that it merited a full band treatment. Scott McKnight's baritone guitar solo makes me smile. (Curiously, despite having a spectacular trumpet player in Last Train Home, we didn't squeeze a trumpet solo in here.)

#### 5/ IF I HAD A NICKEL

(by Eric Brace)

Time is the only real currency, and here I get to hammer the metaphor. I recorded this a few years ago with my trio partners Peter Cooper and Thomm Jutz, and I love our version, but I've always wanted to hear it with a big brass band and New Orleans rhythms. And so, Kevin McKendree's barrelhouse piano, layers of Kevin Cordt's trumpet and Chris Watling's saxophone, plus Jim Gray's bass and Martin Lynds' drum have given me what I yearned to hear, and I love it. And remember: the time you take to contemplate... that time's gone for good.

## 6/ THE SIX O'CLOCK TRAIN AND A GIRL WITH GREEN EYES

(by John Hartford)

A stunning and idiosyncratic composition from the mind of John Hartford, circa 1967, one that fits beautifully into this album's ruminations on the passage of time. We thought we'd turn Hartford's slightly strident march into a gentler samba, because why not? It just felt right. Bill Williams' banjo and ethereal backing vocals, Scott's nylon-string guitars, Kevin and Chris's horns (which echo the strings on Hartford's original recording), Martin and Jim's tropical rhythms, Dave's eerie pedal steel... I rather think that John Hartford would have enjoyed hearing our take on his little-heard tune.

## 7/ NEXT TIME

(by Eric Brace)

When you don't see someone for long stretches -- whether on account of a pandemic or some other other circumstance -- they may look very different the next time you see them. Sometimes they *\*are\** very different. This song is from the same neighborhood as my songs "Just a Moment" (#4 above), and "Distance and Time" off our 2019 album *Daytime Highs and Overnight Lows*. What does the swirling fourth dimension of time sound like? We think it sounds like the last 90 seconds of this song.

## 8/ EAST NASHVILLE HIGHBALL

(by Eric Brace)

Over the years, LTH has recorded several instrumental tunes, each very different, and each one of them makes me happy in ways that our songs with words don't and can't.

I've had this instrumental kicking around in my head for years, and we finally got it down for posterity. I love how Chris channels the great Boots Randolph (of "Yakety Sax" fame), and how everyone else channels their favorite country picker in this short-but-sweet instrumental. Jared Bartlett reveals previously unheard "Master of the Telecaster" skills.

## 9/ IN THE DARK

(by Eric Brace)

I wrote this for the late, great Jerry Lawson when I was making the album *Just a Mortal Man* with him a few years ago. The founding lead singer of The Persuasions made the song unquestionably his, and I will never claim otherwise. But another angle occurred to me and I tweaked the bridge slightly, then Bill brought it into a more power-pop realm with his glorious layers of harmonies.

## 10/ I'M AN OLD COWHAND (FROM THE RIO GRANDE)

(by Johnny Mercer)

Back in 2010, Peter Cooper and I shared a bill with Chris Hillman & Herb Pedersen, and as we came off the stage after our set Chris Hillman gave me my most treasured compliment of all time: "Your singing reminds me of Johnny Mercer." I was mighty pleased, because little did Hillman know that I'd spent years listening to Mercer, and it doesn't surprise me that some of Mercer's vocal mannerisms may have crept into my singing. He's one of the greats of 20th century American music who doesn't always get his due. I won't bother to list his accomplishments -- it's easy enough to find them out. I'll simply say that Mercer's greatest songs will live on forever because they can be infinitely reinterpreted. This one is a case in point: Mercer wrote it after trying to become a Hollywood songwriter, but after not finding success out west, he was driving back home to the east coast and quickly scribbled this satire of the singing cowboys of the silver screen. Ironically, this was the song that got him his big Hollywood break, when Bing Crosby sang it in the 1936 movie "Rhythm on the Range." One day while down a Mercer rabbit hole I listened to dozens of interpretations of "I'm an Old Cowhand," and decided to mash up a few and plant the Last Train Home flag on it. In our recording you'll hear echoes of versions by Bing Crosby, Sonny Rollins, Gene Autry, Sam Butera, Dan Hicks, Roy Rogers, Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass, Grant Green, Sons of the Pioneers, Donald Byrd, and perhaps a few more. And when we wanted to really crash through the guardrails, we brought in our pal Karl Straub to do his best Sonny Sharrock impersonation (I have no proof that Sharrock ever performed the song, but I have no proof that he didn't!).

## 11/ WHEN I'M DEAD AND GONE

(by Benny Gallagher & Graham Lyle)

This great nugget is from the Scottish band McGuinness Flint, who had a minor global hit with it in 1970 - 1971. If you listen carefully, you'll hear all the LTH boys singing along (I believe that is a first!), and we like to think that when we're all dead and gone, folks might find some Last Train Home tunes to sing along to.