



**ARTHUR CIRCLE MUSIC PRESENTS**

## **ERIC HOFFMAN AND KEN HATFIELD**

**WITH THE INTIMATE NEW VOCAL AND GUITAR DUET ALBUM  
“STIRRINGS STILL”**

**AVAILABLE ON CD, DIGITAL AND STREAMING**

**JANUARY 24, 2023**

**VINYL EDITION DUE JUNE 2023**

**ARTHUR CIRCLE MUSIC** proudly presents *Stirrings Still*, an intimate set of duets for voice and guitar, scheduled for release **January 24, 2023** on CD, digital download, and streaming, with a vinyl edition to follow in **June 2023**. Featuring the distinctive baritone vocals of song stylist **Eric Hoffman** accompanied by award-winning composer and guitarist **Ken Hatfield**, it deftly balances introspective originals with fresh takes on standards, both familiar and unexpected. *Stirrings Still* is a rich showcase for Hoffman’s consummate vocals and Hatfield’s exquisite playing and arranging. For more information, visit **www.KenHatfield.com**

After a decade of performing together in a variety of settings, Eric and Ken have developed an intuitive musical rapport. *Stirrings Still* demonstrates their simpatico interplay.

Producer/arranger Hatfield explains, “I’ve always had a fondness for the sound of the human voice accompanied by guitar. Be it Frank Sinatra and Tony Mottola, Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass or Tuck & Patti, there’s something visceral about the intimacy of this combination that invites the audience to come closer, join the performers, and listen attentively.”

With performance venues shut down, Eric and Ken embarked on this recording as a creative outlet. Conceived as a reflective yet hopeful exploration of universal themes such as love, loss, hope, and possibility, the choice of material was crucial. The two musicians selected a mixture of their favorite songs by other composers and some of Hatfield’s originals.

The originals take inspiration from a wide variety of sources. For example, Hatfield wrote the liltingly melodic “À Demain” in 2003 in response to a scene in Claude Lelouch’s 1966 film *A Man and a Woman*. Years later Eric added lyrics that express the joy and hope sparked by a serendipitous encounter, and accordingly they renamed the song “**See You Tomorrow**.”

Similarly, a phrase from the film *To Dance with the White Dog* prompted Hatfield to write the down-home, bluesy instrumental “**Most Every Day**” in 2003; he added the witty, upbeat lyrics in 2021.

Discussing the album’s title song “**Stirrings Still**,” Ken explains, “I wrote this as an instrumental in 2000 to express feelings ‘stirred’ by Samuel Beckett’s last short story of the same name. Twenty-two years later I wrote lyrics that verbalized aspects of those feelings, which resonated even more deeply during the pandemic.”

The haunting “**Lonely Nocturne**” hails from Hatfield’s 2013 monumental homage *For Langston*, a jazz song cycle in which he set poems by Langston Hughes to music arranged for a sextet; here it is reimagined for baritone voice and guitar.

“**Juniper Street**,” which like many Hatfield compositions began life as an instrumental, was composed in 1998. The lyrics penned by Hatfield in 2009 express reflections of someone in later life recalling youthful infatuations and love lost.

Ironically, the original that concludes the recording inspired the entire project. “**The Time I Spend with You**” is the result of a collaboration between Eric and Ken with an extraordinary young man named Jeremy and his mother, novelist/poet Annette Berkovits. This song developed from interactions during a series of home concerts that Eric and Ken performed for Jeremy.

Even with the album's abundance of outstanding original material, Eric and Ken were eager to put their own spin on treasures from the Great American Songbook and beyond. They test drove many of the standards they perform in their live shows and chose five for the recording.

Eric selected **"Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home."** "This standard has about as good a pedigree as you can get, with music by Harold Arlen and lyrics by Johnny Mercer," Hatfield observes.

A surprising but rewarding cover choice is **"You Can Never Hold Back Spring,"** written by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan and featured in Roberto Benigni's film *The Tiger and the Snow*. Eric's performance really expresses the undying hope of one who knows that no matter how interminable winter may seem, spring inevitably follows.

**"Down Here on the Ground"** is the theme that Lalo Schiffrin wrote for the film *Cool Hand Luke*. Many know Lou Rawls' iconic interpretation of this striking song with lyrics by Gale Garnett. Eric and Ken's sensitive rendering captures the spirit of Lalo's original.

Tommy Wolf and Fran Landesman's classic **"Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most"** was inspired by the first line of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." The song's universal expression of the vicissitudes of love perfectly chronicles an experience we all know.

Ken first heard the plaintive **"Answer Me, My Love"** in a solo piano rendition by Keith Jarrett and immediately began playing it as an instrumental. After discovering Nat King Cole's 1954 hit version with lyrics, Ken suggested it to Eric for this project. Eric's moving interpretation speaks for itself.

The music in this collection is perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon, a cozy evening by the fire or any time you're in a reflective mood.

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**Eric Hoffman** is a distinctive song stylist with an impressive vocal range. Whether employing an intimate whisper or his full-voice baritone, he is a master of many styles, convincingly interpreting genres from jazz to Broadway and everything in between. From Flint, Michigan, and an Interlochen Arts Academy graduate, Hoffman comes from a musical family. At an early age he began singing with his grandparents in their church choir. At age ten he took up the Lowrey 88 Organ before moving on to the trombone. He was a featured singer with big bands on various cruise lines, working with performers such as Jack Jones, The Spinners, Vic Damone, and Steve Allen. After moving to New York, Hoffman became a trombonist and featured male vocalist with Supersound, former Dizzy Gillespie drummer Charli Persip's big band, appearing on Persip's recording *Intrinsic Evolution*. Eric is a protégé of the legendary Marilyn Maye, who directed his New York cabaret debut, "A New Nightclub Act," in 2017. He has performed in a variety of contexts and ensembles with guitarist Ken Hatfield for the past decade. Eric's previous albums include *Introducing Eric Hoffman with Oliver Von Essen* and *Get Together*.

**Ken Hatfield** – guitarist, composer, and arranger – is a leading proponent of jazz played on the classical guitar. Described as "a veritable Picasso of the jazz guitar world" (*20<sup>th</sup> Century Guitar*), and "one of the most skilled, creative, and original guitarist/composers currently recording" (*Acoustic Guitar*), he is known for his "brainy, dynamic and relentlessly melodic playing" (*Guitar Player*) and original compositional voice. Recipient of the prestigious ASCAP Foundation Vanguard Award for "innovative and distinctive music that is charting new directions in jazz," Ken's music draws on influences as diverse as jazz, blues, classical, Brazilian, and Appalachian music. Arthur Circle Music has released ten albums with Ken performing his original works, and six books of his compositions. Mel Bay published his instructional book *Jazz and the Classical Guitar: Theory and Application* and features his works in *Contemporary Guitar Composers of the Americas* and *Master Anthology of Jazz Guitar Solos, Vol. III*. Ken's compositions and writings have also appeared in numerous jazz and guitar publications, including *DownBeat*, *Acoustic Guitar*, and *Just Jazz Guitar*. In addition to composing for ensembles he leads, his compositional experience includes commissioned ballet scores for Judith Jamison, The Washington Ballet Company, and the Maurice Béjart Ballet Company, and scores for television and film, including Eugene Richards' award-winning documentary *but, the day came*. Ken has performed in a variety of venues ranging from the JVC Jazz Festival, the Smithsonian Institution and Carnegie Hall to intimate jazz clubs such as Birdland and 55 Bar. He has performed and/or recorded with a diverse list of international artists, including Charlie Byrd, Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff, Chico Hamilton, Melissa Manchester, Stephanie Mills, Pat Benatar, Charles Aznavour, Bob Cranshaw, Grady Tate, Marcus Miller, João Donato, Ben E. King, Eddie Kendricks, Marlena Shaw, Z.Z. Hill, and Toni Braxton.

### **"STIRRINGS STILL" TRACK LIST**

- 1) **See You Tomorrow (À Demain)** – Music by Ken Hatfield, lyrics by Eric Hoffman
- 2) **Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most** – Music by Tommy Wolf, lyrics by Fran Landesman
- 3) **Stirrings Still** – Music and lyrics by Ken Hatfield
- 4) **Down Here on the Ground** – Music by Lalo Schiffrin, lyrics by Gale Garnett
- 5) **Juniper Street** – Music and lyrics by Ken Hatfield
- 6) **You Can Never Hold Back Spring** – Music and lyrics by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan
- 7) **Most Every Day** – Music and lyrics by Ken Hatfield
- 8) **Answer Me, My Love** – Music by Gerhard Winkler, German lyrics by Fred Rauch, English lyrics by Carl Sigman
- 9) **Lonely Nocturne** – Music by Ken Hatfield, lyrics by Langston Hughes
- 10) **Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home** – Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer
- 11) **The Time I Spend with You** – Music by Ken Hatfield,  
lyrics by Annette Berkovits, Jeremy Berkovits, Eric Hoffman and Ken Hatfield