

David Caceres
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“Caceres has ‘it,’ that something extra that separates him from his peers.”

-Paul J. MacArthur, The Houston Press

A twenty-first century musician would be one who is proficient in all of the inventions and dimensions of jazz, and can speak the languages of R&B, country, folk and pop – both instrumentally and vocally. On his self-titled, **Sunnyside** debut, the Houston-based alto saxophonist/vocalist/composer/educator **David Caceres** shows why he’s a musician who fits that bill.

A scion of a legendary family of Texas musicians, Caceres’s sax is a pleasing blend of David Sanborn’s bite with Paul Desmond’s romanticism, mixed with a mellow-toned vocal style that amalgamates the best of Stevie Wonder and Donny Hathaway. Those gifts made him a standout in Houston, and they are in full effect on this CD, produced by **Matt Pierson** (Pat Metheny, Brad Mehldau) and arranged by keyboardist **Gil Goldstein** (Bobby McFerrin, Chris Botti, Esperanza Spalding), featuring bassist **Larry Grenadier**, drummer **Bill Stewart**, organist **Shedrick Mitchell**, percussionist **Bashiri Johnson**, guitarist **Larry Campbell** and pianist **Aaron Parks**. With that sterling support, the CD’s eleven tracks showcase Caceres’s multi-faceted musicianship in a variety of moods and grooves.

"It feels just as good to sing one note as it does to play one note," Caceres says. "However, they have very different roles and somewhat different languages when used in the same song. The voice sets the tone of the tune, drawing the listener in with a direct, rather vulnerable statement. Then the sax is allowed to stretch out and explore some of the other emotional layers of the song."

Buoyed by Goldstein’s evocative string and horn arrangements, Caceres’s sax and vocals breathe new life into Maxwell’s heartbreaking ballad “Sympton Unknown,” Ray Lamontagne’s folk/pop number “You Don’t Bring Me Flowers,” Van Morrison’s “The Way that Lovers Do,” and a soulful rendering of the Donny Hathaway selection “Giving Up.” James Taylor’s waltzy “You Make it Easy” retains its middle-of-the-road charm, and Caceres’ takes on two Stevie Wonder compositions, the poetic and pleading trio take of “Seems So Long,” and the festive Afro-Brazilian motored “Bird of Beauty,” which features special guest vocalist **Margret Grebowicz**, are inventive as they are inspired. Caceres’s mastery of the jazz canon is evidenced by his down-home and dancing rendition of Thelonious Monk’s “Round Midnight” and his soaring reading of Herbie Hancock’s “Tell Me a Bedtime Story.” Two Caceres originals, the midtempo “Sacred Path” and the Latinesque “Gratitude,” complete this sumptuous and stunning CD.

Born in San Antonio in 1967, Caceres comes from a talented family of musicians. His grandfather, jazz violinist Emilio Caceres, led a popular swing orchestra in San Antonio,

Texas in the 1930's & 40's, and his great uncle Ernie Caceres played saxophone and clarinet with the Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and Woody Herman big bands. "I remember when I was about five years old, staying over at my grandparents' house, and seeing my grandfather in his tux heading out for a gig and I wouldn't see him till the next morning. I understood that my grandfather and great-uncle were musicians, but it wasn't until I was around 12 that I heard the last record they did together in 1969," he says. "There was an extensive bio in it about my relatives and I used to read it all the time. Although I didn't really understand the language they were playing, I felt connected to it and the music was definitely making an impression on me."

David's maternal grandfather, Manuel Rangel, owned a major Latin music record retailer, label, and distribution company, and his mother managed a store, called "Sound of Music." Growing up in this environment, it's no surprise that young Caceres found himself beginning piano studies as an eight-year old, and took up the alto saxophone three years later. "Of all of the instruments, the alto seemed to most emulate the human voice and I was also intrigued by the complexity of all the keys," he recalls. He studied John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, and Sonny Rollins, learned to play soprano, clarinet, and flute, started playing gigs in San Antonio, graduated from high school and earned a scholarship to Berklee College of Music, graduating in 1989. It was at that esteemed institution where he found his singing voice. "There was a wedding band that needed a sax player who could also sing a few tunes. I had never sung publicly," Caceres recalls, "but I figured what the hell? I knew I could at least sing in tune - how bad could it be?"

Caceres moved on to New York with a Berklee class that included Roy Hargrove, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Mark Turner, Donny McCaslin, Antonio Hart, Seamus Blake and Chris Cheek. But the pull of Texas called him back to San Antonio, and then on to Houston, where he joined the Paul English Quartet, the fusion group Stratus and a 10-piece funk outfit named TKOh! Caceres has logged hours in the recording studio on numerous sessions, including Latin sensation La Mafia's Grammy award-winning *Un Millon De Rosas*, plus New York sessions with Deodato and Robbie Williams, among others and led his own quartet. He has shared the stage with a varied and prestigious list of musicians, including Milt Hinton, James Williams, Kirk Whalum, John Pattitucci, Will Kennedy, the Drifters, and Tejano star Little Joe. His three previous, independently-released CDs as leader – released from 1995 to 2007 – include: *Innermost*, *Trio* and *Reflections*.

Which bring us to *David Caceres*, a bold new, statement from a daring and diverse musician who exhibits three hundred and sixty degrees of inspired, category-crossing art.