



Thanks In Advance **BRYAN BELLER**

Five years after his acclaimed debut album *View*, the bassist/composer/writer creates a definitive jazz/rock compositional statement about breaking through anger and finding gratitude.

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Bryan Beller (bass, keyboards, guitar), Mike Keneally (guitar, keyboards), Rick Musallam (guitar), Griff Peters (guitar), Chris Cottros (guitar), Mike Olekshy (guitar), Bruce Dees (guitar), Jeff Babko (keyboards), Jody Nardone (piano), Clayton Ivey (Hammond organ), Kira Small (Rhodes), Marco Minnemann (drums), Joe Travers (drums), Nick D'Virgilio (drums), Toss Panos (drums), Marcus Finnie (drums), Jim Hoke (clarinets), Steve Herrman (trumpets), Doug Moffet (tenor and bari sax), Roy Agee (trombones), Ann Marie Calhoun (violins), Scheila Gonzales (tenor sax).

Bassist Bryan Beller seemed to have it all: a storied sideman career (Mike Keneally, Steve Vai), regularly published articles in *Bass Player Magazine*, an acclaimed debut solo album (*View*, 2003 Onion Boy), and an executive corporate position running SWR bass amplification for Fender Musical Instruments Corporation. But the untimely death of a close friend in early 2005 exposed deep fissures in his own identity, and instigated a period of intense and sometimes painful self-examination. One year later, Beller had quit his day job, returned to life as a freelance musician, moved from L.A. to Nashville, found love, and experienced an epiphany that forever shifted his view of life, and his role in it.

Thanks In Advance is the musical manifestation of that journey. Set to Beller's highly detailed, rock-infused, jazz/fusion compositional voice, it's an intense trip through the heart of personal darkness – from the lushly dissonant orchestral arrangement of "Casual Lie Day," to the searing, grinding dirge of "Cave Dweller," and culminating with the frenzied "Love Terror Adrenaline/Break Through" featuring renowned virtuoso guitarist/composer Mike Keneally (solo artist/Frank Zappa) and recent *Modern Drummer* cover subject Marco Minnemann – before finally reaching a state of personal and musical peace in the title track and the album's unexpected close.

"I was constantly unhappy, even angry, about my everyday life, wondering why this or that was all 'happening to me,'" says Beller. "Only after a shock to my system did I get that, ultimately, I was the source of it all. Where I am now is infinitely more satisfying. So *Thanks In Advance* really completes *View*, which I now realize was a well-crafted complaint about things, and tries to convey how I got to being grateful for life's everyday content, whatever it brings, as opposed to being angry with it. It sure wasn't a painless process, but it's been deeply, profoundly rewarding, and it's a message I'd like to share with others. That's what I'm up to with this record."

More comfortable than ever in his own playing skin, Beller worked fretless, fretted, acoustic/electric, boutique and vintage basses into the mix, and contributed piano and guitar tracks as well. But he left plenty of spotlight for a stylistically diverse all-star cast: the aforementioned Keneally and Minnemann; drummer Joe Travers and saxophonist Scheila Gonzalez (*Zappa Plays Zappa*); violinist Ann Marie Calhoun (Steve Vai); *View* veteran guitarists Rick Musallam (Mike Keneally, Ben Taylor) and Griff Peters; keyboardist Jeff Babko (James Taylor, Robben Ford); and drummers Nick D'Virgilio (*Spock's Beard*, *Tears For Fears*) and Toss Panos (Michael Landau, Larry Carlton). And that's just the L.A. contingent; Beller tracked a whole separate group of Nashville musicians, including some veteran R&B grease in guitarist Bruce Dees (James Brown, Ronnie Milsap) and keyboardist Clayton Ivey (Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin) to complement the virtuosic firepower. There was also a personal touch, as Dees and Ivey previously recorded with the woman Beller moved to Nashville for: R&B singer/songwriter/keyboardist Kira Small, who also played Rhodes on the album's title track.

While recording occurred in eleven different studios (primarily in Nashville, Los Angeles and San Diego), Beller bucked the remote-album file-swapping trend and personally attended nearly every session, bringing cohesion to the production and personally preserving the album's narrative. "After a year of seclusion writing the material, I was more than ready to get out of the house and interact with the people I trusted to bring this music to life. Driving back and forth from Nashville to SoCal, with a van full of gear and basses and hard drives, going from studio to studio...it was really exhilarating to feel it all come together. That's an easy one to be grateful for."

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