



To Nothing BRYAN BELLER

The special-edition DVD accompaniment to *Thanks In Advance* is more than an inside look at how the record was made – it's about the community that made it, and the philosophy behind it.

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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), Kira Small (Rhodes), Jody Nardone (piano), Clayton Ivey (Hammond organ), Joe Travers (drums), Nick D'Virgilio (drums), Marcus Finnie (drums), Scheila Gonzales (tenor sax), Pete Griffin (bass).

Edited and Directed by Dave Foster.

When Bryan Beller finished the year-long process of writing *Thanks In Advance*, he pondered where to record it: in Nashville, with the players he'd met since moving there in early 2006, or in Southern California with the tight group of musicians and friends with whom he'd made *View* four years prior. "I decided the answer was 'yes!'" says Bryan. "I wanted some of the new vibe I was soaking in, plus the familiarity and camaraderie of my old friends in L.A. and San Diego. And I had a minivan, so why not just start in Nashville, drive to California, crash with my friends, and keep tracking until we get everything we need, and then drive home to finish it up?"

That's exactly what he did, and *To Nothing* captures both the journey and the spirit of the creation of *Thanks In Advance*. Featuring nearly three hours of video material, the DVD follows Beller from A-list studios on Nashville's Music Row and in L.A.'s San Fernando Valley, to smaller rooms and home studios in both Tennessee and California, including one very special place that ended up being the centerpiece location of the CD and its artwork: Hilltop Frog Studios in Escondido, CA, a.k.a. the home of guitarist Griff Peters.

"Griff's place was one of the centers of the universe for our tight group of friends right after our dear friend Wes Wehmiller passed away," Beller explains, referring to the fellow Berklee alum and professional bassist who died in early 2005 at the young age of 33. "We'd all been busy doing our own things, but when that happened, we all decided we needed to get together and play more often. So we'd jam over at Griff's place, which is in this beautiful hilltop setting surrounded by trees and frogs and wildlife, and one of those jams actually became the song 'Thanks In Advance.' So this record is dedicated to Wes because, in a way, he's the one who made it possible. I didn't spend a whole lot of time thinking about gratitude before this all happened. I do now."

The roughly 100-minute main movie chronologically documents the making of the record from December, 2007 to March 2008. It starts with the full-band tracking of two songs in Nashville, plus overdubs, and then follows Beller to Los Angeles for tracking of the rocker "Play Hard." From there it's down to Hilltop Frog for three days of overdubs (including guitarist/composer Mike Keneally cutting the impossibly difficult "Love Terror Adrenaline/Break Through") before two final days of full-band tracking at Doubletime Studios in San Diego. From the gospel swing opening moments of "Snooze Bar" in Nashville, to the frenetic improv of "From Nothing" on the last day of recording, *To Nothing* features alternate mixes, stripped-down arrangements, cameo footage of everyone involved, and interviews with Beller and others. "Being a mainly instrumental composer, I get one chance in language to explain the actual intent of these songs – the title. But this gave me a shot at getting into the meaning of the record, and how the songs relate to the message I'm trying to get out with it."

To Nothing is overflowing with bonus footage. It contains an additional hour of video from final bass tracking in San Diego and mixing in Nashville; alternate/rough mixes of seven songs; full band demos of five songs, on which Beller played every instrument and programmed the drums; and a live video of the Bryan Beller Band performing the title track of his first album *View* at the WesFest 2 benefit concert (a charity event that benefits the Wes Wehmiller Scholarship at Berklee College Of Music) in March of 2007. On the lighter side, it also contains two gag reels (both PG and R-rated), and a self-deprecating look at how Beller produces in the studio. "The subject matter can be heavy and you can laugh your ass off at the same time. Our crew's good like that. Even in a space of gratitude, life's too short and too weird to take seriously all the time. Stuff that I used to think was so significant...it's all just a big cosmic joke, really. I just forgot to laugh most of the time."

Press/Label contact: Onion Boy Records ** sales@onionboyrecords.com ** (818) 599-0262