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Rising Star Tenor Sax

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NOAH PREMINGER

**Rising Star—Tenor
Saxophone**

Distinctive Character

ON HIS EIGHTH ALBUM, NOAH PREMINGER DEALS WITH BIG ISSUES: LIFE, DEATH AND CIVIL LIBERTIES. THE TENOR SAXOPHONIST'S SELF-RELEASED *MEDITATIONS ON FREEDOM* IS AN IMPASSIONED MUSICAL TREATISE ADDRESSING AMERICA'S NUMEROUS ILLS, BE THEY SOCIETAL, ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL.

"Iwanted the album to be a conversation starter, something I could discuss onstage both verbally and musically," Preminger said from his home near Boston. "I hoped it would create awareness, and maybe someone would send the record to a friend. It has nothing to do with Donald Trump, literally; it's about what our country is turning into and why freedoms are at risk, and do people really understand that? Artists struggle, but this is one of the more fulfilling things I've been able to do as a musician."

Preminger's huge tenor tone and muscular rhythms fill his music with warmth and direction, but he's more than this year's model. Preminger surrounds himself with like-minded players on *Meditations On Freedom*, the album's arrangements recalling storied jazz from John Coltrane to Sonny Rollins to Chico Hamilton's various groups. Preminger and his band—Jason Palmer (trumpet), Kim Cass (bass) and Ian Froman (drums)—came to play, to improvise and to offer musical meditations on the theme of protest.

"The only reason we play is to be original," Preminger said. "When I was a kid I practiced all day long, 10 hours a day. I sacrificed for the instrument to learn the tradition and to be a better technician on the horn. That starts to fade when you develop ideas and create your own personality and character."

"I don't touch my horn at home—ever," Preminger continued. "It comes out when I get paid to play. I haven't practiced the horn in over 10 years. But that's because it's in me at every moment. It's in my fingers, in my head. I want to improvise freely and not play regurgitated crap."

The album is unequivocal in intent. Preminger's original material, bearing such titles as "We Have A Dream," "Mother Earth," "The 99 Percent" and "Broken Treaties," balance the album's cover songs, which include Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come," Bob Dylan's "Only A Pawn In Their Game" and Bruce Hornsby's "The Way It Is."

Though Preminger's musical interests are contemporary, there's no denying the influence of Ornette Coleman, Rollins and Coltrane on his saxophone playing, and the impact of those master musicians' groups on his own.

"Everybody dips their feet in what came before them, whether you stick your toe in it or take a bath," Preminger said. "I want to hear someone sound like themselves. Take what the masters did and put your own variation on it. Then learn what the variations are and how you can create your own arsenal of sounds."

In addition to recording a solo saxophone album at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, Preminger has made a trio album with Cass on bass and Dan Weiss on drums, as well as a duo album with pianist Frank Carlberg. He is currently recording *The Chopin Project*, a series of nocturnes set to music by himself and drummer Rob Garcia.

"I'd like people to hear my music and say that it's very real and reliable, and that it grabs them," Preminger said. "That is the most important thing to me—to be a distinctive character. All the greats were unique."
—Ken Micallef



JIMMY WATZ