

# Aaron Bazzell

Aaron Bazzell is a musician, composer and educator based out of Brooklyn, NY. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, at the age of eight the family moved down south. Growing up in Metro-Atlanta, he would eventually come home from school one day to find that his father had purchased an alto saxophone. After receiving some encouragement from his middle school band director, he quickly became serious about the instrument. Originally a classical saxophonist, it was the increased opportunity for freedom of expression along with the sense of community among its practitioners that would lead him to shift his focus to jazz. He holds a B.M. in jazz studies from Michigan State University and a M.A. in music education from Teachers College. His primary teachers include Don Taylor, Jack Morrell, Greg Ward, Wess Anderson, and Diego Rivera. Aaron teaches music within the New York City Department of Education where he hopes to develop within his students the same attributes of empathy, focus and consistency that a life in music has provided him.

For me, music is about conveying both the beauty and the struggle of the human experience. *Aesthetic* is my debut album and my first body of work documenting the pursuit of this goal. The 9 compositions are an earnest attempt at displaying the components of music that I hold dear (groove, melody and communication among others) and tell the story of my musical as well as personal development.

*Tomorrow Today* is the album opener and the loud dynamic at which it begins is meant to stand as a wake-up call to the fleeting nature of time. Time is the most valuable resource in existence because it's the only thing that once gone can never be gotten back. With this in mind, we must never put off what can be done today because tomorrow isn't promised.



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*Asked and Answered* deals with combating feelings of regret. Oftentimes life proves to be the best teacher. Rather than constantly second-guessing past decisions, this tune is meant to encourage focusing on having gratitude from the knowledge gleaned from the experience.

*Unrequited* is the oldest composition on the record and the things that I've thought about while performing it in order to convey the feelings of rejection that the piece calls for have changed over the years. At the time of the recording my thoughts went to the relationship that African Americans have with this country. Our contributions were and continue to be integral to the nation's status as a world power, yet since the beginning it's been a constant struggle just to receive humane treatment.

For the past eight years I've worked as a music teacher in the NYCDOE. *First Period Prep* was inspired by this experience. In the field of education, teachers are provided with preparatory periods in order to get ready for the trials and tribulations of guiding young people. The piano intro is meant to represent the calm before the storm of the school day begins. Eventually the song settles into a groove in the same manner that teaching does.

In order for life to have meaning everyone needs a calling, something that they are pursuing that motivates them to get out of bed each morning. The next two compositions explore this idea. *Purpose* is about navigating the difficulties that arise on the path towards chasing a dream. *Eventually* features the captivating voice of Rachel Robinson. The lyrics are sung from the perspective of one's calling personified as a romantic partner and encourage the pursuit of the relationship despite the challenges that may arise.

*Maktub* was inspired by Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*. The word is Arabic for "it is written" and is repeated by several characters over the course of the story. The balance between fate and free will is one of the overarching themes of the novel and the reconciliation of those two seemingly disparate ideas is what this composition is meant to explore. The samba groove is a nod to Coelho's Brazilian heritage.

*Up and Away* chronicles a past relationship. Each section of the tune is meant to represent its different points from the initial meeting and infatuation stage through the good times and the bad. The composition is a reminder to cherish and prioritize time spent with loved ones. The album closes with *Increase and Persist*, a song of encouragement for the people of the African diaspora. The title is a rebuttal to the phrase "cease and desist" a common saying uttered by authoritative forces in order to get the masses to comply with their commands. This composition is about acknowledging that throughout our collective history we've been met with and will continue to face resistance on the path towards self-realization. Rather than succumb to these obstacles, whether external or internal, the necessary course of action is to increase and persist.

1. Tomorrow Today 5:36 (Aaron Bazzell)
2. Asked and Answered 4:29 (Aaron Bazzell)
3. Unrequited 5:12 (Aaron Bazzell)
4. First Period Prep 6:49 (Aaron Bazzell)
5. Purpose 6:09 (Aaron Bazzell)

6. Eventually 3:46 (Aaron Bazzell)
7. Maktub 4:29 (Aaron Bazzell)
8. Up and Away 6:11 (Aaron Bazzell)
9. Increase and Persist 3:08 (Aaron Bazzell)

Aaron Bazzell (Saxophone)  
Rachel Robinson (Voice, 6)  
Keith Brown (Piano)  
Brandon Donald (Drums)  
Jonathan Michel (Bass)

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