

For immediate release

Bassist Nicholas Krolak inspires listeners to find and use one's voice to impact the world around oneself with his sophomore album, "*Voice = Power*."

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. – Bassist, composer, and lyricist Nicholas Krolak is no stranger to the complexities of the modern world in which we live. As a musician, Krolak understands it is not enough for him to merely preserve tradition, but it is not possible to move forward without it. As a person, he understands the dual necessity of walking in modernity while maintaining healthy roots firmly in the natural world. *Voice = Power*, Krolak's sophomore album, represents the path he has walked to reconcile these dualities and epitomizes his mantra as he seeks to find a balance between past and future, urban and natural.

Nicholas Krolak sees one's artistic voice as having the potential to carry power – to uplift, to inspire, and to create thoughtful and meaningful change. Following feelings of powerlessness in the sociopolitical environment, Krolak deemed that for him to pursue music merely for art's sake was not enough. He wanted to make a difference and impact lives. "With the amount of time I spent training in music," Krolak recalls, "I could have become a lawyer and been fighting alongside the ACLU or a scientist dedicating my life to finding sustainable solutions to climate-change." Discouraged but not defeated, Krolak began listening to this art in which he had invested so much of his life. It was through this listening that his perception changed. After repeatedly listening to saxophonist Kenny Garrett's albums "Do Your Dance" and "Seeds From The Underground" Krolak felt uplifted – and realized firsthand the important, empowering role music has of inspiring and uplifting despite circumstance.

Voice = Power draws conceptually from the spirit of Krolak's revelation about music and artistic voices, and the album's title quickly became his mantra as he began to move forward. For Krolak, *Voice = Power* represents the strength drawn to stand against the façade of defeat and against the impending pressures of commercialism as they encroach upon nature's grounds and music's integrity. *Voice = Power* is a symbol of strength. As Krolak states, "It is what I tell myself and others to keep us going."

Much of the music on *Voice = Power* was inspired by Krolak's deep connection to and affection for nature, which he values all the more as one who is based out of the booming cityscape of Philadelphia. Krolak's writing stems from the position of a strong intersectionality and correlation between nature and jazz. Firstly, Krolak sees that both have desire for sustainability – in the ecosystem, this manifests in finding a balance between urbanization and preservation, and in jazz this is exhibited in the jazz musician's desire and need to hold on to the strength of past musical legacies and tradition. Krolak composes from the position that the beauty and integrity of both nature and jazz are under threat by commercialization, and his music seeks to honor and respect the legacy of both. Lastly, Krolak sees and is empowered by the meditative qualities found in this music and the natural world. Jazz, in Krolak's eyes, causes listeners to reflect and listen beyond the superficial level to find value, and nature, in its serenity and power, creates an environment in which one may be enveloped and profoundly reflect upon reality. Understanding these areas of overlap inspired Krolak to develop his voice for this album, and provides a schema for listeners to understand *Voice = Power*.

Voice = Power takes Krolak's concept of balance within duality and manifests this in a tangible way musically. *Voice = Power* draws on the jazz tradition of the Art Blakey-style hard-bop quintet and driving it forward into the 21st century with the addition of both modern jazz harmonic concept and poetic lyrics carried by melody and spoken word. Recorded live at Rittenhouse Sound Works in Philadelphia, PA, capturing the intensity and spontaneity of the moment. The album contains two tracks that encapsulate modern harmonic concept in the form of texture pieces, *Mannequin's Hand* and *Looking Back Through Time*, which are to be reflective and cause deeper listening, utilizing texture to emphasize their themes. *Crucian Lullaby*, a song born from tragedy, illustrates the need for balance between humanity and nature and the damage that occurs when there is an imbalance, inspired by a trip Krolak took to St. Croix shortly after the city had been devastated by a hurricane. *This Is Our Moment* stands out as a bold artistic choice that highlights Krolak exclusively

as a composer and lyricist. Written as a duet featuring pianist Tim Brey and vocalist V. Shayne Frederick, *This Is Our Moment* is inspired by a location along a riverbank in which Krolak, his wife, and their friends go to rock climb and reflect. This piece, musically and lyrically, intertwine to create an ambient and abstract representation of a location and experiences that are unerringly tied to the subtleties of love, nature, and living in the present. *Stargazer* was written when Krolak was a student at Temple University. Inspired by experiences spent outside after dark, *Stargazer* draws on the mesmerizing nature of staring into campfires and at the stars, and the interconnected unity that stems from the realization that humankind has been staring at the same stars and sky since the dawn of man.

When asked what he loves about the musicians he worked with on *Voice = Power*, Krolak remarks, "I appreciate their honesty... [and] most of all, I appreciate their time." He elaborates, "They are very clear about what they feel works and what does not. I also appreciate their willingness to go along with my larger visions." Krolak also values their flexibility in the composition process. The band performed regularly at Chris's Jazz Café, where Krolak would test out new compositions. Krolak cites the band's strength in how, without verbally communicating, they were consistently able to subtly adjust arrangement and compositional elements to help the audience feel the intended impact. Moreover, Krolak values their frankness. "If one of my songs misses the mark," he quips, "they will tell me."

The personnel on *Voice = Power* features V. Shayne Frederick, on vocals; Tim Brey, on piano; Jon Katz, alto saxophone; Elliot Bild, on trumpet; and Gusten Rudolph, on drums. "As a band, I strive to have a very balanced sound among the members of the group, in terms of aggressiveness and cohesion," Krolak states.

Voice = Power is an album that speaks to the character of the modern times, without forgetting the strengths of the music that came before. It highlights the strength and grandeur of nature and exposes the listener to the magnitude of a creation that combines this grandeur with the ingenuity and design of a modern urban reality. Through *Voice = Power*, Nicholas Krolak reminds us of the beauty of looking ahead responsibly while preserving and sustaining what lies behind.

Voice = Power releases on NextLevel, an imprint of Outside in Music on May 22, 2020.

About Nicholas Krolak:

Nicholas Krolak has been described as "thoughtful, sensitive, and humble" and one who "will undoubtedly be a contributor to the music world at large" by saxophonist Ben Schachter, and a composer who maintains "strong ties to the history of jazz while still sounding original and fresh" by bassist David Wong, who elaborates, "There is a wonderful sense of freedom alongside clear melodies and strong harmonies."

Bassist Nicholas Krolak is, despite his youth, a veteran of the Philadelphia jazz scene spanning over a decade. Heavily booked as a sideman, he has learned the musician's trade both from higher education institutions and from the masters of the Philadelphia music scene. Using these skills and expertise, he began leading his own group, in which he traces the lineage of bebop through to contemporary jazz and beyond. Using his compositions, Nicholas honors nature while also celebrating the city. He also hosts the ongoing *Voice = Power Podcast* in which he interviews contemporary jazz legends, focusing on the key question: in today's world, how does an artist find their voice?

NEXTLEVEL is an imprint of Outside in Music, dedicated to early career and first-time bandleaders seeking to make an impact on the music. OUTSIDE IN MUSIC is a record label and media company that exists to serve musicians. We are a community that strives to lift its artists above the noise of the 21st-century music industry and make music that expresses the sounds of today's wide-ranging jazz and creative music scene.

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