

I have always believed that all music is a gift from God. There are so many wonderful flavors and textures in music. It is like a banquet for your ears and a symphony for your soul. I like to cook, with food and music. I created this project with the intent to do a jazz / gospel fusion CD. Like any good recipe, it's in there and a whole lot more.

Promise made, promise kept. Eight years ago, while lying in a hospital bed, I made a promise to God to make a CD that would honor, praise him and share his message. The thing I love most about this project is that everyone involved with this project knew the importance of the task and they brought it for God and I thank them for that and more.

God blessed me a few years back when I got to work with the incomparable Steve Jankowski on Transitions, my first CD after surviving a massive stroke that left me a hemiplegic, unable to speak for a bit and for a much longer period, unable to sing.

On this project Steve wore many hats. There is no end to his talent, skills or versatility. On this project he did all the horn arrangements, some of the background vocal arrangements and he created the arrangement for the title track. He also played Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Trombone and Percussion.

As musical director and producer, Steve laid the groundwork for me to work with a plethora of prodigious musicians starting with Aaron Graves, a very accomplished musician and arranger from Philadelphia. An extraordinary talent, Aaron created 10 of the 11 arrangements on this project. His skill and delicate, soulful touch on the piano and organ lead the way to a gourmet meal of sophisticated arrangements with artistic, enlightened harmonies. He added a tasty jazz piano solo to "Better Than Anything". Aaron then put together the rhythm section that laid down the tracks for 10 of the 11 songs.

Steve Beskrone, a master of his craft and virtuoso, played bass on this project. His sensual and provocative playing add to this marvelous musical gourmet meal.

Leon Jordan is a phenomenal drummer and a master of his craft. He brought the meat and the heat to cook this gourmet meal, hot and steamy when needed to simmer, cool and collected when necessary.

Richard Tucker, is an incredible guitarist as evidenced by his solo in, "This I Know for Sure". He made his instrument cry. His tasty guitar licks added sauce to the pot which he also tastefully sprinkled on the meal.

Deb Lyons is a consummate performer. Her vocal on the duet with Leticia is expressive and glorious. The duet is a slice of heaven.

Kimberly Davis, Audrey Martells, Deb Lyons are superb vocalists, individually and as a trio singing background vocals. The women provided an absolute heavenly and delicious spice mixture that added a warmth and sweetness to this gourmet meal.

Doug DeHays, an amazing horn player, played Alto, Tenor, Bari saxes, and Flute. He added some flavorful garnish to the meal. He was delicate and sweet on the flute and hot and sassy on the saxes.

Steve Jankowski took everything to a new level with his extraordinary prowess on every instrument and in every song he played on. He made this musical meal savory ensuring that people would want more.

Then came dessert. The title track, "Lit from Within", was written and added at the last minute. The band came together just as quickly and is another example of God putting people in our paths and blessing us. It just so happened that Little Steven, Smokey and Chic were not touring at the time which freed up Mark Ribler, musical director and Demetrios Pappas, musical director, Audrey Martells and Kimberly Davis respectively. Deb Lyons was also available. Anthony Senatore, master of the 12-string bass, was not booked the day we wanted to record and Tom Cottone, an artist in his own right, was able to fit in a quick session between gigs. The dessert will not disappoint. This promise kept will feed your soul, fuel your spirit and leave you LIT FROM WITHIN.

The band

Aaron Graves – Arrangements, Piano, Organ

Steve Beskron - Bass

Leon Jordan - Drums

Richard Tucker - Guitar

Deb Lyons – Duet, vocal on Happy Days / Get Happy

Kimberly Davis, Audrey Martells, Deb Lyons - BG Vocals

Doug DeHays - Alto, Tenor, Bari saxes, Flute

Steve Jankowski - Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Trombone, horn arrangements and Percussion

Lit from Within (band)

Marc Ribler - Guitar

Demetrios Pappas - Keys

Anthony Senatore - Bass

Tom Cottone - Drums

Audrey Martells, Kimberly Davis, Deb Lyons - BG vocals

Doug DeHays - Tenor and Bari Sax

Steve Jankowski - Arrangement, Trumpets, Trombone,

Special thanks to my special guests

Marc Ribler – Guitar, and take no prisoners solo on "Lit from Within"

Demetrios Pappas – Keys and a phenomenal organ solo on "City of Ruins"

Anthony Senatore - Bass

Tom Cottone - Drums

Tommy LaBella - Alto sax and a very tasty solo on "Power of Love"

Engineered, Mixed, mastered, and produced by Steve Jankowski
at www.JanklandRecording.com in association with Contiguous Music.

CD Graphics and design by Jeremy Holmes, Bear Riff Studios
Vocals recorded at Lovelight Recording, Jayson Simpson, engineer / producer

FROM THE HEART

This I know for sure; I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and Prayer changes things. I wholeheartedly thank God for this opportunity to sing his praises and to serve him. I thank him for his grace, his many blessings and his abundant and abiding love.

A huge thank you to everyone involved and who was supportive in bringing this project to fruition including but not limited to, Emily Dunn, an extraordinary speech therapist, Deb Lyons, an amazing vocal coach, Steve Jankowski, a wonderful renaissance man, and to my family, My three awesome sons, Jayson Simpson, Shawn Simpson, and Jeremy Holmes. A very special thank you to Donna Shields, an extraordinary and phenomenal woman, for her sacrifice, support and love.

Distribution: The Orchard

1. Lit From Within: Leticia Walker, Jayson Simpson, Steve Jankowski
2. This I Know for Sure: Leticia Walker, Jayson Simpson
3. Speak To Me: Tommy Walker
4. Better Than Anything: Bill Loughborough / Dave Wheat
5. Power of Love / Love Power: Luther Vandross, William Miller
6. Prayer of St. Frances: Sebastian Temple
7. Highest Praise Medley: Carl Boberg, Andrea Clayton,
8. My City of Ruins: Bruce Springsteen
9. Just A Closer Walk with Thee: Traditional
10. Happy Days / Get Happy: Jack Yellen, Harold Arlen
11. Jesus Is Mine: Carlis Lee Moody

Prayer of St. Frances: additional lyrics, Leticia Walker; additional music, Aaron Graves and Leticia Walker

Happy Days / Get Happy: additional lyrics, Leticia Walker, Deb Lyons; additional music Aaron Graves, Leticia Walker, Deb Lyons