



## Esbjörn Svensson *HOME.S.*

ACT  
★★★★

We grieve for the loss of those we know, for the inability to connect with them ever again, nor they with us. So, imagine what it must have felt like for Eva Svensson to discover, 10 years after her husband's premature death in 2008, a recording of solo piano pieces he recorded just weeks before that fateful tragedy.

"When the solo piano recordings were found at our home, it felt like getting a message smuggled over the border," she said. Death

is that uncrossable boundary between our lives and whatever follows, yet Esbjörn Svensson's parting gift to his loved ones and to lovers of his music is this encore performance from beyond the veil, in a touching requiem.

This recording also now stands as the only documented performance of Svensson alone at the piano, removed from his longtime companions in the acclaimed trio E.S.T., the first European band to grace the cover of *DownBeat*. His playing here is of the same essence as the trio: introspective clarity, moments of incandescent velocity, a spacious mystique — only now the pianist is free to move in a rhythm all his own.

The specter of Keith Jarrett hovers not far from Svensson's core of inspiration, and à la Jarrett, these pieces seem to be wholly conceived in the moment. Yet this music sounds unequivocally personal to Svensson, and poignantly culminating — as if somehow one can know upon hearing that this is perhaps the last thing he ever played.

It's a fitting coda to a musician's life well lived, to be cherished one more time.

—Gary Fukushima

**HOME.S.:** Alpha; Beta; Gamma; Delta; Epsilon; Zeta; Eta; Theta; Iota. (36:32)

**Personnel:** Esbjörn Svensson, piano.

**Ordering info:** [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com)

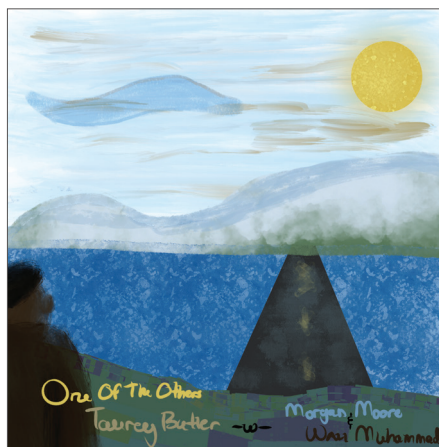
## Taurey Butler *One Of The Others*

JUSTIN TIME  
★★★★½

Pianist Taurey Butler's trio of bassist Morgan Moore and drummer Wali Muhammad aren't just swingin' on *One Of The Others*, they're swangin'. There is both stank and funk on that there thang. Butler's originals and arrangements of standards honor the swing approach of the genre as a purist while still feeling entirely contemporary.

The album's title track opens things up with a pure swingin' tune that sounds so rooted in tradition it feels like it's been around for decades. Butler, Moore and Muhammad seem to have inhabited this arrangement long ago and are just as delighted to bring it to us this time around. "Artis' Truth" is a pure ballad that could stand the test of time if it makes all the proper rounds.

Everyone gets their moment to shine on that old chestnut "Smile," with Moore's particularly moving bass solo, though one wishes Muhammad had a few more bars on his solo — it leaves one really wanting more, but it's rather nice to have one's appetite whet so well. Their take on "What Is This Thing Called Love" finds the long way around the tune and seems to find



its bearings mid-air to barrel-roll to even more dizzying heights.

So much of *One Of The Others* feels familiar without being rote. It's the piano-bass-drums trio album that could have arrived on the scene at any point in jazz history and still feels fresh and new.

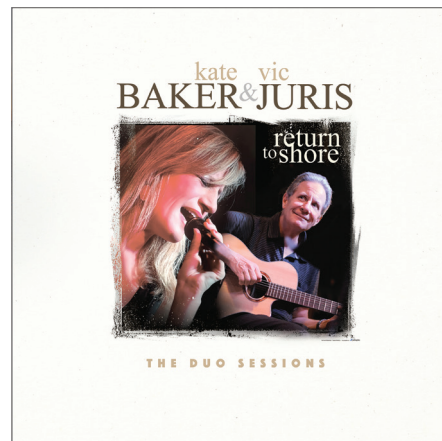
Thankfully, Taurey Butler brought it to our present time.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

**One Of The Others:** One Of The Others; Artis' Truth; Swappin' Lies; On The Natch; Smile; Nut Fog; Sisyphean Task; What Is This Thing Called Love; Can't Buy Me Love; Laini's Love; I Can Only Be Me. (56:39)

**Personnel:** Taurey Butler, piano; Morgan Moore, bass; Wali Muhammad, drums.

**Ordering info:** [justin-time.com](http://justin-time.com)



## Kate Baker & Vic Juris *Return To Shore: The Duo Sessions*

STRIKEZONE  
★★★★½

Knowing that singer Kate Baker's debut album was also guitarist Vic Juris' last makes *The Duo Sessions* particularly poignant. Given the obvious chemistry the married couple once shared on the bandstand, tunes like Brian Wilson's "God Only Knows," "I've Grown Accustomed to His Face" and Alec Wilder's "Blackberry Winter" now take on profoundly deeper meaning here, turning them into heart-wrenching odes to a lost love.

Other gems on this intimate recording produced by guitarist and longtime friend Dave Stryker include an energized version of Joni Mitchell's "Black Crow" that has Juris strumming furiously on acoustic guitar, the waltz-time title track, which has Vic overdubbing tight unisons with Kate's scatting lines, a minor key "Moonscape" (title track of Juris' 1997 *SteepleChase* album, which his wife wrote new lyrics for) and a stirring take on Mitchell's "Both Sides Now."

That Juris, who died of cancer on Dec. 31, 2019, was an all-world guitarist is a long-ago established fact. His 20-year tenure in Dave Liebman's band, along with 18 albums as a leader for the *SteepleChase*, firmly cemented his position as a guitarist's guitarist whose sheer command of the fretboard was undeniable. He holds back none of his vaunted facility here — playing rich fingerstyle chord melodies, intricate contrapuntal patterns and crisp arpeggios while picking lyrical single note lines and tapping out bell-like false harmonics — but it's always in service of the tunes, his wife's gorgeous voice and her clearly articulated lyrics.

—Bill Milkowski

**Return To Shore—The Duo Sessions:** God Only Knows; Return To Shore; I've Grown Accustomed To His Face; Black Crow; The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress; Moonscape; Madalena; Both Sides Now; Blackberry Winter; Are You Kind. (54:30)

**Personnel:** Kate Baker, vocals; Vic Juris, acoustic and electric guitars; Arta Jekabson, background vocals. (10)

**Ordering info:** [katebakerandvicjuris.bandcamp.com](http://katebakerandvicjuris.bandcamp.com)