



Guitarist/Composer QUENTIN ANGUS Presents *The State of Things*

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Featuring: Quentin Angus (guitar, compositions), **Michael Mayo** (voice, lyrics),
Can Olgun (piano), **Desmond White** (bass), **Nate Smith** (drums)

Guitarist/composer **Quentin Angus** is back with a wonderfully unique album (his fourth as a leader), *The State of Things* (available March 18, 2022 on Outside In Music), a pristine recording that truly reflects Angus' life experiences, including becoming a father, embarking on a Professorship (at BMCC), the challenges and rewards of living and working in NYC, observing the political, social and environmental turmoil of America and beyond, and much more.

Because of this album being comprised of a cohesive book of music with eight chapters, and utilizing elements of rock, pop and R&B (such as forms with very little improvisation, songs with strong, catchy melodies that could be considered a 'chorus', and very little swing), it was imperative for Angus to assemble the right musicians, and did he ever hit the mark! It's hard to imagine a better drummer for the music on *The State of Things* than **Nate Smith**, who delivers a colossal groove at every turn. His feel, pocket and taste reaches another plateau on these compositions. Vocalist/lyricist **Michael Mayo** is a talent deserving wider recognition, which this album should certainly help with. His crystalline delivery is joyous to behold and truly brings these songs to life, while his improvisations reveal a communicative and compelling soloist within. Pianist **Can Olgun's** parts on the album, and his many solo trades with Angus, are so near perfect that you could take them for granted. But, to achieve the level of artistic maturity and skill required to deliver such a performance is a monumental task. Bassist **Desmond White** . . . words won't do him justice, so the best bet is to go listen to the album! The fearless leader and architect of this album, **Quentin Angus**, more than lives up to such high praise as, "Lord of the strings" – Michael Dwyer, *The Age*, "The Future of Jazz Composition" – Paul Williams (ASCAP), and "Exuberant, richly melodic and smartly arranged" – Richard Kamins, *Culture Creature*.

Highlights on the album include the compelling, thought-provoking title track, "**The State of Things**," a strong statement (and the reason the album is named for it), meant to convey a somber story about the many predicaments and plights of the world, but also offer a more positive outlook, and ultimately to look forward to a more desirable future. The melancholy instrumental melody played by Angus and White, accompanied by a rapid-fire series of news clippings (addressing gun violence, race and gender inequalities, climate-change, political corruption, Covid-19 and more), is meant to make the listener feel uneasy and eventually overwhelmed, until suddenly the song releases into a propulsive groove in seven, with vocals and lyrics by Mayo: "*As this world, ever turns. Fear, closed minds, as it burns. Can we hold, our hearts, to the sky? And make room, for our, human rise? We holding hands can inspire, Change in a land, bathed in fire. In our own, kind of way, we are whole. As long as we know, hope.*" Following a solo by pianist Olgun, the melancholy melody is reprised for an outro, again accompanied by a deluge of news clippings, but of a more hopeful, positive nature, covering topics such as renewable energy, new technologies, ultimately building towards a world of abundance and access for all.

"**New York Muster**" is a composition about grinding it out in NYC. Beginning his journey in Eden Valley, a small South Australian country town with a population of only 200, Angus has been based in the world's Mecca for the arts, the Big Apple, since 2010. Angus elaborated, "NYC is the city of dreams, a hotbed for artistic expression, melting pot for cultural exchange, and arguably the best place for jazz in the world. While I acknowledge how wonderful it can be, it is also terrifying as the city can chew you up and spit you out if you are not lucky, and just being good at your craft does not guarantee a fruitful career. And though there are millions of people in NYC, it can also be a very lonely place at times."

Fast forward to now, and Angus is firmly entrenched in the City's jazz scene, with the bonus of a solid career as a professor for the City University of New York. He has released many albums, toured around the world, and has a house and a family of his own. However, he's never forgotten the New York City hustle, the struggle, hard work and persistence it took to reach this point, and "New York Muster" is a tribute to that progression.

Peppered throughout the album are three melodic gems known the world over, arranged by Angus to great effect; "Pure Imagination," "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," and "What A Wonderful World." These are songs that Angus has felt a connection with for a significant amount of time. The guitarist fell in love with "Pure Imagination" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" as a kid after seeing "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and "The Wizard of Oz." He has also listened to "What a Wonderful World" for more than twenty years (mainly Louis Armstrong's iconic versions). "Rather than simply covering the songs, I have tried to arrange them in a way to provide interest for the listener, including changing "Pure Imagination" to 3/4, adding a bass line 'riff' to "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and reharmonizing "What a Wonderful World" says Angus.

More on Quentin Angus:

Quentin Angus has received national and international recognition for both his guitar playing and composing, including an APRA Art Music Award for 'Excellence in Jazz' (2012), subsequent nominations in 2013 ('Excellence in Jazz') and 2014 ('Work of the Year'), winning three ASCAP 'Young Jazz Composer Awards' (2012/2013/2015), five *Downbeat Magazine* Awards in the 'Composition' (2011/2012/2014) and 'Soloist' (2012/2014) categories, and being named the Channel 9 'Young Achiever of the Year' (Arts Category/2013).

Angus has been leaving audiences in awe around the world with performances in Holland, Belgium, Romania, Switzerland, Turkey, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. This includes appearances at the Montreux International Jazz Festival (Switzerland), Melbourne International Jazz Festival (Australia), and Jazz Hoeilaart Festival (Belgium), along with the release of three critically acclaimed albums as a band leader, *In Stride* (2017), called, "Eclectic, dynamic and lyrical" – *Dragon Jazz*, *Perception* (2013), described as, "A truly special and essential recording" – *Jazz Inside Magazine* (Eric Harabadian), and *Retrieval Structure* (2011), hailed as, "fresh, sophisticated, vibrant and formidable" – Edward Blanco, *All About Jazz*.

Angus holds a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), awarded with a 'Dean's Commendation', a Master of Music Degree (Jazz Performance) under the tutelage of jazz great John Abercrombie, awarded 'Summa Cum Laude', and a Bachelor of Music Degree (Jazz Performance). Angus' is the author of five original transcription books of Gilad Hekselman improvisations: 'Splitlife' (2012), 'Words Unspoken' (2012), 'Hearts Wide Open' (2012), 'This Just In' (2013), and 'Homes' (2015). He has also been published by PickUpMusic, Jazz Lessons Videos, MelBay, Jazz Heaven, and the NZMiC music journal along with conducting presentations of his academic research at music conferences across Australasia including the 2020 Music Business symposium for JEN (Jazz Education Network).

Angus has performed and recorded with jazz luminaries Nate Smith, Ari Hoenig, Kevin Hays, Jon Gordon, Shai Maestro, Colin Stranahan, Linda Oh, Rogerio Boccato, Jo Lawry, Elliot Mason, and Will Vinson. As part of his formal academic education, he has received instruction from Jason Moran, John Riley, Todd Coolman, Hal Galper, Jonathan Kreisberg, Randy Johnston, Pat Martino, Adam Rodgers, and Carmen Lundy.

Quentin Angus – *The State of Things*: 1 – Broken Bones – by Quentin Angus (lyrics by Michael Mayo), 2 – **Pure Imagination** – by Leslie Bricusse & Anthony Newley, 3 – **The State of Things** – by Quentin Angus (lyrics by Michael Mayo), 4 – **Enigma** – by Quentin Angus, 5 – **Somewhere Over the Rainbow** – Harold Arlen, 6 – **New York Muster** – by Quentin Angus (lyrics Michael Mayo), 7 – **What a Wonderful World** – Bob Thiele & George David Weiss, 8 – **New Beginnings** – by Quentin Angus (lyrics by Natalie Deitz)

Please Visit:

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