



# WALTER KITTLE

BASSIST & CONTEMPORARY JAZZ ARTIST

MUSIC FOR THE ADVENTUROUS SOUL

For those of us who aren't yet in the position to be "living the dream" like Walter Kittle, the multi-talented Crystal Beach, Florida bassist and emerging contemporary jazz artist, Kittle's music offers the next best thing. He retired from his Michigan-based chiropractic clinic several years ago, after a serious work-related injury, to rehab himself and then to pursue his first love of music full time. Kittle follows his acclaimed debut album **Full Circle** with **Jazz by the Sea** – a soulful and eclectic five track EP that celebrates the joys of romance and the natural beauty of life on the Gulf of Mexico. Both releases reflect the veteran medical professional's desire to engage in the art of healing through music.

The titles of the tracks all connect to dynamic visuals and emotions intrinsic to Kittle's chill "life is good" mindset, living in a house on the Gulf and sharing his days with his wife Robin, their pup Gracie and kitty Martha. "It's all about enjoying my new life and loving this lifestyle," the bassist says.

Kittle wrote the opening track "She Fire," featuring the funky sax of Nick Stone, when he was dating his now wife Robin, as an ode to her red hair and vibrant personality. Extending that sentiment, "Remembering When" is a thoughtful and reflective tune inspired by memories of their first date. "Dueling Dolphins" and "Playful Pelicans" are his own musical interpretations of the sea life he gets to observe and appreciate every day. One of the daily activities in Crystal Beach is crowds gathering to watch the beautiful sunset – a meaningful ritual that inspired the bassist to write the song that came to be titled "Sunset Serenade." The origin of the title has a special poignancy. When the song was in progress, Kittle took it to his brother-in-law Stephen, who was very ill at the time, for his opinion and title suggestions. He passed away early the next morning after giving Kittle the title, which prompted Kittle to subtitle it "Stephen's Song."

Like **Full Circle**, the tracks on **Jazz by the Sea** are produced by renowned Detroit based contemporary jazz artist, multi-instrumentalist and producer Nate Harasim, whose all-star smooth jazz credits include Nils, Lin Rountree, Brian Simpson, Darren Rahn, Michael Lington, Dave Koz and Julian Vaughn. "I've learned so much about the process of making music from Nate," Kittle says. "When we first started working on **Full Circle**, it was all new to me and I would simply send him a song and let him work on it. Now, I have more confidence and feel like an equal in that environment. We really enjoy playing off each other."

Known throughout his years of performing in and around his hometown of Lansing, Michigan as "Dr. Bass," Kittle offers a range of sounds unique to the urban jazz genre via a variety of instruments, including piccolo bass, five string bass, MIDI synthesizer bass, fretless bass and his custom 8-string bass – an axe he calls "an extended range bass," which allows him to modulate to sound like a jazz guitar. He attributes his passion for unique instrumentation and his melodic sensibilities to his background as a performance major at Michigan State University (MSU), where his scholarship was based on his playing bassoon in the Symphonic Band, contra bassoon in the Orchestra and bass guitar in the jazz band.

Once I retired from being a Chiropractor, I realized I could still impact people's lives and health in other ways. Thus, giving new purpose when I made my 'Full Circle' back to music. Becoming an artist for me, has to do with playing music that can touch and move people – and in one unbelievable instance, actually helped to save someone's life. After a gig, a person approached me and told me that they were at a very low place and played my album and in that moment decided not to take their own life as planned. That's the power of music, and confirmation that I've made the right new career path."

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# MUSIC

Urban jazz fans who love the bass will vibe especially well with the unique array of romantic and beach life inspired tunes on Kittle's *Jazz by the Sea* EP. The lead single – and the most infectious, “in the pocket” among all these great tracks – is “She Fire”, which bursts forth with finger snap percussion and a bubbling bass melody that leads to an explosive hook with saxophonist Nick Stone- who later adds a sensual light funk solo. While the snappy bass and lively bass/sax interplay dominate, Kittle also includes playful synth colors atop the melody.

Kittle teaches us about sea life via the edgy funk energy of “Dueling Dolphins,” which shuffles and bounces along with Harasim’s jazzy piano and the bassist’s bubbly soulfulness alternating to create an alternating sense of laid-back breeziness and spirited activity (including a dazzling bass solo) that reflects the movement of the dolphins. Kittle admits that when he first moved to Florida, his initial impressions of those “Playful Pelicans” was that they were uncoordinated and dorky. However, his mind quickly changed once he saw these beautiful, graceful creatures in flight – and was particularly fascinated with how they dip to just inches above the water. He opens his ode to them with a hypnotic swirling motif that approximates the tone of a jazz guitar, then eases into a moody mystical, easygoing flow highlighted by a bass melody. Then, as if to reflect the birds’ movement, he and Harasim heat up to a light funk vibe with tight basslines all while keeping the atmospheric mystery intact.

Engaging in more of the romantic ambience of life by the water, on “Remembering When,” Kittle and Harasim keep the mystical atmospheres flowing and include trippy synth textures, and a unique approach, with laid back bass and keys easing over Kittle’s snappy bass driven

acoustic guitar sounds. Later in the track, Harasim creates mystical, immersive synth water textures and Kittle reflects musically on the beauty and mystery of love. The closer, “Sunset Serenade,” picks up the pace with a strutting melodic bassline and a funkied out electric guitar modulation and click percussion groove. With its minimal arrangement, it’s the EP’s best pure showcase of Kittle’s virtuosic skills.





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## ON STAGE

Kittle's love for live performing began in 11th grade, when his band teacher asked him to join his pro jazz band. He was amazed to be chosen as all the members of this group were music teachers. He also played in rock bands during his teens. While in high school one of his Rock bands opened for the super group Chicago and The Lettermen.

In Grad school he performed in a 9-piece horn band called Brass Tacks. They were honored to be voted "Midwest's Number One Horn Band." Though his family and medical career dominated his life for many years, Kittle found time to play in the worship band in church most Sundays, performed assorted jazz shows at restaurants and festivals in the Lansing area. He played in the pit band for Broadway musicals at the famed Wharton Center, and he performed on live TV in Nashville for the Christian music awards. He also was honored to be a guest soloist at the world-famous Baker's Keyboard Lounge in Detroit, where he performed with guitarist Steve Somers and the Washtenaw Community College Jazz Ensemble.

When he released *Full Circle*, he headlined a release party at the Cadillac Club with keyboard/sax duo Horn and Holland and played with them on other occasions at local jazz festivals. Since moving to Florida, Kittle has become a regular at the Clearwater Yacht Club, performing (solo with backing tracks) for their jazz and Mother's Day brunches, as well as other special events solo and also with two piece ensembles.



## NOTABLE PREFORMACE

- Lansing Center – Lansing, MI (opened for Chicago)
- Charlotte Performing Arts Center – Charlotte, MI (opened for The Lettermen with Don Sovey Band)
- Hastings Jazz Festival – Hastings, MI (w/ Horn & Holland)
- Michigan Chicken Wing Festival – Lansing, MI (w/ gospel singer Anna Maria)
- Big Ticket Festival – Gaylord, MI (Michigan's largest Gospel music festival)
- Live TV broadcast – Nashville, TN (Christian Music Awards)
- Music in the Park- Holt, MI (w/ Billy Mac)
- Bakers keyboard Lounge – Detroit, MI (guest soloist w/ Steve Somers Band)

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## REVIEW

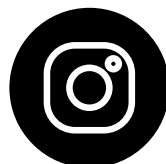
"In a genre where dynamic grooves and lively melodies usually take precedence over true instrumental storytelling, multi-talented bassist/composer and artist Walter Kittle stands out by virtue of inviting us on his perfectly titled new EP **Jazz by the Sea** to experience his joyful and fulfilling life on the Florida beach. Produced by Nate Harasim – who has also helmed projects for some of smooth jazz's elite artists – the contagious collection offers an eclectic mix of songs full of cool mood swings, dreamy atmospheres, funky hooks and vibes and exciting jazzy solos. Using his array of basses, Kittle is a master of sonic modulation, creating everything from low toned bubbly energy to crackling jazz guitar sonics. **Jazz by the Sea** is a powerful showcase for a powerhouse emerging talent!" – **Jonathan Widran**

## FROM THE BEGINNING

The title of Kittle's 2016 debut album **Full Circle** says it all about his full time return to music after years as a Chiropractic Physician in his home state of Michigan. He started out at MSU as a performance major on a scholarship, then after two years felt he needed a more secure career path and changed his major to biochemistry. He later graduated from Palmer University School of Chiropractic Medicine in Iowa. His interest in music was there from the age of three, when he would put on shows in his playroom and sing and dance for family members. When he was five, and probably due to his Polish heritage, his parents bought him an accordion. He quickly tired of playing polkas and in 5th grade asked his parents for a bass guitar for Christmas. In high school, in addition to playing the bassoon, he also played his bass in a rock band that was good enough to be offered a recording contract with United Artists Records. He later gigged and toured with this group between high school and starting college.

## CONNECT HERE

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