

pianist & musical director  
**DAVIS WHITFIELD**



**SCATTER  
THE  
ATOMS  
THAT  
REMAIN**

My first years were in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I come from a family of musicians. I chose the piano because I was amazed at being able to play multiple sounds at once and in a way that felt natural with my body. As a child, I had this uneasy feeling of knowing there is something operating on a deeper level than what I was told or taught. This feeling followed me like a shadow well into my twenties onto the jazz scene. I've never liked being told what and/or how to feel, think or believe. Looking back on it, even from a very young age I didn't trust giving my devotion - my complete depth of feeling - to an institution, whether the church, school or later, the NY jazz scene.

I was operating with a sort of split purpose for many years, being pulled somewhat one way or another by the gravity of wanting to fit in on the one hand and a yearning for self-discovery – self-realization and purpose - on the other. The thing that kept me going was this certain feeling - like a spark - that I'd feel so potently on some occasions, I was looking for it in my romantic relationships as well, but it was still quite difficult to identify and understand at the time. One clue was that I'd feel it especially when listening to the music of John Coltrane's quartet on the albums Live at the Half Note, Transition, Sun Ship, A Love Supreme and Meditations.

I wanted more from what I was doing, so over time more and more of the music I played as a bandleader I designed for more freedom. I was searching for something. It was on this path of discovery that I met Franklin Kiermyer. I was recommended to him by a mutual friend as someone that might be able to do what the music needed.

At first, I was lost. I couldn't understand what was happening, as it defied many of the conventions I was used to. At the same time, it felt more like what I was supposed to do. It felt like anything goes, no holding back, go for broke, play whatever comes instead of questioning it.

After working with Franklin for about 2 years the way I conceptualized playing music made a radical shift. This was the first time I had the opportunity to work with someone so dedicated, focused and wise in their own right - who not only expected the same fire from me but had the faith to bring me into the fold and share his different processes to help me identify and attain it for myself. Finally, the feeling of being "lost" evolved into the practice of letting go and being present in the moment - having faith in the very feeling that brought me to the music in the first place.

I haven't been able to accomplish this by playing the piano the ways other people play. I've only been able to attain this by finding my own way through continued exploration, development and evolution. That's why I play with Franklin Kiermyer. That's what he's been devoted to all his life, long before he and Pharoah Sanders recorded Solomon's Daughter. That album set the tone.

Developing this music with Franklin at the helm has been an intense process, due to the music's own gravity. It's been difficult, because it requires vulnerability and honesty more than anything else. Through these years of working together - through trials and tribulations - our friendship has evolved and now we're like family.

It's exciting, because with each revelation comes a deeper level of understanding and more faith in oneself to keep that momentum going. Whether it's a product of our environment, our DNA or both, we all have baggage that we carry with us through life. For example, it's feels so hard for me to to confront and deal with negative feelings like disappointment, anger, fear, sadness - these feelings come up inside of me and I know they will not disappear even when I reach a certain level of contentment. Avoiding these feelings distances oneself from honesty. Honesty is what makes the music beautiful.

The path of developing this music is not to reach a place of contentment, but to be propelled through continual growth and evolution, challenging complacency so that we can ultimately be awake and fully present in the moment. So for us, the music isn't something separate than the other parts of our life. It's not a gig like going into the office. It's more like going to worship - the spiritual practice of being aware. Like worship of the center of now.

SCATTER THE ATOMS THAT REMAIN is the name Franklin and I have given to what we do. We are usually a quartet, sometimes a sextet, with a roster of some of the best musicians in the world. We also perform and record as a duo and trio. The name of the band comes from a spontaneous song composed by Franklin's spiritual teacher: "Take this big corpse of the five skandhas and burn it in the realization of selflessness. Scatter the atoms that remain in the space of the Dharmadhatu and in the Dharmadhatu of no attachment ... Ah! Ah! Ha! Ha!"

From a young age Franklin looked for the music that moved him the most. Resting in and sharing that feeling became his life's devotion. Every time he plays the drums, he is fully immersed in that feeling and shares it in its most potent form.

*"A sense of shared catharsis through music that is at once majestic, ferocious, and relatable ... the words "ecstasy" and "ecstatic" appear almost predictably, but sometimes a word is just right. Scatter The Atoms That Remain channel the kind of beautiful, disciplined intensity exemplified by late John Coltrane. This type of universal, non-denominational spirituality simply feels good." ~ JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER*

*"The transformative energy of Scatter The Atoms That Remain - A phenomenon on the current jazz scene. Drummer, composer and leader Franklin Kiermyer and pianist Davis Whitfield are the soul of this formation, two artists who imprint spirit, magic, soul and heart on the band, and who have been critically acclaimed in their many performances." LEVANTE + VALENCIA PLAZA SPAIN*

*"love your new album ... obviously...wow! Played a track on my last show!" GILLES PETERSON WORLDWIDE*

*"Spiritualism, Magic and Soul - An astonishingly rounded, flowing performance that focuses on spiritualism, magic and soul lets the transformative power of the quartet's music shine brightly." - GAESTELISTE GERMANY*

*"A relentless pulse that conveys incredible strength ... a sublime spirituality that envelops the entire album" JAZZ COLOURS (Italy)*

*"By its fervor and its sincerity, by the vibration that runs through all its music with an intense thrill, the quartet commands respect." CITIZEN JAZZ (France)*

*"5-Stars! Immediately from the first song I was hit by the immediate and raw energy ... this album has everything ... an excellent album full of honest music from a fantastic, acoustic jazz quartet." SKJAZZ (Slovakia)*