



**CONTEMPORARY JAZZ PIONEERS *PIECES OF A DREAM* RELEASE
25TH RECORDING WITH THE ANTICIPATED *FIRE UP!***

**New CD Out 10/15 Features Guests Justin Lee Schultz,
Alexander Zonjic & B.K Jackson
Plus a New Anthem For The City of Brotherly Love**

THE BUZZ ON PIECES OF A DREAM

“Pioneers of Smooth Jazz.” - The Philadelphia Inquirer

“The Steely Dan of Smooth Jazz.” - All About Jazz

“A tough act to follow!” - Count Basie

After a year and a half of social distancing, virtual concerts and live streams, Contemporary Jazz pioneers Pieces Of A Dream is back with *Fired Up!* With their 25th new recording set for release on October 15, 2021, their fast-approaching 45th anniversary and a string of tour dates, the super-band’s mission is stronger than ever. “We are committed, determined and fully prepared to get back in the groove again,” declares drummer Curtis Harmon. “This means doing all I can to ensure my God-given gifts and talents are used for something meaningful, not just for myself but for others as well.” Pianist James Lloyd adds, “On our first in person gig recently, it was nothing short of magical. We didn’t want to leave the stage. It was awesome being able to see our fan’s faces again, even if through masks.” The story of Pieces Of A Dream, who has opened for such luminaries as Miles Davis, Count Basie and James Brown, is a tale of destiny and brotherhood. Picture three starry-eyed fanatical teen musicians who manage to get discovered by Mister Magic (Grover Washington, Jr.), become teen sensations and go on to join the pantheon of musical wonders from the “City Of Brotherly Love” that includes, Gamble and Huff, Patti Labelle, John Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, and The Roots. They have toured the world, sold over one million albums, and scored both Smooth Jazz and R&B radio hits along the way. Pieces Of A Dream has long been revered for their signature fusion of Jazz, R&B, Funk, Pop and Blues. James Lloyd promises the new CD *Fired Up!*, will feel like coming home. “This new album runs the gamut of what our fans have come to expect: up-tempo, down-tempo, Funk, ballads, Latin-infused and party jams - it’s all Pieces!” he exclaims.

James Lloyd and Curtis Harmon share a zeal for music and connecting with their fans that is palpable. This coupled with their magnetic chemistry have attributed to their enduring success. James shares, “My partner Curt is the pocket and the drive onstage. When collaborating and writing music, he brings a different energy and direction, which is refreshing,” Curtis comments, “James has a unique sense of humor that makes working with him a lot of fun. He is also a perfectionist when it comes to our music so he never settles for doing less than his best.”

Pieces Of A Dream's anticipated new recording, *Fired Up!*, delivers their trademark sound. The album showcases ten tracks featuring soulful grooves, energized solos and organic compositions. "After a collectively challenging year and a half, we hope *Fired Up!* brings new excitement and energy to our fans love of music," says drummer Curtis Harmon. "We want this album to be a reminder of the good things life has to offer both musically and personally." Pianist James Lloyd reflects, "We wouldn't be here without our fans. Our mission has always been to stay true to them and to dance a delicate balance between being progressive and holding onto our roots, while pushing the envelope and stretching our boundaries."

Recording an album during Covid presented some obstacles but James and Curtis met the challenge. "This album was a bit more challenging, but because we were already accustomed to not having to be in the same room to record, it wasn't too bad," says James. *Fired Up!* opens with the exhilarating and jet-fueled "In Too Deep," featuring saxophonist Tony Watson Jr. and trumpeter Parker Lewis. Curtis describes the song as "Pieces Of A Dream meets Tower Of Power!" He adds, "It gives you a Pieces groove with a popping Tower Of Power type horn section." The old-school flow of "Ear Candy" serves just the right amount of sweetness to satisfy your ears with Lloyd's piano glissandos and bluesy phrasing along with Harmon's rock-steady back beat. The tranquil lilting melodicism of "Smoothing Out" follows, featuring flutist Alexander Zonjic and "Livin' The Life," offers the perfect party anthem to uplift any occasion and is a special tribute to Pieces' beloved Philadelphia. Harmon says, "I think that this track represents a Philly type of groove. This is one of those head-bobbing songs that grabs you when the bass line starts and keeps you grooving all the way through. Young saxophonist B.K. Jackson gives a great performance on this one."

One of the most time-honored and treasured traditions in jazz is the mentorship that the elder statesmen and women provide to the younger generation of players. Luminaries like Art Blakey and Betty Carter utilized their bands as 'Universities.' Pieces Of A Dream feels an obligation to carry on this tradition. When Lloyd and Harmon were teens, the iconic saxophonist Grover Washington Jr., took the duo under his wing and signed them to their first deal in 1981. Now the duo have come full circle and are mentoring the young multi-instrumental whiz kid Justin Lee Schultz. Lloyd shares, "We learned so much from Grover and we try to share those lessons wherever we can and as much as we can. Now, through Justin, we're paying it forward." Lloyd wrote and along with Harmon appears on Justin's first single from his recording debut, *Gruv Kid*. The circle of life continues and Lloyd adds, "I feel things like this are what keeps Grover's and Pieces' legacy going." Justin Lee Schultz is featured on the track "Just Do It!" and Harmon affirms, "There is a certain satisfaction that comes from connecting with young people. It revitalizes you and gives you even greater purpose. Although Justin is only 14 years old, his maturity is definitely on display as his solo kicks this song up a notch. We hope to keep people in the groove with this one!"

The album's title track and first single "Fired Up," is a rallying cry for people to focus on the present and to make the most of it. James Lloyd shares, "It's a wake up call. This song is meant to be a sign that things are on their way to where we want it to be. There's still a ways to go, but it can be done and we can get there! Let's get fired up!" Pieces offer an antidote for your blues with "Feelin' Good." "This song will help you forget your worries and take you to a place of serenity," explains Harmon adding, "Chris Harris's acoustic and Latin flavored performance on the guitar along with Tony Watson Jr.'s sultry saxophone, almost transport you to a paradise island. It's the calm after the storm!" Most people would think that Smooth Jazz and Trap music have nothing in common but think again! Lloyd says, "'It's A Vibe' is his attempt to find the synergy between Smooth Jazz and Trap Music. "I wanted to find that space where they coexist and bring their worlds to each other." Now, how is that for exploration? Harmon says of the R&B inflected swinger "Gettin' Through It," "This groove displays a smooth jazz feel with an R&B swagger. It's one of those songs that we hope musicians as well as the general public will appreciate because of its unusual chord progressions. Plus, Chris Harris really brings the heat with his guitar solo." *Fired Up!* concludes with the ethereal and arresting "Going Home," a farewell tribute to Lloyd's recently deceased Father-In-Law. He shares, that the song is ultimately a composition of "hope and healing."

James Lloyd and Curtis Harmon have been the nucleus of Pieces Of A Dream since its inception and played together as kids and members of the Ada Lewis Middle School jazz ensemble along with former member, bassist Cedric Napoleon. Danny Harmon, Curtis' father and a jazz musician himself, became their manager and had the guys

listening to the Modern Jazz Quartet, Ahmad Jamal and Oscar Peterson, as they developed their unique sound, blending their jazz roots with R&B, soul and funk.

Taking their name from the Stanley Turrentine song “Pieces Of Dreams,” Pieces released three albums in quick succession, establishing their place in the world of Smooth Jazz: *Pieces Of A Dream* (1981), *We Are One* (1982) and *Imagine This* (1983). Those albums include some of their biggest early hits, including “Warm Weather,” “Mount Airy Groove” and “Fo Fi Fo.” Pieces Of A Dream recorded their Shanachie debut, *In The Moment*, in 2013, followed by 2015’s *All In*, 2017’s *Just Funkin’ Around* and *On Another Note* in 2019.

With the release of *Fired Up!*, Pieces Of A Dream is proving that they are still relevant, still swinging, still pushing and still searching to hold a sacred place in the hearts of their fans. Curtis Harmon states, “Although the pandemic altered the way we were able to deliver our music to people, we will always create music and find a way to make it available to those who want to hear it.” James Lloyd adds, “With what the world has experienced lately, I do feel that the importance of music and its powers have gained more recognition. However, I don’t feel that our role as artists has changed. Our goal is still to touch, heal, energize, and help people release.”

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