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Chicago Bassist & Composer Matt Ulery
To Release Third Greenleaf Music Album,
***In The Ivory*, September 16,**
Expanding Upon the Critically Acclaimed
2012 Chamber-Jazz Double Album, *By A Little Light*

With The Help of His Core Trio Plus Violinist Zach Brock,
Vocalist Grazyna Auguscik and 3-time GRAMMY-Winning
New Music Ensemble, eighth blackbird

Expanding upon the artistic and critical success of his 2012 double album *By a Little Light*, Chicago bassist-composer **Matt Ulery** returns with ***In the Ivory*** on Dave Douglas' acclaimed independent label **Greenleaf Music** – eighty minutes of resplendent, lyrical, transportive, and impeccably performed chamber-jazz music. Inspired and motivated by the musical and personal relationships developed while recording and performing *By a Little Light*--Ulery's most ambitious project to date--*In the Ivory* explores the idea of consciousness through patient, lyrical composition.

At a time when classical musicians perform in clubs almost as frequently as jazz musicians appear in concert halls, Ulery has forged a unique signature sound that combines a jazz core with luminous ensemble writing and song craft. Built around a band of select, unique voices, *In the Ivory* draws upon Ulery's positive experience performing *Light* with this particular thirteen-piece aggregation.

Ulery's sixth album as a leader blends jazz, American minimalism, Eastern European folk music (as a longtime writing member of Chicago band Eastern Blok), and romanticism into a constantly evolving emotional kaleidoscope. *Ivory*'s core consists of Ulery on double bass alongside his longtime trio mates pianist **Rob Clearfield** and drummer **Jon Deitemyer** as well as violinist **Zach Brock**, a longtime friend and collaborator. Five of the 14 tracks contain vocals, all but one by Polish singer **Grazyna Auguscik**, with whom Ulery has worked for a decade. And every track except one features Chicago contemporary music and three-time Grammy-winning ensemble, **eighth blackbird**.

Ulery is primarily a linear composer whose self-expression is concerned with form and structure presenting narrative through patient, elegant, and sophisticated melodic development. Intimate and compassionate trio playing is supported by carefully composed ensemble accompaniment. Minimalism is used as texture rather than as engine, with Clearfield's piano looming large as the music's predominant voice in tracks like "Mary Shelley" and "Black Squirrel." "In the context of the whole work, it can be digested like a piano concerto with chamber orchestra," says the composer. "It's of the utmost importance that the evolving energy of one moment be allowed to progress effortlessly to the next." The trio's long, deep history of this core rhythm section trio is evident in its finesse and fervency.

Ulery writes fanciful music that is rooted in the real. "In this art form, we embrace the learned prowess of technique and comprehension of musical theories together with our personal emotional response to collective energy in crafting something extraordinary for the purpose of abstraction. "When things go bad – and they do, and they will – I propose fantasy as a way to confront our own reality." Three central musical esthetics present themselves on *In the Ivory*: **chamber ensemble writing**, **jazz improvisation**, and **song**. The ensemble writing is evident throughout and is pared down in three pieces of music for strings only – "Innocent," "Longing," and "Viscous," which were composed originally for Ulery's own wedding.

While his 2013 *Wake an Echo* album with his quintet, Loom, was a self-described “palate cleanser,” Ulery has continued to explore songwriting with his poetic inventions and orchestrations featuring Grazyna Auguscik. These include the profound “There’s a Reason and a Thousand Ways,” “Write it on the Wall,” “When Everything is Just the Same,” and “Visceral.” Along with "The Farm," sung hauntingly by Sarah Marie Young, these distinctive pieces combine all three elements of this unique brand of modern jazz composition.

Ivory possesses the emotional power and nuance of the Russian and Eastern European Romantics who came to Hollywood in the mid-twentieth century. But it also has the spontaneity of jazz improvisation. This is apparent in the subtle dissolves between Eighth Blackbird and the jazz trio, as on "Sweet Bitter," which features the trio of Ulery, Deitemyer, and violinist Zach Brock soloing intimately in and around one another. Zach Brock, while classically trained as one would expect, is also genuinely steeped in the authentic jazz tradition and has gained exposure as a member of bassist Stanley Clarke’s quartet.

Insofar as *In the Ivory* emerged from global culture--musical and otherwise--feel free to call it chamber jazz, with an emphasis on the noun rather than the adjective. Think of an update of an update presented by Dave Douglas’ string group, Parallel Worlds, proposed 20 years ago, and revel in the sound of Matt Ulery imagining the possibilities.

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

Matt Ulery *In the Ivory* Tour

September 19th and 20th at The Green Mill, Chicago, IL
(Official Release Weekend) with full 11-piece ensemble

October 10th at Constellation, Chicago, IL
with full 11-piece ensemble, featuring eigth blackbird

October 14th at Littlefield, Brooklyn
with full 11-piece ensemble, featuring eigth blackbird

October 15th at An Die Musik, Baltimore

October 17th and 8th at Chris Jazz Cafe, Philadelphia

October 21st at Kerrytown Concert House, Ann Arbor, MI

October 22nd at Merrimen's Playhouse, South Bend, IN

October 24th and 25th at Cliff Bells, Detroit, MI

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