

**CHART-TOPPING GRAMMY-NOMINATED CONTEMPORARY JAZZ PIONEER RICHARD ELLIOT
TRANSPORTS US TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH HIS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED FIRST ALBUM IN FIVE
YEARS AUTHENTIC LIFE OUT 1/29/21**

***The 10-Track Blueprint for a Fulfilling & Blissful New Year Unites Elliot with All-Star Friends
Rick Braun, Dave Koz, Jeff Lorber, Chris “Big Dog” Davis, Philippe Saisse, David Mann & Others***

“There are absolute parallels between jazz and flying,” confesses Grammy-nominated tenor titan Richard Elliot who has been flying airplanes for the past three decades. The Renaissance man, who is currently engrossed in the colossal project of building his own airplane, adds “When you are performing and flying you are 100 percent consumed and focused on that experience from a technical perspective, emotional and aesthetic perspective, taking in everything around you.” Elliot, who has also successfully moonlighted as a software engineer, has a laser-like focus and creative vision that knows no bounds. The chart-topping saxophonist and pioneering Contemporary Jazz musician’s instantly recognizable trademark tenor has afforded him the opportunity to work with everyone from Smokey Robinson, Bonnie Raitt and The Temptations to Dave Koz, Tower of Power and Gerald Albright, to name a few. On January 29, 2021, Richard Elliot offers the perfect antidote to a year wrought with challenges and setbacks. *Authentic Life* is the Scottish-born, LA-raised saxophonist’s Shanachie debut – his first new album in five years. It’s an inspiring collection comprised mostly of originals that speak to Elliot’s optimistic outlook on life. “The recording has a positive and uplifting feel which is what we all need right now,” reflects the San Diego resident. “A lot of the inspiration is based on the idea of living life in a mindful way, with focus and in the truest way possible that allows you to be sincere in your actions and intentions with other human beings.”

Danny Weiss, Shanachie VP of Jazz A&R states, “Richard Elliot has an uncanny ability to combine precision and technical mastery with passion and excitement. As a result, whether you’re a casual listener or a jazz fanatic (like me), Richard Elliot’s music is richly rewarding - and a real home run for Shanachie!”

The past year has changed the world immeasurably affecting how we live, love, communicate, interact and work. Elliot recounts a new form of inspiration that grew out of the forced circumstances. “One of the things I love about recording is the collaborative aspect of being in the studio. Unfortunately, in the last year I’ve had to forgo this,” he shares. “It’s amazing that sometimes out of challenging times you glean positive experiences. We were able to take the positive experience of collaborating remotely while finding the inspiration - albeit virtually.”

A musician’s musician, for Elliot, the line-up alone on *Authentic Life* is a testament to the respect and adoration he has garnered from his peers throughout his enviable four - plus decade career. Never one to rest on his laurels, the saxophonist confides, “With every record, I try and push my boundaries and stay just a little bit out of my comfort zone so that hopefully I can create an environment for evolution. There is such a camaraderie in this genre. If you are in it for any meaningful period of time you have this community of artists. I feel very fortunate and privileged.” Some of the special guests joining Elliot on *Authentic Life* include trumpeter Rick Braun, keyboardists Jeff Lorber, Chris “Big Dog” Davis and Philippe Saisse, saxophonists Dave Koz and David Mann, and percussionist Lenny Castro, among others. “It was wonderful collaborating with these guys because each one of them pushes me in a different direction melodically.”

Authentic Life opens with the album’s sizzling first single “Snapshot,” co-written with Jeff Lorber and featuring Lorber alongside trumpeter Rick Braun and saxophonists Dave Koz and David Mann. Elliot first met Lorber when he was a 19 year-old recording with the jazz-rock unit Kittyhawk. “Jeff’s tracks are so funky and they always feel so good. He is always a pleasure to work with!” The alluring R&B flavored “Walk With Me,” is a tender excursion that Elliot co-wrote with Rick Braun. “Rick like Jeff (Lorber) is prolific. He always comes up with these really infectious grooves and chords that are really a pleasure to record melodies over.” The sensual melodic flow of “Right On Time,” a collaboration with keyboardist Chris “Big Dog” Davis and Rick Braun, transports us to a tranquil space if only for a moment in time.

Elliot shares, “Chris is the perfect melding of jazz and R&B. He writes and plays these amazing harmonic structures and beats. We all had a great time working on this particular song.” The epic title track is reminiscent of the iconic CTI sound and classic Don Sebesky arrangements. The stunning Nathaniel Phillips arrangement showcases soulful interplay between Elliot and Braun that captivates throughout. “Nate has been the bass player in my band for a long time and we go back many years. He was also the bassist in the amazing R&B band Pleasure. He created this beautiful mood and orchestration with stellar horn parts.”

Authentic Life also features the forward momentum of ‘Move Ahead,’ a refreshing and uplifting track that is bound to inspire joy. Co-written with Philippe Saisse and Rick Braun, it’s a swinger with a percussive backbeat with drummer Jay Williams and percussionist Lenny Castro and once again shows off the magnetic chemistry between Richard Elliot and Rick Braun. Elliot adds, “This song is the musical embodiment of moving forward and beyond the challenges that we have all had to faced this past year.” The lone album cover is Gino Vannelli’s “Living Inside Myself.” Elliot’s passionate interpretation will move you to tears with his gorgeous, emotive and robust tenor lines. “This one came from my wife,” confesses Richard who runs a foundation with his wife Camella, that donates to worthy causes that benefit youth and young adults including the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, St. Jude’s and the San Diego area dance organization TranscendANCE. “She actually suggested the last two or three cover tunes that I have recorded. She’s batting 1000 so far! I have been a Gino Vannelli fan forever. Joe Vannelli, who writes a lot of the music with Gino, is the genius that comes up with these striking chord structures. ‘Living Inside Myself’ is probably not an obvious cover for a saxophone but we were able to turn it on its head and make it a little different.”

Authentic Life also quietly preaches the virtues of balance with the sophisti-pop flow of “Elegant People.” There are people who go through life accepting everything that comes their way both the positive and negative. They accept it all as part of the entire human experience,” shares Elliot. “If you listen to the song you hear a gamut of emotions running throughout.” The funk-filled and blues-based “Moon Gazer,” co-written with Braun and Lorber, is another winner that shows off Elliot’s penchant to sit right in the groove and drive home a hit. “Secrets,” another Chris “Big Dog” Davis collaboration, showcases Elliot’s effortless ability to sculpt masterful solos that draw you near. Lastly, the closing showstopper “Boogie” is an all-out exhilarating funk explosion.

A family man and father to five, Elliot reflects on the challenges of being a parent and witnessing the pandemic’s affects on his children. ‘This has been a challenge for all families but the thing that really hurts me most is how young adults my kids’ age have been affected. This is their time to get out there, explore and pursue their dreams and passions, but it has been quelled for now. They have suddenly been stopped in their tracks.” In contrast he notes that there has been one upside. “I did not think it was possible for our family to be closer but it has brought us closer.”

At the age of eleven Richard Elliot discovered his calling in his junior high school jazz band led by baritone saxophonist John McGruder, a studio musician and Don Ellis’ band alumnus. Around this time he also heard two tenormen who would turn his world upside down, Grover Washington Jr. and Dexter Gordon. He recalls a pivotal moment at 16 going to see Dexter at Concerts By the Sea in Redondo Beach, CA. “I watched this big man come out on stage with an enormous presence before he had even blown a note. I was mesmerized. He blew the first note and it was this huge sound that blew me away.” In the 80s Elliot became a touring member of the soul-funk outfit Tower of Power. He released debut solo album, *Trolltown*, in 1986 and shortly thereafter he began a fruitful relationship with Bruce Lundvall and was signed to Blue Note Records. Elliot has released more than 20 albums as a leader, his most recent being 2016’s *Summer Madness* and has scored more than 20 Top 10 Smooth Jazz singles and #1 Contemporary Jazz albums including *On The Town*, *Soul Embrace*, *After Dark*, and *Jumpin’ Off*. His 2013 collaboration with saxophonists Dave Koz Gerald Albright and Mindi Abair, *Summer Horns*, was Grammy-nominated. A crowd-pleasing favorite on the festival circuit, Elliot has also garnered wide praise for his all-star touring attraction West Coast Jam that includes longtime collaborators.

The ever-evolving and continually inspired Richard Elliot concludes, “I definitely don’t feel the same sense of urgency that I did in my younger years. I always felt that I had something to prove whereas now, I only need to prove to myself that I am growing as human being and artist. It’s really about living an *Authentic Life*, doing what feels right and accepting life in all of its facets.”

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