



Photo Credit: Anna Webber ([Download High Res](#))

“Sheer Joy.... uplifting as hell” – All About Jazz

“Exploration of the human experience, seamlessly blending technical prowess with deep emotional resonance” – NYC Jazz Record

Pianist Celebrates New Work with Performances at SMOKE in NYC September 26-29

September 27, 2024: Today, GRAMMY®-nominated pianist **Christian Sands** released his newest studio work [Embracing Dawn](#), a concept album chronicling his journey through heartbreak and healing. The collection, his fourth with Mack Avenue Records, contains nine extraordinary compositions and follows 2023’s acclaimed *Christmas Stories* and 2020’s *Be Water*, of which *The New York Times* said “Equipped with a crisp but forceful touch, he seems always to be flowing in new directions, integrating elements of prog rock, gospel and Western classical into a forward-tumbling jazz conception.” *Embracing Dawn* furthers Sands’ uniquely cultivated jazz language, where agile post-bop meets soulful blues and gospel elements infused with gorgeous swells of strings to brilliant effect. Order [Embracing Dawn here](#).

Listen to Christian Sands’ Title Track [“Embracing Dawn”](#) – View Performance [Here](#)

It has been said that Sands has an almost singular level of perfectionism in his music, a potent mix of “enlightened jazz classicism with fresh ambition and thirst for action.” *Embracing Dawn* is

nothing less than a cinematic narration of the stages of grief, crafted by one of jazz's finest young composers. It's a "breakup record," to be sure — composed while Sands was experiencing the hurt that only a sudden absence of love can deliver — but it's so much more.

The thoughtfully assembled tracks contain a group therapy session, a guide to healing, and an understanding that Sands' deeply personal angst could apply to any person who has lost a partner, a job, a loved one, an opportunity, the list goes on. In other words, *Embracing Dawn* is for everyone.

The song cycle begins with its lone standard, "**Good Morning Heartache**," given an arrangement touched by neo- and alternative soul. Billie Holiday's iconic 1946 recording was the first song Sands heard on the radio following his breakup. "And I actually understood it this time!" he says with a chuckle. The dynamic midtempo swing and anxiety-laced melody of "**Divergent Journeys**" reflect, as Sands says, "that initial impact of the challenging experience, and the subsequent need to make choices between multiple paths. What do I do now? Where do I go?" The funky, gospelish, almost New Orleanian groove of "**Ain't That the Same**" serves as a reminder that even the darkest moments contain humor. "**Thought Bubbles I (Can We Talk?)**" is hued with an off-kilter, Monk-like tension and a shifting tempo — illustrating that moment when a text from you-know-who begins OK but leads to second-guessing and spiraling.

The second half of the album kicks off with "**MMC**" — or "Mom's Mac and Cheese." "That tune's about needing sustenance to get you through things," Sands says, "not just for your body but for your soul." "**Thought Bubbles II (Do Not Disturb)**" is a nonchalant gem, with a hooky melody and a trap-style beat, that represents old problems (and people) cropping up after you've finally made progress. The darkly beautiful "**Braises de Requiem I (The Embers Requiem, Mov. I)**" argues Sands could be just as renowned in the contemporary-classical space, and signifies those embers, or last straggling pieces of hurt, that need to be stamped out before real peace can arrive. "**Embracing Dawn**" closes the album with even-keeled acceptance, it's a pitch-perfect metaphor in sound for the maturity and equilibrium required to move on from trauma.

Supporting the pianist on this journey are some of his most trusted and admired collaborators including bassist **Yasushi Nakamura** and drummer **Ryan Sands** — Christian's fiercely gifted younger brother. "When we perform, there are things that I don't even have to say," the pianist explains. "We literally share the same musical DNA." One of a very few contemporary guitarists to truly hit the sweet spot between jazz and blues, **Marvin Sewell** is a secret weapon here. Sands describes his sound as "highly skilled and highly intelligent, but also rooted in the blues." Two musicians who have graced Sands' solo-project wishlist for years also turn up: vibraphone virtuoso **Warren Wolf**, Sands' bandmate from Christian McBride's *Inside Straight*, and **Grégoire Maret**, whose sunny harmonica provided the exact kind of measured optimism Sands was looking for in his closing title track.

"As an artist, I've always told stories," says Sands, looking back on the therapeutic process that became *Embracing Dawn*. "But I've always tried to tell the stories of other people, right? These are my stories here."

Embracing Dawn Tracklist

Good Morning Heartache

Divergent Journeys

Ain't That the Same

Thought Bubbles I (Can We Talk?)

Serenade of an Angel

MMC

Thought Bubbles II (Do Not Disturb)

Braises de Requiem I (The Embers Requiem, Mov. I)

Embracing Dawn

Christian Sands on Tour

SEP 26 – 29 Christian Sands Quartet Smoke – New York, NY

OCT 5 Christian Sands Trio Keystone Korner – Baltimore, MD

OCT 6 Christian Sands Trio Shalin Liu Performance Center – Rockport, MA

OCT 9 Christian Sands Trio LantarenVenster – Rotterdam, Netherlands

OCT 10 Christian Sands Trio New Morning – Paris, France

OCT 11 Christian Sands Trio La Rochelle Jazz Festival – La Rochelle, France

OCT 12 Christian Sands Trio Auditorio Martin Recuerda – Almuñécar, Spain

OCT 13 Christian Sands Trio Blue Note Milano – Milano, Italy

OCT 15 Christian Sands Trio Ronnie Scott's – London, United Kingdom

OCT 16 Christian Sands Trio Barcelona Jazz Festival 2024 -Eixample, Spain



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