Nick Maclean's

SNAGGLE

featuring the ALI BROS

FOUNDATION



[released Oct 30, 2026 on Browntasauras Records]

"FOUNDATION", the third release from Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE, represents the ensemble's most ambitious project yet, bringing Isaac Asimov's legendary science fiction universe to life through electric-jazz in the tradition of Weather Report, the Brecker Brothers and Snarky Puppy. Evolution abounds on this 3rd recording now featuring the dynamic ALI BROTHERS in the front line, with Maclean's increasingly intricate compositions exploring Asimov's themes of power, knowledge, technology and the rise and fall of civilizations. As on their previous album "The Long Slog", the synergistic connectivity between SNAGGLE's 6 hand-picked musicians remains a cornerstone of the ensemble's sound and group dynamic. Maclean advances his exploration of the modern electric jazz ethos here, embracing collective storytelling, personal expression and creative risk.

Longtime technology professional Mike Moroney -- former Physicist, Microsoft programmer, now working at Google -- was invited to write FOUNDATION's liner notes. As one of Brownman's oldest friends dating back to highschool & then University of Waterloo days as young Physicists, Moroney brings a unique perspective shaped by scientific curiosity, a deep, encyclopedic appreciation of Asimov's work, and firsthand knowledge of these musicians' creative partnership. Below, he reflects on the human connections and grand ideas that brought this ambitious album to life.

Where Worlds Converge

By Mike Moroney

I'm a former physicist, current computer programmer, lifelong jazz lover, and was honoured to be asked to write these liner notes. My connection to SNAGGLE begins with its trumpet player and producer, Brownman Ali, one of my oldest and closest friends. We first met in high school playing in the Peel Honour Band in the '80s (I played French horn back then), though it wasn't until we found ourselves together as first-year Physics students at the University of Waterloo that our friendship really began. Even while immersing himself in the rigorous analytical world of physical science, Brownman's calling as a jazz trumpet player was undeniable. In his 20's he practiced day and night, often commandeering the Physics building's observatory, while juggling grueling studies and a relentless schedule of gigs. His infectious love of music, seemingly boundless energy and fearless willingness to experiment were already evident, alongside a scientific curiosity that has never really left him. He would go on to study under the great Randy Brecker, lead Toronto's Latin-jazz powerhouse CRUZAO to win the Montreal Jazz Festival's Grand Prix du Jazz and perform with Wayne Shorter.

He later toured the globe as the featured trumpet soloist with the legendary GURU's JAZZMATAZZ, before establishing his own record label to house the ten ensembles he now leads.

It was through Brownman, now based in Brooklyn, NY, that I was introduced to pianist and composer Nick Maclean. The two first crossed paths performing in Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL, with Brownman as a featured trumpet soloist and Maclean at the piano. Brown often recalls hearing "insanely magnificent chords behind me while I soloed, the kind of shit Herbie woulda played behind Miles, to the point I had to meet this kid when the gig was done." That encounter began a musical partnership that would see Brownman become Maclean's first-call trumpeter, eventually signing the young pianist to his Browntasauras label and producing several of Maclean's recordings. Their collaboration would grow to encompass numerous projects, albums, international tours, and masterclasses.

Born in Ottawa, Nick Maclean moved to Toronto to study jazz piano, completing his undergraduate studies at Humber College and a master's degree at the University of Toronto under the guidance of Canadian jazz icons like David Braid, Dave Restivo and Bernie Senensky. Grounded in a deep reverence for Herbie Hancock's 1960s Blue Note ensembles - particularly his work with trumpet firebrand Freddie Hubbard - Maclean draws upon that tradition's harmonic sophistication and explosive group interplay while exploring a modern, multifaceted musical identity spanning acoustic post-bop, contemporary electric jazz, and beyond.

With the NICK MACLEAN QUARTET feat. Brownman Ali, Maclean explored acoustic post-bop through classic Hancock repertoire and original compositions on Rites Of Ascension (2017) and Convergence (2023), the latter earning a 2024 JUNO nomination for "Jazz Album of the Year: Group". His award-winning solo piano work revealed a more intimate, reflective, and vulnerable side of his musical personality as showcased on the double-disc Can You Hear Me? (2021). But it was through SNAGGLE, his groove-driven, all-original electric-jazz powerhouse, that his high-octane ensemble writing found its most expansive outlet, accommodating both his intellectual restlessness and his appetite for sheer visceral impact. Already established through its 2013 self-titled debut and the Brownman-produced The Long Slog (2016), which earned three Gold Global Music Awards and a Toronto Independent Music Award, SNAGGLE provided the foundation for the ambitious project that would follow.

Anyone who knows Brownman knows that his enthusiasm for something rarely stops with a simple recommendation. Isaac Asimov's sprawling Foundation universe occupies a particularly privileged place in his imagination, and his position on the subject is characteristically unequivocal: "to be my friend, you NEED to read these novels". Maclean took up the assignment, immersing himself in the fifteen-book literary universe encompassing Asimov's Robot, Galactic Empire and Foundation stories. What began as required reading from a demanding friend and mentor gradually became a compositional obsession. Over two years of intricate writing, Maclean fashioned ten original compositions exploring the people, places, events and ideas contained within that extraordinary universe. For a former physicist like myself, there is something

especially appealing about this exchange: a trumpet-playing physicist introduces a pianist to a fictional science of civilization, and the pianist responds by building an entire musical world, one that would become SNAGGLE's FOUNDATION.

To realize these compositions, Maclean wanted an ensemble with an established musical identity and an instinctive understanding of the electric-jazz language in which he was composing. Having grown up listening to BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO albums, and drawing upon more than a decade of collaboration with Brownman, he decided to tuck that trio inside SNAGGLE itself, providing the record with a powerful engine. Joining Brownman were his trio bandmates Matt Gruebner on electric bass, a New Zealander who now lives in Australia, and Adam Mansfield on drums. Around that core, Maclean's keyboards and synthesizers, together with Jay Yoo's electric guitar, expand the ensemble's harmonic and textural possibilities, while guest percussionist Luisito Orbegoso (from Brownman & CRUZAO) brings an additional rhythmic dimension.

To fill out the front line, Maclean turned to Marcus Ali, Brownman's younger brother and a heavyweight woodwind multi-instrumentalist, winner of the Montreal Jazz Festival's Grand Prix du Jazz and a sought-after sideman for leading artists including Matt Dusk, Jason Wilson, and Mr Something Something. Together, the ALI BROS bring a familial DNA-driven connection and years of shared musical experience to the ensemble. Their instinctive unity, matched by fiercely individual voices, allows them to navigate the intricacies of Maclean's writing with both precision and expressive force.

Drawing upon the electric-jazz traditions of Weather Report and the Brecker Brothers, alongside contemporary influences like Snarky Puppy, SNAGGLE brings a distinctly different musical vocabulary to Maclean's writing than his Hancock-inspired acoustic quartet. Its musical vocabulary spans brawny funk, shifting rhythmic structures, expansive electronic textures, and passages of considerable tenderness. That range matters when the subject is Asimov. A universe containing galactic collapse, emotional manipulation, robotic solitude and the audacity of youth demands more than a succession of spectacular solos; each of those contrasting ideas calls for its own musical character.

As producer, Brownman envisioned a larger narrative structure for FOUNDATION beyond Maclean's ten compositions, proposing interconnecting "skits" that would carry the listener through Asimov's universe as a continuous experience. Drawing upon his experience in the hip-hop world, with Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers) as a particularly fitting touchstone, he imagined passages between the tunes that would give Asimov's characters and ideas a presence beyond the music itself. The resulting eleven shorter clips, encompassing an introduction, interludes and an epilogue, weave the compositions together into a complete Asimovian journey.

What has emerged from this collaboration is something truly extraordinary. FOUNDATION brings a cerebral, deeply imaginative science-fiction universe into the hands of musicians equipped to explore both its scale and its humanity. For lovers of electric jazz, it offers formidable writing, deep groove and fearless improvisation; for

readers of Asimov, it opens another avenue into a familiar imaginative world, allowing characters and ideas encountered on the page to take on new emotional dimensions through sound. And for me, having watched Brownman's scientific curiosity and musical passion develop side by side since our Waterloo days, there is particular satisfaction in seeing those impulses find such fertile ground in his collaboration with Maclean. What began with a mentor's insistence to read some cherished books has become ten intricately crafted compositions, the fruits of over two years of painstaking writing, brought to life by a truly remarkable ensemble and shaped into a continuous journey through Asimov's universe. It is Maclean's imagination that gives that universe its musical life, reflecting the intellectual rigour, emotional depth and adventurousness that have marked his development as a composer. I suspect Asimov would have loved this.

Let's take a closer look at this recording:



FOUNDATION

1) "Trantor" – Introduction (0:11)

2) Twilight of Civilization (6:56) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: tenor sax

The Galactic Empire has ruled for thousands of years, its power and grandeur seemingly eternal. Yet Hari Seldon recognizes what few others can see: beneath that magnificent facade, the foundations of galactic civilization are crumbling. The piece opens softly among chilly winds with an unhurried melody from Brownman's reflective trumpet, painting the illusion of calm over Maclean's lush, atmospheric keyboard voicings. The ensemble enters with a fuller restatement of that melody before its fragile tranquility gives way to energized groove. A pulsing bassline shared by electric bass and synth, coupled with Mansfield's active drumming, drives the ensemble beneath a jagged Ali Brothers horn melody and gathering storms. The band falls away, leaving trumpet, keys and drums suspended in a mournful moment, until an abrupt ensemble re-entry gives way to a smouldering tenor solo. Marcus weaves fluid, highly expressive lines through shifting harmonies and meters, his brooding urgency gradually giving way to more frenetic phrases supported by a restless rhythm section. Amidst gunfire, explosions and sirens, the perspective shifts from a bird's-eye view of fading grandeur to the desperation of survival on the ground surrounded by ashes. The angular horn melody returns against a barrage of fictional news reports chronicling calamity and societal destruction, careening toward a devastating nuclear climax that stops both band and listener in their tracks. When the opening theme reappears, its grandeur is diminished, as though the structures holding it together are slowly giving way. A final chord lingers and fades into silence beneath a narrative reflection on an empire's final twilight.

3) "Adjusting" – Interlude (0:09)

4) Second Foundation (7:29) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: guitar

Starting subtly, Jay Yoo's dark, pulsing guitar ostinato is soon joined by brooding bass and intricate cymbal patterns. Together they form the backdrop for an other-worldly synth melody, illuminated by unsettling sounds from Brownman's ring-modulated electric trumpet. Maclean's synthesizer's discordant, unstable sound coupled with Brown's eerie effected trumpet machinations perfectly captures the hidden mentalic guardians of the Second Foundation, a mysterious group who, depending on whom you ask, might be considered saviours shepherding the galaxy's last great hope or secretive overlords wielding disturbing powers over the minds of others. The Ali Brothers' horn lines take over with a groovier, more driving statement of the melody before Jay Yoo steps forward on guitar, delivering a cerebral, irregular solo that weaves complex melodic threads through the shifting harmonies. The band drops away, leaving bass and keys in a contemplative moment before the groove breaks down entirely. What follows is a series of alternating melodic statements from the band and pointed, contrapuntal exchanges between Rhodes and piano, suggesting the immense complexity of the calculations underpinning psychohistory. The original melody returns, first in the unsettling voice of the synth and then joined by the horns, laying the groundwork for a blistering drum feature highlighted by powerful ensemble riffs and a final, emphatic chord.

5) "We Are" – Interlude (0:13)

6) Gaia's Call (5:26) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: guitar

Alternating between soft, tentative passages and bold, assertive grooves, Gaia's Call opens with a sense of the skepticism and awe that Golan Trevize must have felt upon encountering the extraordinary planet of Gaia, where every living creature, physical landscape and individual consciousness is united in a single collective mind. Represented by buoyant & bright Brazilian textures, the rhythm section settles into a bubbling axé groove beneath a vibrant horn melody, while Jay Yoo's guitar fills the spaces with inventive improvisations. The melody gathers strength as the tempo picks up and the band shifts from axé to samba, its joyful energy swelling until the ensemble falls away to mellow keyboard chords that introduce the guitar solo. Jay begins patiently, developing gentle, singing single-note phrases into an intense, fiery peak, driven by soaring lock-step Ali Brothers hornlines, quickening tempos and group ensemble hits. A lively drum fill brings the band back to the main melody, now transformed into an invigorating samba. The piece surges toward a final climax of rhythmic ensemble shots, insistent guitar ostinatos, winding horn lines and Mansfield's

shifting polyrhythms, culminating in a final statement that feels like Gaia herself unfurling in all her splendour.

7) "Jehoshaphat" – Interlude (0:05)

8) Elijah & Gladia (10:31) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: bass, synth

The impossible love story between Earth detective Elijah Bailey and Solarian Spacer Gladia Delmarre evokes quiet vulnerability, aptly represented by the gentle sound of wind, sensitive keyboard accompaniment, and a tender bass melody in the hands of Matt Gruebner. In this bass feature, Gruebner's delicate & inspired melodic lines are gradually taken up by Brownman's darkly-toned haunting trumpet. His brother's entrance on tenor, accompanied by guitar, shifts the music between rising passion and quiet tenderness. Settling into an R&B-flavoured groove, the horns establish a relaxed refrain, later joined by synth, before making room for a colourful, expressively inventive bass solo from Matt Gruebner. Following a brief drum statement, Maclean cheekily ripples into a synth solo as the rhythm section shifts into a more attitude-laden, Dilla-inspired hip-hop feel. His improvisation builds, eventually soaring through sweeping horn melodies before culminating in an almost orchestral passage of rumbling drums, rolling chords and responsive melodic lines that evoke two lovers reaching for each other across the vast expanse of space. The ensemble then falls away, leaving bass and keys to gently revisit the opening refrain in a higher key, lending the familiar melody a newfound lightness before guiding the band toward its final chord - a poignant conclusion to a love that bridged two distant worlds.

9) "Magnificent" – Interlude (0:10)

10) The Mule (7:34) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: trumpet, drum trading

Capturing the chaotic, unpredictable disruption caused by the galaxy's most dangerous warlord, The Mule stands as the darkest and most unsettling track on the album. In keeping with its inspiration, the piece begins innocuously, with a slightly crooked groove, raspy guitar chords and a foreboding over-dubbed narrative asking pointed questions about this despot's rule. Brownman's psychedelic effect-laden trumpet alternates with Maclean's synth to up the creepiness factor. The Mule's chilling laugh closes off the intro, ushering in the main melody, where relaxed horn lines and a lightly simmering rhythm section betray little of the violence to come. An interlude of locked horn lines briefly raises the temperature before the melody returns, now simmering with greater menace. Mansfield shifts between the original groove and double time, delivering a sense of societal instability as the melody changes keys, the guitar interjects energetically and the whole ensemble begins to boil. Arriving at the solo section, the band suddenly pulls back leaving keys, bass and drums grooving with

quiet precision, so Brownman can enter boldly as the featured soloist, slathered in dangerous effects, with all signs of the earlier relaxation erased. Brownman deftly slithers through his solo, delivering sinewy lines that reveal the unmistakable influence of his mentor Randy Brecker, until trumpet and drums break away together into a highly interactive duet. Blazing trumpet lines are answered by percussive volleys against an unsettling atmospheric backdrop, building until the full ensemble comes crashing back in with explosive rhythmic shots, evolving towards the moment when The Mule finally reveals himself in all his terror. Furious ensemble soli lines alternate with Brownman's acrobatic improvisational language, propelled by driving rhythmic hits. As the solo reaches a fiery effect-laden climax, Brownman throws to Adam Mansfield who delivers a short but bombastic drum solo against powerful band shots and chilling final pronouncements from the mutant despot himself. Following one final ensemble hit, the music gradually unravels into a mournful trumpet lament, while the Mule's closing declarations mock and belittle those who underestimated his power and his determination to dominate.

11) "History" – Interlude (0:08)

12) Ten Thousand Generations (7:58)

Solo order: tenor sax

Spanning the millennia-long sweep of human history required to build the Galactic Empire and the multigenerational scope of Hari Seldon's grand design, Ten Thousand Generations carries an undeniable sense of scale & grandeur. The piece opens with a chorale: a synth melody supported by contrapuntal Ali Brothers trumpet and tenor lines against a gentle rumble, evoking the sensation of floating serenely through an empty void. Shimmering ensemble harmonies bubble and build shadowed by improvisations that feel at once unsettled and harmonious, eventually resolving into a soft chord. A sudden bang ushers in the A section, a soulful tenor melody over heavy, deliberate grooves. As Brownman joins his brother Marcus on the melodic hornlines and the rhythm section propels forward, a responding synth melody weaves through the horns while sounds of early humanity colour the soundscape. The ensemble then turns inward, introducing the gentle refrain of the B section that gradually builds before receding to make room for Marcus' tenor solo. Beginning with sensitive, expressive lines over a relaxed R&B groove, Marcus develops a slow burn into agile runs and flurries as the harmonies deepen and the tempo quickens. At its peak, his improvisations give way to a joyful, upbeat melody that recalls the earlier A section, now seemingly more sophisticated and evolved, accompanied by futuristic sounds of humanity. A brief interlude finds the Ali Brothers trading phrases, showcasing their shared improvisational bond against shifting grooves, before the ensemble revisits the earlier gentle B section, now transformed into something energetic and driving, in a new time signature and accompanied by a spoken reflection on the Seldon Plan. The band

falls away, leaving Maclean's keys to reprise the opening melody. Guitar takes up the theme before the full ensemble delivers one final, powerful, conducted passage. As a lingering chord sustains beneath Marcus' closing tenor cadenza, a final narrative reflection brings this journey through 10,000 generations of Asimovian civilization to a close.

13) "Protected" – Interlude (0:07)

14) The Zeroth Law (7:27) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: tenor sax, trumpet

Tight, crisp and highly syncopated hits comprise the rhythm section's opening bassline, soon overlaid by a serrated, polyphonic melody from the Ali Brothers. The Zeroth Law places the protection of humanity as a whole above the welfare of any individual, presenting R. Daneel Olivaw with a profound moral dilemma: how can a robot determine what is best for an entire civilization without violating the principles that govern his very existence? The music aptly captures the razor's edge humanity's mechanical saviour must walk. The stalwart main melody eventually gives way to a tenor and guitar driven bridge, over a steadier groove, later joined by trumpet and synth before spiraling into a brief interlude in seven. The solo section features the Ali Brothers taking turns with Marcus beginning with an exploratory tenor solo. Making expressive use of his wah pedal, he weaves deft lines and compelling melodic narratives before passing the ball to his older brother. Brownman picks up the wah-inflected conversation, bringing a change of colour as keyboards take over the comping from guitar and mechanical effects percolate in the soundscape. Brownman's own trumpet solo begins with a dark, smoldering intensity before erupting into increasingly forceful, rhythmically charged lines. To wrap up the solo section, the band returns to the opening bassline and melody, eventually settling into a cool-down section in seven. Maclean's synth then introduces a repeating anthemic phrase while a robotic voice describes the implications of the Zeroth Law. The Ali Brothers launch into a spirited musical dialogue over the continuing synth melody as the arrangement steadily expands. Piano, organ and even choir voices enter the texture, progressing toward a rousing climax. At the peak the brothers finally join the synth in a soaring melodic declaration worthy of a space opera, bringing the piece to one final, epic note.

15) "Thinking" – Interlude (0:06)

16) Little Wanda, Big Future (6:38) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: trumpet

Opening with melancholic chords that hint at the mystery surrounding Wanda Seldon's extraordinary covert mentalic prowess, Little Wanda, Big Future takes its inspiration from Hari Seldon's gifted granddaughter, whose seemingly unassuming presence conceals remarkable potential. Guitar and trumpet introduce the melody,

soon joined by synth amidst moving basslines and understated ensemble shots. The music then bursts into an exuberant Cuban-flavoured bass groove, punctuated by playful synth improvisations before the Ali Brothers' horns join the celebration. A cooler passage brings horns and synth together in a developing melody against rhythmic ensemble hits, eventually giving way to an infectious refrain brimming with youthful energy. The band pulls back to allow space for Brownman's nimble trumpet solo entrance, evoking Wanda dancing playfully into a room. The rhythm section accentuates his phrases with crisp, spacious shots as Brownman weaves effortlessly through the groove. His melodic inventions gradually grow more animated, developing into agile, energetic lines as he adds an octaver and the ensemble returns to the bubbling Cuban groove. A brief reprise of the earlier horn-and-synth interlude offers a momentary pause before Brownman leaps back into the fray, urging the rhythm section forward with a combination of lyrical invention and acrobatic improvisation toward the tune's final, exuberant melodic refrain. It should be noted that this composition also draws inspiration from Maclean's daughter Olivia, in whom he sees something of the same curiosity and remarkable promise as the brilliant young mentalic who would help form the core of the Second Foundation.

17) "Alone" – Interlude (0:13)

18) Lonely Moon Robot (5:05) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: keyboard

For millennia, R. Daneel Olivaw has kept a solitary vigil from his secret lunar base, quietly guiding the course of human evolution while bearing the staggering weight of centuries. Inspired by his profound isolation, Lonely Moon Robot unfolds as a haunting, expansive ballad over a slow R&B groove. A plaintive trumpet melody emerges above lush keyboard chords, melancholic bass and sparse drumming, while guitarist Jay Yoo contributes what he was instructed to provide: "sad robot noises," a task he acquits himself of admirably. Tenor sax harmonies enrich the melody on its second pass before the ensemble hands the spotlight to bandleader Nick Maclean. Beginning with remarkable restraint, keys, bass and drums let the space speak for itself, evoking the profound seclusion of Daneel's lunar sanctuary. Maclean patiently develops his improvisation, treading a delicate line between somber and subtly mechanical ideas. As Maclean's Bill Evans-esque explorations continue, guitar eventually joins with a more conventional comping approach. As the solo grows more expansive, the horns introduce a repeating background refrain before the opening melody returns, transformed into something loud and chaotic. After millennia of waiting, somewhere in the galaxy, Daneel's carefully laid plans are approaching a crucial turning point! But the music abruptly retreats from that vast galactic perspective, returning to Daneel's lonely vigil for one final, hushed statement of the melody, soft, quiet and utterly alone.

19) "No One" – Interlude (0:08)

20) Arkady (6:47) by Nick Maclean

Solo order: synth & trumpet, trading

Dedicated to Arkady Darrell, the fiercely independent fourteen-year-old whose sharp intuition exposes hidden galactic conspiracies, this explosive finale wastes no time, launching straight into driving keyboard lines against tightly animated rhythm section shots. The Ali Brothers burst into deeply funkified, high-velocity horn figures, propelled by the rhythm section and laced with inventive guitar interjections. A sudden break leaves the horns alone, hurtling through an angular, blazing polyphonic figure befitting the dangerous adventure Arkady has thrown herself into. Trumpet & synth then trade phrases with tenor & guitar before the 4 instruments converge in 3-part harmony. The ensemble builds toward another eruption of the angular horn figure, passing its energy to the drums before a thunderous chord fades into silence. Out of that intensity emerges a more lyrical keyboard melody over a dancehall-inflected groove, capturing the idealism and childlike wonder beneath Arkady's fearless exterior. Guitar joins the melody on its second pass before handing the spotlight to the synth. Maclean and Brownman begin trading improvisational ideas, their spirited dialogue suggesting a playful exchange between mentee and mentor as the energy steadily climbs. The full ensemble joins them for a rousing celebration of Arkady's youthful theme before the improvisations take a more turbulent turn. Shifting harmonies and an increasingly abrasive synth tone provoke Brownman's muscular, chromatic responses, while additional horn lines push the exchange toward a fever pitch. Driving keyboard figures propel the band back into the opening material and a powerful restatement of the melody. Arkady's lyrical theme returns, developing through changing harmonies and key centres as the entire ensemble gathers momentum, seemingly lifting off toward an ecstatic climax. The isolated angular horn figure makes one final appearance, followed by a ferocious drum fill and a triumphant final note, bringing this science-fiction jazz odyssey to an exhilarating close.

21) "Infinite" – Epilogue (0:26)

CLOSING REMARKS

In Isaac Asimov's Foundation, even the grandest plans for humanity's future must ultimately pass through human hands, with all their uncertainty, courage and capacity for hope. There is something of that same faith in the making of this record. A composer spends two years imagining a world, then entrusts it to other musicians, knowing that its fullest life will emerge through what they bring to it. His collaborators, in turn, enter its intricate architecture, trusting that there is room for their own histories, instincts and voices. Nick Maclean, Brownman Ali, Marcus Ali, Jay Yoo, Matt Gruebner and Adam Mansfield meet within that act of mutual belief. What they've created

together carries something of each of them, yet belongs entirely to the encounter: a musical world that none could have brought into being alone.

Maclean has always been a searcher, a thinker and a feeler. What moves me about FOUNDATION is the care with which he holds those parts of himself together. He can wrestle with the mathematical ambitions of psychohistory and the moral burden of the Zeroth Law, yet remain attentive to the loneliness, tenderness, fear and wonder experienced by those living within Asimov's immense universe. To imagine the fate of a civilization is one thing; to make us care about a single life within it is another. Maclean's music makes room for both. Across these compositions, his affection for a cherished story becomes the patient labour of composition and, through the generosity of his fellow musicians, something a listener can feel. The scale is galactic, but the impulse is deeply human: to share something that has moved him, in the language he knows best.

For me, there is also the quiet pleasure of seeing an old friend's influence become part of a true creative partnership. What Maclean and Brownman have built together rests on years of shared artistic rigour, affection, trust and the willingness to ask more of one another than either might initially believe possible. Maclean's intricate and evocative compositions gave this record its musical heart; Brownman's imagination and determination as producer helped give that heart an entire universe to inhabit. Their history of mentorship lives within the collaboration, deepened by the exchange between two artists who know how to challenge one another and recognize what is precious in each other's work. Having known Brown since our Waterloo Physics days, I find something profoundly moving in seeing his restless veteran's curiosity meet Maclean's own younger version of the same, and in hearing what has grown from that intersection of ideas.

When the final sounds fall away, I hope you will feel some of the affection, conviction and shared faith that brought this record into being. And I hope you will carry with you the voice of Nick Maclean, who has gathered the music that formed him, the stories that captured him and the people he trusts into a work of remarkable generosity and vision. He has spent years finding a way to let us hear what these Asimov books awakened in him. Now he places that world in our hands.

-- **Mike Moroney** | October 2026, Redmond, Washington, USA

Mike Moroney is a software engineer based in Redmond, Washington working on Google's Android Studio team. Moroney attended the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, doing both his undergrand and masters degrees there, before going to work for Microsoft, where he spent 18 years before taking his talents to Google. His career reflects a longstanding involvement in the technology industry & deep problem solving abilities. Outside his professional life, Moroney is an avid poker player, great fan of the outdoors, pursues physics proofs for fun & has been a lifelong jazz enthusiast, with a profound appreciation for the music and its rich history, creativity, and improvisational spirit.

About SNAGGLE feat. the ALI BROS

Led by JUNO-nominated & 10X Global Music Award-winning pianist and composer Nick Maclean, SNAGGLE feat. ALI BROS delivers an all-original electric-jazz experience that moves from haunting introspection to explosive intensity. Drawing upon the exploratory traditions of Weather Report, the Brecker Brothers, and Snarky Puppy, the ensemble now undertakes its most ambitious project yet: FOUNDATION, a suite of electrifying works inspired by Isaac Asimov's legendary saga, bringing one of science fiction's greatest & most enduring literary universes vividly to life through sound.

At the front line are the ALI BROS: trumpet virtuoso Brownman Ali (Guru's Jazzmatazz, Jay-Z, Randy Brecker) and his brother, saxophone heavyweight Marcus Ali (Matt Dusk, Jason Wilson, Mr. Something Something). Behind them, an elite rhythm section of Toronto electric-jazz luminaries drives their sound: Jay Yoo on guitar, Matt Gruebner on bass, and Adam Mansfield on drums. Strategically, Maclean has deliberately folded every member of BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO into SNAGGLE, forming the ensemble's core nucleus.



Nick Maclean – keyboards & synth,
Brownman Ali – electric trumpet, Marcus Ali – tenor saxophone
Jay Yoo – guitar, Matt Gruebner – bass, Adam Mansfield – drums

www.NickMacleanJazz.com/Snaggle for more info on this group.
www.NickMacleanJazz.com for more info on Nick Maclean.
www.Brownman.com for more info on Brownman Ali.
www.MarcusAli.com for more info on Marcus Ali.
www.AliBros.Brownman.com for more info on the Ali Bros.
www.Browntasauras.com for more on Browntasauras Records.

Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE feat. the ALI BROS is:

Nick Maclean – keys, Brownman Ali – electric trumpet, Marcus Ali – tenor saxophone
Jay Yoo – guitar, Matt Gruebner – bass, Adam Mansfield – drums

Nick Maclean – bandleader / pianist / composer

Born in Ottawa and now based in Toronto NICK MACLEAN is a JUNO nominee for "Jazz Album of the Year", the winner of 10 Global Music Awards, and a Toronto Independent Music Award. Nick holds a Bachelors of Music from Humber College and a Masters of Jazz Performance from the University of Toronto where he studied with some of Canada's leading jazz musicians including David Restivo, Bernie Senensky, Nancy Walker, David Occhipinti, Andrew Downing, Chris Donnelly, and David Braid. Maclean has also been mentored by acclaimed trumpet player Brownman Ali since he was 22, who signed him to Browntasauras Records shortly after meeting. Nick leads two critically acclaimed and multi-award winning jazz ensembles: the funkified electric jazz group SNAGGLE and the hard swinging modern jazz group NICK MACLEAN QUARTET, as well as having received numerous accolades and acclaim for his SOLO PIANO work. The future is bright for this young visionary as he continues his upward ascent in jazz artforms of all shapes & sizes.

Brownman Ali – trumpet / electric trumpet / producer

Trinidadian-born, NYC-schooled & heralded as "Canada's preeminent Jazz trumpeter" by NYC's Village Voice, multi-award winning trumpet player Brownman Ali stands at the forefront of innovation in the Canadian jazz community. One of Canada's most decoratedtrumpet players, Brownman is a GRAMMY Award long-lister, multiple JUNO nominee, winner of 2 National Jazz Awards, the Montreal Grand Prix du Jazz, 7 Toronto Independent Music Awards, and the SOCAN composition award. A protégé to his teacher, Grammy-winning trumpet legend Randy Brecker, Brownman tirelessly leads 10 unique ensembles of his own including the internationally acclaimed, Miles Davis influenced, BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO. As an in-demand studio musician he has over 300 recording credits to his name. In 2009 he launched his own record label: Browntasauras Records, which is now a home to all his ensembles as well as SNAGGLE feat ALI BROS. Now, using the label as a breeding ground for new and visionary talent in the modern jazz realm, Browntasauras and Brownman himself are widely regarded as vanguards for the evolution of Jazz in Canada.

Marcus Ali – tenor sax & effects

Born in Toronto to Trinidadian parents, multi-instrumentalist Marcus Ali is an award-winning woodwind specialist whose versatility has made him a sought-after performer and recording artist. Equally accomplished on saxophones, flutes, clarinets, West African flutes, and tin whistles, Ali has performed and toured internationally alongside acclaimed artists including MATT DUSK, JASON WILSON, MR. SOMETHING SOMETHING, and TOMSON HIGHWAY, with appearances across Canada, the US, the UK, the Caribbean, and Japan. As a member of Brownman & CRUZAO, Marcus received the Montreal International Jazz Festival's prestigious Grand Prix du Jazz. He has appeared on more than 90 albums, including projects recognized with JUNO and

Indigenous Music Award nominations, a Canadian Reggae Music Award, and a place on the Polaris Music Prize shortlist. An experienced educator, Marcus has taught private woodwind lessons and led workshops and sectionals throughout the GTA for more than 20 years.

Jay Yoo - guitar

Jay Yoo is a Toronto-based Korean-Canadian guitarist, composer, and music director working across jazz, fusion, R&B, pop, and contemporary music. He has performed and recorded with a wide range of artists and ensembles across Canada, including the ROBERT LEE GROUP, with whom he toured and recorded the album WAH ARIRANG featuring Korean traditional vocalist SANGAH LEE and gayageum player ROA LEE. Jay co-leads the Japanese/Korean city-pop project NEXT PERFECT DAY with vocalist CECILIA, and serves as music director of DOKEBI, a Korean traditional fusion ensemble combining Korean percussion and pansori with contemporary sounds.

Matt Gruebner - bass

New Zealand-born Matt Gruebner earned an Associate Diploma in Jazz Studies with ‘high distinction’ from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music before establishing himself across the Australasian jazz scene. He’s performed with the AUCKLAND PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA alongside DON BURROWS, contributing to three New Zealand EntertainmentAwards nominations for ‘Jazz Album of the Year’. A highly in demand session and freelance player, Matt has performed regularly with GRUVASYLUM, the BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO, and SNAGGLE feat. ALI BROS and has strong connections with the Toronto, Canada scene as well as his home in Sydney, Australia.

Adam Mansfield - drums

A graduate of Humber College’s Bachelor of Music program, where he studied with some of the industry’s finest, including Marito Marques and Joaquin Hidalgo, Adam has developed a versatile musical approach rooted in both technical precision and deep musicality. Equally comfortable navigating improvised music and groove-driven settings, he brings adaptability and a strong sense of musicality to both the stage and studio, drawing inspiration from drummers such as Vinnie Colaiuta and Thomas Pridgen. His work has led him to perform alongside a diverse array of esteemed musicians from across the globe, including BROWNMAN ALI, NICK MACLEAN, VASYL POPADIUK, OLEG SKRYPKA, JOSH COHEN, JUSTICE DER, DR. ASLAN GOTOV, ARMEN MATOSYAN, and celebrated Canadian jazz vocalists GIGI MARENTETTE and JORDANA TALSKY.

Words from Nick Maclean on FOUNDATION

The inception for the compositions of 'Foundation' started in the spring of 2023 during the Nick Maclean Quartet's national tour across Canada. For two months we toured across the country performing the frenetic and hard swinging music from 'Convergence', and between gigs we drove for hours and listened to Isaac Asimov's 'The Complete Robot' (a must, after being told by Brown I couldn't be his friend unless I had digested all of the Foundation Universe novels).

This was the start, I was hooked quickly and soon devoured the Robot series, then the Galactic Empire series, and finally the brilliant FOUNDATION series - 15 books in total. I am still struck at the brilliant insights that Asimov had into humanity: our drives, our fears, our struggles, the enormous challenges faced by civilization and the tools we must wield in order to conquer them. I wasn't 'trying' to be influenced by Asimov when I first started writing this record, it just kept happening, it was kind of hard not to be.

One of the lessons I took from Asimov's masterwork is that our greatest strength as a society is not predicated on wealth, military power, or even our technology... it's our ability to reason and our ability to preserve and build knowledge. As a Jazz musician I'm part of a tradition that is roughly a century old and which itself builds upon musical innovations that have stretched through the millennia. The making of this record is an act of building on inherited knowledge - not through preservation but transformation; using past innovations as a platform - a FOUNDATION - on which to launch our own, adding another small piece to the cairn of shared history future musicians will draw inspiration from.

This process is mirrored in countless ways across our society - in the knowledge we've discovered, the technologies we've created, and in philosophical innovations that shape our thinking; all preserved in history, literature, and enduring institutions. We stand on the shoulders of giants and I think we are in danger of forgetting that. Whether through disposable distractions, pernicious conspiracy thinking, and other mechanisms, we are experiencing an erosion of intellectual continuity and our ability to understand ourselves is waning.

While I stress the importance of maintaining this continuity of accumulated knowledge, I'm not making an argument for tradition. Knowledge remains alive when subsequent generations DO something with it, when we're able to pick up where the last generation left off. Whether we forget the past or are ruled by it, BOTH are handicaps making us less capable of responding to crises, of which we have many.

We're living through a tough moment right now and are facing problems whose scale exceeds the ability of any one person to solve. Like all of the largest crises faced by Asimov's Foundation, ours must be solved by larger civilizational forces that spring from the choices of us all. The Foundation had messages from the past to guide them and we do too so long as we remember to seek them out. Two jazz musicians driving across Canada, listening to an author from another generation may not seem terribly important in the grand scheme of the world, but in an age where we are losing connection with the inherited knowledge of our forebears, deliberately re-connecting ourselves to it matters. Picking up a book - or listening to a record - can become a revolutionary act.

THANK YOU!

Nick Maclean wants to thank his producer, featured trumpet player, and member of the Ali Bros -- Brownman Ali. You sound magnificent on this record. Your inventiveness, the strength of your artistic statements, and your boundless energy is inspiring and world-class. Every single time we do a record together I feel like I have to gush at what an incredible producer you are and how, somehow, this experience was even better than the last... and SOMEHOW that just keeps being true over and over. You've outdone yourself yet again on this one and have pushed this project in directions that I never would have dreamed of. Marcus Ali, our featured tenor saxophone player and member of the Ali Bros - the first time you played with this band - nailing everything on only 48 hours notice - I knew that I wanted you on the next record. Your sound is deeply artistic, highly narrative, and exactly what we needed from the tenor chair. You and Brownman make one killer front line that I am proud to feature on this record. Jay Yoo, Matt Gruebner, and Adam Mansfield - my incredible rhythm section - you guys truly set the foundation of every tune. The depth of the grooves, the band synergy, the playful interaction... you guys brought colour, solidity, and so much joy - you made us all sound better. To everyone in the band, I love you dudes so much. All of you are musical killers and amazing people, I'm so grateful for every single one of you. All of your voices can be felt throughout this record and they are magnificent. Luisito Orbegoso both for his generosity and his unparalleled percussive genius which elevated numerous tracks to new heights. Dinah Maclean, Erin Brooks, and Olivia Brooks-Maclean for lending us their voices for 'The Zeroth Law'. Kim Cooke (booker), Stephen Koszler (lead engineer), and Luke Schindler (assistant engineer) at Revolution Recording - this is my second time working with you and as before the work that you do is unparalleled, I'm so grateful for all of your expertise and meticulous organization. Thomas Varey (director of photography), Brittany Farhat (camera crew), and Matthew Fong (camera crew) for their incredible video work during the sessions. The footage is absolutely sublime, the group has never looked so good! Josh Bowman who's exceptional engineering ability dually created beautifully rich and detailed mixes and mastered them with brilliance. Dean Shu who's creative visual prowess made epic album art worthy of Asimov. Mike Moroney for his insightful and poetic brilliance in the writing of the liner notes. Isaac Asimov for his brilliant observations of humanity and the prescience of his literary genius. The Brecker Brothers, Weather Report, and Snarky Puppy for being such an inspiration. Mum and Dad who never cease to be an overwhelmingly supportive force in my life - I love you both dearly. To my brother, Adrian and his partner Allena, I love you guys! To my wife Erin who is my deepest friend and my closest partner in all things - I'm so lucky to be sharing my life with you, I love you so much. To Ollie, my dear daughter. You're growing so fast and already at 4 you are kind, interesting, funny, and deeply curious. Watching you live life with reckless joy is nothing short of a privilege. I am so lucky to have you. Andrew 'Nickel' Nicholson for his sage advice and hard work on behalf of us and other Browntasauras artists. Noah Vig-Fernandes for being such a present and capable helper in all things, and for truly embodying the love of this art form. Max Jones for his photographic talents and expertise. Brianne Carey for being such a firm friend and supporter. My House, Night Oat, RCHA Club and all the other clubs, venues, and festivals across Canada who've supported this band's growth and development since the band's inception in 2012. To the Toronto Arts Council for providing generous funding support to allow this album's creation. Finally, a huge thanks to YOU for having this record and reading what I have to say. I hope you dig it and that you'll stick around for the rest of our journey, wherever that takes us. My deepest thanks.

- Nick Maclean

CREDITS

Recorded Dec, 2025 by Stephen Koszler & Luke Schindler
at Revolution Recording, Toronto
Mixed June 2026 by Josh Bowman at Bowman Sound, Toronto
Mastered Aug 2026 by Josh Bowman at Bowman Sound, Toronto
Produced by Brownman Ali, Brooklyn, NY / Toronto, ON
Cover Art by Dean Shu, New York
Liner notes by Mike Moroney, Redmond, Washington
Released on Browntasauras Records, Oct 2026
Catalog# NCC-1701P

All songs composed by © Nick Maclean

This recording was graciously funded by the Toronto Arts Council

:: NICK MACLEAN – keyboards / synth / compositions
:: BROWNMAN ALI – trumpet, electric trumpet, producer
:: MARCUS ALI – tenor sax & effects
:: JAY YOO – guitar
:: MATT GRUEBNER – 6-string electric bass
:: ADAM MANSFIELD – drums
:: ***Special guest:*** **Luis Orbegoso – all percussion (tracks 6,10,14,16,20)**

:: ***Special guest:*** **Dinah Maclean -- vocals (track 14)**
:: ***Special guest:*** **Erin Brooks -- vocals (track 14)**
:: ***Special guest:*** **Olivia Brooks-Maclean -- vocals (track 14)**

:: Thomas Varey -- director of photography
:: Brittany Farhat -- camera crew
:: Matthew Fong -- camera crew
:: Max Jones -- still photography

:: Noah Vig-Fernandes -- assistant to the producer
:: Steve Danic -- publicity & marketing
:: Andrew Nicholson – operations assistant


Nick Maclean's
SNAGGLE
featuring the
ALI BROS
FOUNDATION
INSPIRED BY
ISAAC ASIMOV
FOUNDATION


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NickMacleanProductions@gmail.com | 416-389-2643
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Browntasauras Records
www.Browntasauras.com
01) ("Trantor" - Introduction) 0:11
02) TWILIGHT Of CIVILIZATION 6:56
03) ("Adjusting" - Interlude) 0:09
04) SECOND FOUNDATION 7:29
05) ("We Are" - Interlude) 0:13
06) GAIA's CALL 5:26
07) ("Jehoshaphat" - Interlude) 0:05
08) ELIJAH & GLADIA 10:31
09) ("Magnificent" - Interlude) 0:10
10) The MULE 7:34
11) ("History" - Interlude) 0:08
12) TEN THOUSAND GENERATIONS 7:58
13) ("Protected" - Interlude) 0:07
14) The ZEROTH LAW 7:27
15) ("Thinking" - Interlude) 0:06
16) LITTLE WANDA, BIG FUTURE 6:38
17) ("Alone" - Interlude) 0:13
18) LONELY MOON ROBOT 5:05
19) ("No One" - Interlude) 0:08
20) ARKADY 6:47
21) ("Infinite" - Epilogue) 0:26
All compositions by: NICK MACLEAN
Interludes by: BROWNMAN ALI & NICK MACLEAN


Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE feat. the ALI BROS
FOUNDATION
Browntasauras • FOUNDATION • Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE feat. ALI BROS • NCC-1701P
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Produced by BROWNMAN
Nick Maclean - keys/synth
Brownman Ali - trumpet
Marcus Ali - tenor sax
Jay Yoo - guitar
Matt Gruebner - bass
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TOTAL RUN TIME: 73m:57s
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www.NickMacleanJazz.com
Contact : Nick Maclean Productions
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BROOKLYN
MUTANT


GSV
AVATAR
CALM COLLECTIV
MUTANT

QUOTES / REVIEWS

Press for FOUNDATION's Singles ("The Mule", "Twilight of Civilization", "Arkady")

"Snaggle... retains the essence of jazz fusion from the 1970s and, with the help of Isaac Asimov, propels it into the next century. Their sound is big, bold, engaging, and tough as nails."
- J. Bruce Parker, Beat Magazine (London, Canada) review of FOUNDATION live concert

"This is the stuff that made fusion fun back in its heyday and Snaggle is a revival of that kind of playfulness missing from a lot of contemporary jazz today."
- S. Victor Aaron, SomethingElseReviews (Plano, USA) about "Arkady"

"NICK MACLEAN's SNAGGLE featuring the ALI BROS presents "Blues Fires" with the single "The Mule," brimming with musical prowess. This composition embodies a personal and vibrant "Progressive" sound, delivered with great ensemble energy and a clear connection between the band members. Their powerful interpretations are evident through stunning solo performances, capable of engaging and captivating even the most discerning listener."
- Bruno Pollacci, Blues Fires (Pisa, Italy) about "The Mule"

"Nick Maclean's SNAGGLE feat. ALI BROS has excelled with their visionary take on a science fiction icon. Asimov's Foundation series is a cornerstone of SciFi, its fans are legion and protective and SNAGGLE's work will win them over. While we wait for the album, the two singles that have been released, "The Mule" and "Twilight of Civilisation" have themes evocative of those episodes, which are superbly realised by the ALI BROS, the group's tight horn section of trumpet (Brownman Ali) and tenor sax (Marcus Ali) that explores and encircles their cores."
- John Lamp, Tempo on the Pulse (Wadawurrung, Australia) on "Twilight of Civilization"

"Arkady features a driving rhythmic backdrop that arcs upward before evening itself out into a seductive electric-jazz vibe. The group's musicians all interact with incredible synergy, with the trumpet & keyboard exploding throughout the piece during their conversational exchanges."
- John Martin, Radio Kelowna (Kelowna, Canada) about "Arkady

Press for Snaggle's 2016 "The Long Slog" release

"So now my main man Brownman has opened the doors of his label Browntasaurus Records to local artists he's been associated with in Toronto and other locales, and the first label release from young pianist Nick Maclean's 6-man electric-jazz group SNAGGLE is most impressive! The music on Long Slog is very, very challenging, yet groovy, soulful & exploratory at the same time. Brownman himself guests on 2 tunes and fits in with flying colors -- no easy task given how difficult some of this music is!
Extremely well performed, written and executed you Snagglers, with high-end production from Brown in the producer's chair. Very impressive work. Reminds me of a band I used to play in! Really well done guys."
- Randy Brecker, multi-Grammy winning trumpet legend (NYC, USA)

“Snaggle plays music without borders, music that is at once sophisticated and inclusive, bristling with infectious funk grooves, rock riffs, and jazz-based improvisations woven into a tapestry of an ambitious yet accessible compositional palette. Seemingly irreconcilable influences vie for attention, from heavy, Zeppelinesque rock riffery to gentle jazz-funk, with hints of Radiohead and the Brian Blade Fellowship Band sprinkled in for good measure, all stitched together in a seamless, somehow inevitable way.”
- David Restivo, Canadian jazz piano giant (Toronto, Canada)

“Totally original... funky as all hell... this ain't any Kenny G oatmeal for folks with no teeth”
- Mike Greenblat, Classicalite (NYC, USA)

"What’s most striking about this group is that they are continually challenging the “norm”, so what you get will be completely fresh and new. I give this band a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an “EQ” (energy quotient) rating of 4.99."
- Dick Metcalf – Improvijazzation Nation (Washington, USA)

“The music of Snaggle, a fruitful sextet based in Toronto, translates into mature compositions and stupendous executions. The members of the band, virtuosos in their respective instruments, resort to a laudable sense of unity and superior taste to creatively orchestrate the nine pieces of The Long Slog, their sophomore feature album… In a certain moment they’re confronting Miles Davis with Medeski Martin & Wood; in the other, you may find the Red Hot Chili Peppers colliding with Incognito or Mahavishnu Orchestra.
- Filipe Freitas, Jazziz (Florida, USA)

"The wonder of the musicians’ playing is how engagingly, articulately, flowingly and creatively they pour themselves into the songs, adding further lustre to this recording, which is stylish, responsive and richly atmospheric."
- Raul da Gama – The Whole Note (Toronto, Canada)

About BROWNTASAURAS RECORDS

Initially formed in 2009 as a singular home to trumpet player Brownman Ali's 7 various ensembles, the flagship release for the label was Brownman Electryc Trio's "Juggernaut", with several recordings that previously appeared on other labels being re-issued. In 2015 Brownman opened the doors to other ensembles which showcased his trumpet playing, but for whom he was not a leader. All of the ensembles on the label -- CRUZAO & BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO in particular -- have been the recipients of many awards & accolades, all receiving critical acclaim.

The label is unique in that all artists receive 100% of all profits, with the label receiving exactly 0%. It is a true not-for-profit with Brownman's vision for the label to be "a catalyst for the creation of new jazz art", and not a typical capital venture as has been the goal of most traditional record labels.

The label is now widely regarded as a vanguard for new and visionary talent in the evolution of Jazz in Canada, with signed ensembles including all 10 of Brownman's own groups, Nick Maclean's Quartet, his Solo Piano recording & SNAGGLE; Chris Lesso's MODUS FACTOR; and Chelsea McBride's SOCIALIST NIGHT SCHOOL. Browntasauras Records is honored to represent such world-class talent.

www.Browntasaursas.com (Official website - for more on the label)
www.Facebook.com/BrowntasaurasRecords (Facebook)
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