

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

### Samuel Kaufman, Senior Music Minor, Trombonist

In this newsletter's edition of student spotlight, the School of Music interviewed senior music minor and trombonist Samuel Kaufman, who played a significant role in the making of the Puget Sound Jazz Orchestra's first ever album, *As the Smoke Clears*.

Sam expressed gratitude for being part of the special project, describing it as "fulfilling" and a "creative joy." Sam was one of the students who, due to COVID-19, was unable to get the full four-year, in-person Jazz Orchestra experience, but being able to contribute to recording *As the Smoke Clears* helped to lessen the sting for him. "It was so worth it," he said. "It felt like a victory hearing the final record."

The album arose as a musical response to the hardships of 2020, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement. Sam and his fellow performers in the Jazz Orchestra "used music as a way to make sense of the pain," and sought to share their creation with others. Through embracing the "healing force of music," Sam was reminded that "coming together, speaking out for what's right, and supporting each other is what is most important in...musical communities."

Sam performed a solo during the piece "For Your Consideration," which featured a fusion of jazz and hip-hop. He referred to having the solo as a "real gift," and he was deeply thankful to be able to perform again after the pandemic had stymied creative outlets for so long. Sam told us that he wanted his solo to be "imperfect," "piercing," and "edgy," in an effort to "[represent]...how the pandemic has broken [everyone] in some way."

The collaboration between the Jazz Orchestra and Tacoma rapper Blake Anthony in "For Your Consideration" was unique. Sam explained how the students' knowledge and familiarity with hip-hop helped to adjust how they usually played, which set apart the rehearsals for the track from the others on the album.

Sam expressed deep pride in the Jazz Orchestra for coming together to make a work of art in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also showed gratitude for the hard work of Jazz Orchestra director Tracy Knoop, who inspired his students to create the album in the first place. "We could have spent the whole year online, playing through a screen, transcribing, and going through the motions," Sam said. "Instead, we made powerful and emotional art, and let our collective voice be heard."



*As The Smoke Clears Album Artwork  
by Joe Garlid, Senior Music Minor*



*Samuel Kaufman*