

Sports & Entertainment

Blue Note Records releases “Fathers,” a self-titled debut by a collective groove-savvy that educates in jazz roots and thrill fans with renown musicianship and the wisdom of ‘fathers’

Blue Note Records has released **FATHERS**, the self-titled debut by a collective of groove-savvy producer-musicians comprised of keyboardist **Kiefer**, bassist **CARRTOONS**, drummer **Nate Smith**, and producer **Kenneth Blume** (f/k/a Kenny Beats). **FATHERS** features artists renowned for both their jazz-rooted musicianship and their production acumen — four deeply talented individuals with serious performance chops who also love the possibilities of the studio. Recorded over just two days of impromptu sessions, the album has a magical spark of spontaneity featuring 8 gems crafted on the spur of the moment.

FATHERS’ producer is Kenneth Blume — better known as Kenny Beats — whose insight has transformed projects by Vince Staples, Denzel Curry, Rico Nasty, **IDLES**, Freddie Gibbs, Geese, Weezer and so many others. He’s also set the pace online, inviting the likes of Doja Cat, Thundercat and Skrillex to participate in his viral concepts across Twitch and YouTube.

Keyboardist **Kiefer Shackelford**, whose moniker is simply Kiefer, has earned acclaim for his original music, with its uniquely atmospheric blend of jazz, electronic and hip-hop. As a collaborator and producer his credits include Terrace Martin and Anderson .Paak. On the



The “Fathers” congregate to spread the wisdom of music. (Photo by Aidan Cullen)

latter’s GRAMMY-winning LP Ventura, he co-produced two tracks, among them the lead single, “King James.”

On bass is the similarly genre-blurring multi-instrumentalist **Ben Carr**, a.k.a. **CARRTOONS**. In addition to producer-led projects like his latest, Space Cadet, the well-connected New Yorker has gained traction through his inventive socials, multiple Tiny Desk performances and produc-

tion work with rap, R&B and jazz heavyweights like George Clinton, Freddie Gibbs, Jadakiss, Usher and Roy Ayers.

Nate Smith ranks among the most respected and influential drummers currently at work, whose meticulous, machinelike understanding of time is matched only by the soulfulness of his pocket. As a musician and writer-producer, his collaborative credits read like a hall of fame of

pathbreaking musicians of the late 20th and 21st centuries: Michael Jackson, Brittany Howard, Jon Batiste, Pat Metheny, Dave Holland, Childish Gambino, Vulspeck, the list goes on. In 2026, he won two GRAMMY Awards for LIVE-ACTION, a guest-laden project showcasing his gifts as a conceptualist and the fulcrum of an astonishing network of artists. It was Smith who first assembled

the core trio in 2023 as part of his residency at the Montreal Jazz Festival. Tours of the U.S. and Japan followed where the trio further developed their chemistry as a working group. “We all write, we all play at a high level, and we’re pushing each other to be better,” says **CARRTOONS**. “So we know going into anything that there’s going to be an inspiration and a push from everybody else, so that hunger that we

all have independently becomes this super-being when we get together.”

FATHERS was produced by Blume and recorded at his Putnam Hill studio in Los Angeles. “I was 95 percent through building my studio, and I asked Kiefer if he could come by with a band and play some instruments,” he recalls. “We custom-built our recording console and hadn’t heard anything through it yet. So it was meant to be a test day to make sure the studio was up and running. Kiefer happened to be playing shows with Ben and Nate at the time, and in testing out the equipment we recorded these songs in 48 hours. Turns out the board works just fine.”

The eight resulting tracks — credited equally to all four members and featuring additional contributions from saxophonist Nicole McCabe, vocalist Genevieve Artadi (**KNOWER**), guitarist Paul Castelluzzo (**HETHER**) and the strings of Yasmeen Al-Mazeedi — certainly project an ethos of high-impact collaboration. But they’re also a vibe: a delightful front-to-back listen that rewards both over-ear headphone time and using the LP as a soundtrack to life.

Follow Blue Note Records:
Website • Facebook • Instagram • Threads • Bluesky • X • Spotify • Apple Music • YouTube

Nell Mescal returns with brand new track “Settles” via Atlantic Records; Artist praised as up & rising talent



“Candid and tender indie folk that tugs at the heartstrings”
NME

“Nell Mescal is on the brink of something huge.”
Vogue

‘A masterclass in storytelling’
Dork Magazine

‘Gorgeous stuff from a promising new star’
i-D

Nell Mescal returns with her new single “Settles,” offering a tender and emotionally resonant portrait of distance, love and longing from one of Ireland’s most compelling young songwriters. “Settles” finds Nell Mescal leaning into a more intimate and reflective space, capturing the emotional weight of a relationship stretched across distance. Rooted in pop sensibilities, the track is built around themes of yearning and hope, balancing vulnerability with quiet optimism as it ex-

“‘Settles’ is a love song about a long distance relationship where it feels like the time spent together is fleeting and that you always seem to be saying goodbye to each other at an airport” explains Nell. “It’s about the hope that one day the dust will settle, life will get less busy and the two of you will get to be together without any interruptions. It’s about reassurance, yearning, hope and loving someone from a distance”.

plores the desire for stability amid constant separation.

“‘Settles’ is a love song about a long distance relationship where it feels like the time spent together is fleeting and that you always seem to be saying goodbye to each other at an airport” ex-

plains Nell. “It’s about the hope that one day the dust will settle, life will get less busy and the two of you will get to be together without any interruptions. It’s about reassurance, yearning, hope and loving someone from a distance”.

With praise from the likes of i-D, The New York Times, Vogue, Radio 1, 6 Music and gracing The Cover of NME at the end of 2025, Nell Mescal has become one of the most talked about emerging pop artists of the past few years. She continues to build a reputation as a distinctive voice who takes your breath away, with a growing catalogue of emotionally direct, relatable material and a live presence that has quickly resonated with audiences across the UK, Ireland & Europe, having supported the likes of HAIM, Dermot Kennedy, Florence & The Machine.

‘Settles’ signals the next step in that journey, offering a glimpse into the evolving direction of her forthcoming work.

Complimentary military tickets are available for FedEx St. Jude Championship, August 12-16. For more information, visit FedExChampionship.com/military.

Also, watch for The Mid-South Tribune’s William M. Larsha, Jr.’s coverage of the FedEx St. Jude Championship!

Email entertainment and sports news releases and photos to MSTsports@prodigy.net



“American Pachuco” Named First Place Winner of the Seventh Annual Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize and Named Sundance Film Favorite
See sports-Ent. Page 6