

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
			[Music continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]
00:00:05	Oliver Wang	Host	Hello! I’m Oliver Wang.
00:00:07	Morgan Rhodes	Host	And I’m Morgan Rhodes. You’re listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> .
00:00:10	Oliver	Host	Every episode, we invite a guest to join us to talk about a heat rock: an album that burns itself into our collective memory. And today, we will be ambling down to a smoky basement club to revisit <i>Embraceable You</i> , the 1957/1995 album by Chet Baker.
00:00:28	Music	Music	“On Green Dolphin Street” from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
00:00:46	Morgan	Host	<i>Embraceable You</i> was written in 1928 by the Gershwin Brothers: two men whose pens kept them booked and busy for most of the 20 th century. Ginger Rogers was the first to sing the song in the 1930 musical, <i>Crazy Girl</i> . But she was not the last. Some of my favorite versions include this one.
00:01:05	Music	Music	“Embraceable You” by Sarah Vaughan.
			<i>Embrace me, my sweet embraceable you</i>
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
00:01:22	Morgan	Host	And this one.
00:01:23	Music	Music	“Embraceable You” by Nat King Cole.
			<i>Embrace me, you irreplaceable you Just one look at you...</i>
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
00:01:36	Morgan	Host	And this one, inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2005.
00:01:40	Music	Music	“Embraceable You” by Billie Holiday.
			<i>My heart goes tipsy in me You and you alone</i>
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
00:01:54	Morgan	Host	Ah, but there’s this one.
00:01:56	Music	Music	“Embraceable You” from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>Bring out the gypsy in me</i>
			<i>I love all the many charms...</i>
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
00:02:15	Morgan	Host	This one was recorded in 1957 by Chet Baker, the title track to an album that wasn’t released until 1995. By then, the prince of cool was on the other side of glory after a career spent being brilliant

and troubled. *Embraceable You* the album has 13 tracks. Besides the Gershwins, there were covers and others. None of the songs were written by Chet, but they all sounded like they were lived by him. That is to say that there is a palpable, personal sadness hanging over every sweep of chorus, every line. Not surprising, given what we know about his life and his struggles.

British jazz critic, Clive Davis, said of the album, quote, “That little boy, lost persona has its charms, but over the course of an album, the impression is one of oppressive melancholia. But for many, that is the essence of his appeal.” End quote. “Many” is me. I liked that “How Long Has This Been Going On” wasn’t upbeat like originally intended but sounded like the salty tears the lyrics referenced. I liked that I wasn’t sure if him singing “I’m gonna love you, come rain or shine,” was actually good news or something to lament. I like how “The Night We Called It a Day” is one of the saddest openers I’ve ever heard. I like the mournfulness of “Traveling Light”.

Richard Bach, the head of Pacific Jazz, purveyor of all things west coast jazz, and Chet’s label head, actually shelved this album, finding it too depressing to release. Was Chet Baker a trumpeter who sang or a singer who played the trumpet? Good question. And maybe one better answered after listening to *Embraceable You* or by listening to Chet Baker. Either way, he made a name for himself by doing both things well. If art imitates life is to be believed, then the sorrow present on this album is in step with what Chet Baker was dealing with. Committing to listening to *Embraceable You* is to commit to your feels and his. He was 28 years old when this was recorded. And maybe being young and dipped in folly, he fell in love with melancholy. Shouts to Edgar Allan Poe.

Embraceable You is a heat rock. It is, by Oliver Wang’s definition, an album that burns, baby, burns. It’s pretty and sometimes pretty hurts. Shouts to Bey. But don’t let that stop you from bumping it. Prepare to be moved, press play, and invite the little boy blue to come blow his horn.

00:04:46 Music Music

“On Green Dolphin Street” from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:05:01 Oliver Host

Embraceable You was the album pick of our guest today, singer-songwriter and guitarist, Bruno Major. Just spend some time ruminating around his budding catalogue, be it his brand-new album—*To Let a Good Thing Die*—or his stellar debut LP from a couple years back, *A Song for Every Moon*. Or take it all the way back to his live EP from 2014, and you can hear how someone like Chet Baker might have been one of his faves coming up. There’s a confessional-like intimacy to Bruno’s singing: romantic but not maudlin, hushed but not quiet. At Trey Taylor put it in *Interview Magazine* a couple years back, Bruno makes music, quote, “designed to make you cry.” End quote.

He’s a young man—well, at least compared to us. But as he tells everyone on the first song from his new album, quote, “I spend my days listening to old soul.”

00:05:52	Music	Music	<p>“Old Soul” from the album <i>To Let a Good Thing Die</i> by Bruno Major.</p> <p><i>We spend our days listening to old soul</i></p> <p><i>I gave you control, you gave me a heart attack</i> <i>It's the reason why I never called you back</i> <i>Hope you're not offended</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:06:08	Oliver	Host	<p>By the way, for Spotify folks out there, I highly recommend you check out Bruno’s self-assembled Brune’s Tunes playlist on there. He’s got some Chet Baker sprinkled in, but also everyone from Wes Montgomery to Matt Miller, Slum Village to Scatman Crothers, Paul Simon to Prince. Our show, of course, is partly dedicated to exploring what people’s musical inspirations and influences are, so we love these kinds of windows into people’s loves.</p>
00:06:37	Bruno Major	Guest	<p>Bruno Major, welcome to <i>Heat Rocks</i>. Hello! Thanks for having me, guys.</p>
00:06:39	Morgan	Host	<p>I gotta ask. How did Chet Baker and this album in particular come into your life?</p>
00:06:44	Bruno	Guest	<p>The introduction I had to this album was a funny one. It was when my younger brother got his first car, and a friend of ours brought over a gift in the form of a CD. And it was Chet Baker, <i>Embraceable You</i>. And the three of us sat in the—it’s a Volkswagen Golf—and we sat there and listened to the whole thing from start to finish. And it was one of those moments—you know, when you listen to an album that’s really special and you never forget that first time you listen to it from start to finish. It was one of those moments. My introduction to Chet Baker himself, I think probably like a lot of people, it was “My Funny Valentine”, which is arguably the song that’s crossed over into the public zeitgeist more than the other.</p>
00:07:31	Music	Music	<p>“My Funny Valentine” by Chet Baker.</p> <p><i>My funny valentine</i> <i>Sweet comic valentine</i> <i>You make me smile with my heart</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:07:51	Bruno	Guest	<p>One of the most influential musicians on my personal style of music, especially as a singer.</p>
00:07:59	Oliver	Host	<p>Yeah, absolutely. Morgan, how about you?</p>
00:08:02	Morgan	Host	<p>I actually came to know Chet Baker’s music through his Christmas album, <i>Silent Nights</i>. I was home from college, on break, and I heard this played on the radio. I think it was 94.7 The Wave.</p> <p><i>[Oliver “ooh”s.]</i></p> <p>And I heard this song because I had to keep listening to the radio, and a version of “Little Drummer Boy” played a couple of songs before this. And I missed the DJ announcing who the song was by. So, I just kept listening, hoping that he would—you know—come</p>

			back on. But he didn't. In the meantime, it led me to Chet Baker and "Come All Ye Faithful".
00:08:44	Music	Music	"Come All Ye Faithful" from the album <i>A Very Jazzy Christmas</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:09:01	Morgan	Host	I loved it at first listen, but I did think it was one of the saddest versions of a Christmas carol I had ever heard.
00:09:10	Oliver	Host	I think similar to you, Morgan—I mean, the first impression I really came away with from listening to Chet, especially singing, is just the kind of inherent sadness to his affect. And you know, I first discovered it I'm sure in the 1990s, when I was exploring the world of jazz vocalists. And obviously, you know, Chet Baker's required listening in that regard. And I know this comparison is—you know, might come off in bad taste, but whenever I hear him sing, the first thing I think about is that his voice sounds like what I imagine heroin feels like. Not that I would know this from personal experience, but there's something so warm and cool about it, but also distanced and disaffected. And I think there's a reason—
00:09:50	Bruno	Guest	I mean, he did do a lot of heroin, Oliver. So—
00:09:52	Oliver	Host	He certainly did!
00:09:54	Bruno	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> It probably is not far off what it sounds like—what it feels like.
00:09:57	Oliver	Host	Yeah. If I understand his biography correctly though, I think his heroin habit came after he had already begun singing. So, it's not as if one was influenced by the other. Or maybe it went in the other direction. His singing led him to H. But in any case, I certainly think there's a reason that people often describe Chet as being this very, quote—you know, "tragic romantic" singer. And that's simply because of how his life went and ended. But I think it's because he always sounds like he's wistfully singing about what it was like being in love, but always past tense. It's only after the love affair has ended. And I just wanted to share this gem that I found in James Gavin's exhaustive 2011 biography of Chet, <i>Deep in a Dream</i> , where he talks about this album in particular—the <i>Embraceable You</i> album—noting that the label, Pacific Jazz, had shelved it because they found it depressing.
			And when it finally did come out, a British jazz critic named Clive Davis, which I'm assuming is not to be confused with Island Records Clive or Arista Records Clive Davis, I should say. He said of this album, quote, "The impression is one of oppressive melancholia, but for many, that is the essence of his appeal." Unquote. And I think that actually captures Chet Baker pretty well, is the oppressive melancholia of his voice.
00:11:17	Music	Music	"The Night We Called It a Day" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>Like a minor lament in my ears I hadn't the heart left to pray The night we called it a day</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>

00:11:42	Morgan	Host	Bruno, I just wanted to talk a little bit more about Chet as a vocalist. I have to say that I love a crooner. And I don't know a lot about Chet's training as a vocalist, but what I do love about his voice is how delicate it is. It may be just how I'm hearing it, but the notes sound like they develop, and they stay here, in his mouth. That they never go to the throat or in this chesty way of other singers, that there isn't a really heavy vibrato. Not that there's anything wrong with singing it with your chest, but I feel like it stays here, and that's what I like about his voice. And the other things that I like about his voice that aren't present on this album that I didn't know 'til I started digging deep was his scat, which I really hadn't heard as much of as I liked. And it just blew me away. I was holding onto my desk like—and this was like four o'clock in the morning, like, "You gotta be kidding me." Especially on songs like "You Make Me Feel So Young".
00:12:31	Music	Music	"You Make Me Feel So Young" from the album <i>Chet Baker Sings</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>[Scatting.]</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:12:47	Morgan	Host	I think when we think about crooners, we think of—you know—this heavy, chesty—this full-bodied voice. And that's why we ascribe—you know—to them this title of crooner. I consider Chet a crooner just the same. What are your impressions of his voice? Or what's unique about his voice to you?
00:13:06	Bruno	Guest	Well, I think Chet—I'm 99% sure that Chet was a trumpet player before he was a singer. And to me, when he sings, he sings like a trumpet. And the thing that's really fascinating is his use of vibrato. So, you know, when you get Louis Armstrong playing the trumpet, it's <i>[mimics a trumpet sound with a lot of vibrato]</i> . Really heavy vibrato. When Miles plays, it's <i>[mimics a trumpet sound that's very sustained]</i> . Zero vibrato. And Chet has this little flicker on the end where it's like <i>[mimics a sustained trumpet sound that ends with vibrato]</i> . Just a little touch every now and then. He's exactly the same when he sings. He sings exactly like he plays the trumpet, and even with his scatting, you know, there's no way somebody could scat like that who couldn't play an instrument to a really high level. That's coming from a place of soul, but it's also coming from a place of deep, deep knowledge.
00:13:58	Morgan	Host	Oh, I was reading that he—Chet had said it himself, I don't know if I'm a trumpeter who sings or a singer that plays the trumpet. How would you consider him?
00:14:07	Bruno	Guest	I mean, all of my—pretty much all of my favorite singers aren't really singers. I don't consider myself to be a singer; I'm very much a songwriter who sings his songs. And when I look at Chet, Louis Armstrong, Randy Newman—you know, these guys have got unique voices that are their own, but you know, none of them are ever gonna be singing alongside Pavarotti. But that's what makes them unique. And ultimately what is a voice? It's a method of communicating your thoughts and your feelings. And I don't think you need to be very technical necessarily to do that. What I do know is that Chet has a voice that is very much his own, and it communicates his feelings very accurately.

00:14:54 Oliver Host I think your observation earlier about the relationship between how he plays and how he sings is really spot on. And I certainly don't—you know, I'm not a big follower of jazz trumpeters. I think I can really only name four, which would be Louis, Dizzy, Miles and Chet. And of those four, only two of them—Louis and Chet—are known as vocalists. But I think what's so striking about both Louis Armstrong and Chet Baker, which we've been discussing here, is the ways in which their singing and their horn playing oftentimes feel very seamlessly blended together. And you know, part of me does wonder if because the trumpet in particular—given, what is it, the armature of how you play it—it does require like exquisite mouth and breath control. So, it would seem to me that those kinds of skillsets might easily translate into how one approaches singing technique as well.

Though I think—in Chet's case, I think one of the things that's well known about him is that he had very little formal training. He's someone who didn't know how to read charts. He never composed, which was very unusual for a jazz musician of his stature. So, a lot of his ability tends to come from what he developed—kind of what you might describe as naturally or at least, you know, in a way that he just kind of made it up as he went along in a lot of ways. And so, the fact that he could have this playing style and singing style that just echoed each other on his songs so beautifully I think is really, really striking.

00:16:19 Music Music "Little Girl Blue" from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

*What can you do?
Old girl, you're through
Sit there and count your...*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:16:41 Oliver Host What's so striking about Chet, as a singer—besides just the qualities of his voice that we've been talking about—is that he used it much less than I think a lot of us realize. And I didn't know this until I went into kind of a bit of a rabbit hole of looking up stuff that had been written about Chet in prep for today, but he recorded something like close to 200 albums. I mean, Chet Baker was incredibly, incredibly prolific. But of those, only about half a dozen were actually primarily vocal albums. And no pun intended—actually, pun very much intended—his favorite instrument was not his voice. It really was his trumpet. And I wonder if part of it is tied up with the fact that, especially when he first started singing, critics hated, hated, hated his singing voice.

One reviewer compared it to the sound of a boiled owl. And I'm not even sure where that metaphor would've come from. Like, how do you know what a boiled owl sounds like?

[Bruno laughs.]

And so, in general, you know, they found it anemic. There's a lot of kind of homophobia and misogyny also that was bred into a lot of the commentary at the time, because he was singing in a way that a lot of people read as being androgynous in an era in which that just

wasn't really done very commonly. At least not in the states. And yet, listeners and audiences—especially like the teenage girl part of his fanbase that a lot of record labels at the time played up to—they loved it. And so, there's this kind of interesting dichotomy between him having this—now, we consider a legendary, signature voice that I think at the time was not received well by people in the music business, but certainly, clearly amongst listeners resonated.

00:18:30 Bruno Guest Because it's one of the things we know about him. Even though, as I've been saying, he really was not primarily a vocalist. I think it's much harder to become a household name as an instrumental artist. If you look through history, the vast majority of jazz musicians that you know well—and I even include the ones in modern day—they sing. Because not many people can connect to a trumpet in the same way that they can connect to a human voice. And it's the same for me. You know, I spent six hours a day playing my guitar when I was 18 to 20 years old, 21 years old. Worked incredibly hard at that instrument, and I know a lot on it. And singing is something that I really just picked up by accident and never put any effort into whatsoever. But now, when I come offstage, no one ever talks about my guitar. All they say to me is, "I love your songs. I love your voice."

[Oliver chuckles and agrees.]

It's like—'cause that's what connects to them. And you know, it was—Chet Baker was undoubtedly one of the all-time great jazz trumpet players.

[Oliver agrees.]

00:19:32 Oliver Host What elevated him into the collective consciousness is his voice. Yeah. I'm curious, do you find that frustrating, in terms of as you were saying, you put all of this time into mastering an instrument, and it's really—you know, your singing, which was secondary I guess in some ways, in terms of how you approached your musical career, that's what people resonate—you know, as you were saying, resonates with the listener.

00:19:49 Bruno Guest I don't at all, because if I'm honest, I—although I worked very hard on my guitar and I became a very competent guitar player, I never found my voice in the way that Wes Montgomery plays one note, and you know it's Wes Montgomery. Jimi Hendrix plays one note, and you know it's Jimi Hendrix. I didn't have a voice on the guitar in that way—an artistic identity in the way that they did. And I loved—always loved words, and I flirted with the idea of becoming a writer of some kind. It wasn't until I found the combination of words and music, basically, in the form of songwriting that I really found my artistic voice.

00:20:55 Oliver Host Because the magic for me about the whole thing is how a certain lyric can elevate a melody and a harmonic choice to a point of transcendence, and how a melody can bring more meaning to a lyric or even a different context to a lyric. That's what songwriting is. That's my favorite thing in the whole world. And I knew as soon as I wrote my first song that that was—you know—what I'm here to do. Right. I wanted to cycle back to something, 'cause not to bury the lead about this specific album—'cause we've been talking about

kind of Chet in the broader sense. But what's striking about—when you chose this album, I mean, *Embraceable You* rang a bell only because it just—it's one of those standards that you just assume that Chet Baker would've sung at some point. But I'd gotten this album confused with the much better-known *Chet Baker Sings*, from 1954, which is like the definitive Chet Baker vocal album.

[Bruno agrees.]

00:21:42 Bruno Guest

This is an album that—you know, as we've been talking about—was recorded in '57, but it wasn't released until 1995. And so, it's not like it was a consensus favorite for a lot of folks. I'm very curious as to why, of all of the Chet Baker albums that could be out there to talk about, why was it this one that resonates with you the most? This album was more influential on my sound and aesthetic choices as an artist than any other. I mean, basically if you got Chet Baker *Embraceable You* and J Dilla *Donuts* and just *[claps hands]* mash them together, you're not a million miles away from *A Song for Every Moon*.

[Oliver laughs and agrees.]

00:22:40 Music Music

And obviously, that's simplistic and reductive, but *[stammering]* *Chet Baker Sings* has the feeling of a major label album. It's got strings. It's got huge bands. It's got production. It's shiny and it's amazing. But this album is so rough around the edges, and it's just electric guitar, an upright bass, and then Chet, either singing or playing trumpet. It's so beautiful and it's like, as a fan of Chet, you never get the opportunity to feel as intimate with him on a recording as you do in this album. And for that reason, I don't really understand how anyone could not like it.

"Come Rain or Come Shine" from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

*High as a mountain and deep as a river
Come rain or come shine*

00:22:53 Bruno Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

Have you seen the documentary that was made in what ended up being the last year of his life, called *Let's Get Lost*. It was made in the—

00:23:01 Oliver Host

Not yet. I mean, I feel like I should've at some point, but yeah.

00:23:04 Bruno Guest

[Morgan affirms.]

Oh my god. So, you have to watch it. It was—like, somebody followed him around and filmed him and didn't know that it was—and it ended up being his last year alive. And it's Chet, and he's sort of—he's this old man, and he's sad, and he's—you know—addicted to drugs. And there's a scene where he's asked, "What's your favorite song and what's your favorite lyric?" And he's got a cigarette in his mouth, and he takes a big sort of melancholy drag. And as the smoke plumes out of his mouth, he says:

00:23:40 Clip Clip

Chet Baker (*Let's Get Lost*): The smoke builds a stairway for you to descend. You come to my arms. May this bliss never end. Awake or asleep, every memory I'll keep, when I'm deep in a dream of you.

00:23:58	Bruno	Guest	And there's a pause, and then he just says:
00:24:02	Clip	Clip	Chet: Nice words. Uh-huh.
00:24:05	Bruno	Guest	It's so sad! But I love him so much, and I—you know, whatever—he obviously was—you know, he obviously was a very, very troubled man. But in the same way, that intimacy that you get from the album, <i>Embraceable You</i> —there's this guy, David Weeks, on guitar who's—you know, his playing is so simple. He's just describing the harmony in a very almost twee way, on this nylon string guitar and a bass, and there's nothing to block you out from Chet and his feelings and his trumpet. It's just the minimum of accompaniment that you could possibly have. All that you're listening to and thinking about is Chet. So, who couldn't like this album?
00:24:50	Oliver	Host	We will be back with more of our conversation with Bruno Major about Chet Baker's <i>Embraceable You</i> after a brief word from some of our Max Fun sibling podcasts. Keep it locked.
00:25:00	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs.
00:25:01	Promo	Clip	Music: Dramatic organ/piano music.

[Background noise throughout: a howling wolf and cawing crow. April speaks in a sinister voice.]

April Wolfe: Hello there, ghouls and gals. It is I, April Wolfe. I'm here to take you through the twisty, sca-a-a-ry, heart-pounding world of genre cinema on the exhilarating program known as [Switchblade Sisters](#).

[Sinister echo on the title.]

The concept is simple: I invite a female filmmaker on each week, and we discuss their favorite genre film. Listen in closely to hear past guests, like *The Babadook* director Jennifer Kent, *Winter's Bone* director Debra Granik, and so many others every Thursday on [MaximumFun.org](#). Tune in! If you dare...

[Thunder booms, something growls over April as she cackles evilly, and then all sound abruptly cuts.]

April: *[Rapidly]* It's actually a very thought-provoking show that deeply explores the craft and philosophy behind the filmmaking process while also examining film through the lens of the female gaze. So, like, you should listen.

00:25:50	Promo	Clip	<i>[Same sinister echo effect] Switchblade Sisters!</i> Music: Fun, cheerful music.
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Kirk Hamilton: Video games!

Jason Schreier: Video games!

Maddy Myers: Video games! You like 'em?

Jason: Maybe you wish you had more time for them?

Kirk: Maybe you wanna know the best ones to play?

Jason: Maybe you wanna know what happens to Mario when he dies?

[Kirk chuckles.]

Maddy: In that case, you should check out [Triple Click!](#) It's a podcast about video games.

Jason: A podcast about video games?! But I don't have time for that!

Kirk: Sure you do. Once a week, kick back as three video game experts give you everything from critical takes on the hottest new releases—

Jason: —to scoops, interviews, and explanations about how video games work—

Maddy: —to fascinating and sometimes weird stories about the games we love.

Kirk: *Triple Click* is hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

Jason: Me, Jason Schreier.

Maddy: And me, Maddy Myers.

Kirk: You can find *Triple Click* wherever you get your podcasts and listen at [MaximumFun.org](#).

Maddy: Bye!

[Music finishes.]

00:26:34 Music Transition
00:26:36 Morgan Host

“Crown Ones” off the album *Stepfather* by People Under the Stairs. And we are back on *Heat Rocks*, talking Chet Baker’s *Embraceable You* with our guest, Bruno Major.

00:26:42 Oliver Host

Bruno, I’m wondering—as someone who, you know, your vocal style draws from some of the similar—as we’ve been talking about—some of the similar kind of affect that Baker tried to imbue in his singing. And I think people oftentimes describe Chet’s singing as being very kind of unadorned, very—not simplistic, but very straightforward in a way, and effortless. Right? It’s that he was not a showy singer. He was not a virtuosic singer, compared to contemporaries. But I think one of the things that has often been said is the more effortless a performance is, is there actually is a great amount of effort and technique that goes into achieving the sense of effortlessness. And I’m wondering—as someone who sings in a kind of a comparable style—is that—do you find that to be true? You know. Is your singing voice something that comes to you very naturally or is it something that you work on a lot from a technique point of view? Even if that’s not evident to the end receiver.

00:27:40 Bruno Guest

It sounds like a facetious thing to say, but I really don’t like singing. I find that singing gets in the way of itself.

[Oliver “hm”s in surprise.]

And my favorite singers, all they're doing is telling the story with the right melody. You know? They're not—I never think about, you know, how much vibrato I'm putting on or a run. You know. Sometimes I hear people cover my songs, and they're doing runs everywhere, and it's like—you know, I could've done that, but I didn't.

[Oliver laughs.]

It's like the poetry is important. And in the same—you know, it's the same as when I'm recording the guitar. It's like, you know, I could shred some like Eddie Van Halen tapping on the front of my guitar on top of my songs, but it wouldn't be serving the purpose, which is to communicate the emotion of the song. So, Chet is a beautiful example of somebody who gets the message across. And what he's searching for is nothing to do with—is nothing to do with the show. It's purely delivering an honest emotional message. And he does that—you know, and what is virtuoso? Because one of the hardest things to do as a singer is just to hold a note without any vibrato for a long time. Which, you know, he does with aplomb.

[They agree.]

So, I would personally call him a virtuoso singer. But it's certainly not something that he was trying to do.

00:29:09 Music Music

"Little Girl Blue" from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

*Now the young world has grown old
Gone are the tinsel and the gold*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:29:26 Morgan Host

I wanna ask you a bit about your song "Old Fashioned". Because you sound a lot to me like Chet on this one.

00:29:35 Bruno Guest

What a complement.

00:29:36 Morgan Host

Talk about recording that song and talk about your mindset going into it.

00:29:41 Bruno Guest

That song's a funny one. It's actually one of the first songs I ever wrote, and when it came to recording my first album—*A Song for Every Moon*—I already had "Easily" and "Fair Weather Friend", which both have the *[mimics the drum pattern]* kind of feel to it. And I didn't feel there was any room for it. And so, it was—it was left unloved. And then it came 'round to making the second album, and I had been playing the song live, and it had become a big of a favorite of like fans. So, yeah, I put on the second album, and I'm very glad I did.

00:30:16 Morgan Host

I'm glad you did, too. Thanks, man.

00:30:18 Bruno Guest

[Chuckles.] You're very welcome, Morgan.

00:30:20 Music Music

"Old Fashioned" from the album *To Let a Good Thing Die* by Bruno Major.

*I'll walk you home, to your front door
I'll say, "Farewell", until the morning calls
I'll be smiling a bigger smile...*

			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:30:38	Bruno	Guest	It's funny, 'cause there's a standard. <i>[Singing.]</i> "I am old fashioned. I love the moonlight." You know that one? "I love old fashioned things." And Chet sings it. It's beautiful. It's very different to my song.
00:30:50	Music	Music	"I'm Old Fashioned" from the album <i>Chet Baker Sings</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>I'm old fashioned but I don't mind it That's how I want to be</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:31:08	Oliver	Host	Well, bringing this back to Chet and his album <i>Embraceable You</i> , we normally ask our guest what the fire track is off of the album. And somehow, this album doesn't really—I don't know if "fire" is the right word to describe any song on here, but certainly I think there are many songs that leave a very powerful impression. So, Bruno, is there a song off of here that really, really hits you every time you listen to this thing?
00:31:31	Bruno	Guest	Um, oof. It's very hard to choose, because they're all very good. Um. I think the title track is extremely special. I love "There's a Lull in My Life".
			<i>[Morgan "ooh"s.]</i>
			There's a chord change in there that gets me eeevery single time. So, I'll go for those two.
00:31:50	Oliver	Host	I mean, what is it in those songs that really hits you?
00:31:53	Bruno	Guest	I really feel like in the sad songs, something comes out of him. He—you know, when he's doing <i>[singing]</i> , "We all laughed at Christopher Columbus when he said the world was round." It's like, yeah! It's great, but he's not delivering that part of himself in the way that he is when you listen to "There's a Lull in My Life".
			<i>[Oliver agrees.]</i>
00:32:12	Music	Music	"There's a Lull in My Life" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>Oh, there's a lull In my life The moment that you go away There is no night, there is no day</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:32:39	Oliver	Host	Morgan, how about you?
00:32:40	Morgan	Host	Well, I'm hoping since we have both instrumentals and vocals on this record, I can pick two fire tracks. So greedy. My favorite instrumental is "How Long Has This Been Going On". And although this isn't the only song on the record where he's just playing trumpet, again I have to go back to the sadness. I love the sadness in his playing.
00:33:00	Music	Music	"How Long Has This Been Going On" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:33:17 Morgan Host A little bit bluesy. And of course, this song has been covered a lot and covered by the greats. Ella, Carmen, and my beloved Shirley Horn. But my favorite version is Sarah Vaughan's. And it's on her 1978 album of the same name.

00:33:33 Music Music "How Long Has This Been Going On" from the album *How Long Has This Been Going On?* by Sarah Vaughan.

*Tell me, dear
How long has this
How long has this been going on?
What a kick!*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:33:45 Morgan Host I—I just—

[Bruno "ooh"s and Morgan chuckles.]

Right?! Yo, Carmen McRae's got a beautiful one and Ella's got a beautiful one. And so does Shirley Horn, but there's something about Sarah Vaughan's. Something about that bottom note that just wears me out. And I hadn't heard Chet's version of this until prep for the chat, but I was like, oh man, this is such a departure, but dripping with that melancholy that we're talking about. And I think it's beautiful.

00:34:16 Music Music My favorite vocal is "Forgetful".
"Forgetful" from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

*But you've been forgetful
And I'm never kissed
And it bothers me*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:34:36 Morgan Host "Forgetful" wears me out. It is the sonic representation of the word "swoon".

[They laugh.]

00:34:43 Oliver Host Yeah. You found it, right there.

00:34:44 Bruno Guest That's a way better description of the album.

00:34:45 Morgan Host Right? Smooth, romantic, it tugs at my heart strings. And that's the one that I kept playing over and over and over.

00:34:54 Music Music "Forgetful" from the album *Embraceable You* by Chet Baker.

*And someday
When you are regretful
You'll wish you had tried much less forgetfulness*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:35:19 Morgan Host What about you, Oliver?

00:35:20	Oliver	Host	<p>You know, it's—I think like Bruno, “Embraceable You” is hard to put down. I mean, as someone who loves—in general—the whole Gershwin songbook, it's certainly I think one of the really stellar gems that the Gershwins wrote. But especially as someone who had come to this album never having heard it before—you know, that first impression you get from the very first song, “The Night We Called It a Day”—it just lingers. And so, it's both the song that I find incredibly haunting, and also it provides my favorite moment on the album—at least on first impression. Which is just how he curls the word “moon” in the first line.</p>
			<p><i>[Bruno “oof”s.]</i></p>
00:36:17	Music	Music	<p>Because already, I think you get a sense of the essence of what he's able to do with his voice and just the way in which he makes these choices—however conscious or not—and how he sings his notes.</p> <p>“The Night We Called It a Day” from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.</p>
			<p><i>There was a moon out in space But a cloud drifted over its face</i></p>
			<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:36:35	Oliver	Host	<p>And to circle back to something we'd been talking about earlier, just the sparseness and the minimalism of the accompaniment here. It's just his voice and a little bit of guitar, and it's all you need to just have instant mood. Right? You don't need like a full string orchestra accompaniment. All it just takes is two different sounds. But already, you're transported someplace through that.</p>
00:36:57	Bruno	Guest	<p>Mm-hm. Absolutely. And isn't it wonderful? Like, you know, not to belittle or patronize—you know—the great sort of jazz quartet setup with a drum and a bass and a piano, because some of the greatest records that were ever made have been in that context, but it's so wonderful just to edit the setup a little bit and play some jazz standards. And suddenly, you've got a whole different sonic tapestry to play with. And you know, this album wouldn't have been as unique if it had been a jazz trio in the background.</p>
00:37:28	Oliver	Host	<p>What's funny too—and I don't know if either of you knew this about the background behind the making of this particular recording in '57, but originally, Baker was supposed to have been recording with a much larger group. I don't know if it was a full-sized big band, but he ended up showing two hours late to the recording session, and it was a mess. I mean, it was so bad that the producer on site immediately decided there's no way we can use this. It's just—none of it works. But Chet just hung out. And as people gradually left, it was just left—you know, whoever remained formed the players on this. And even though, at the time, they decided—the folks at Pacific Jazz decided that they didn't wanna put the album out, you know, this was in a lot of ways a real accident. Because it's not the album that that session was supposed to have produced. But nonetheless, it's the session that we got.</p>

			And you know, I think the history of pop music is filled with fortuitous accidents. And I think <i>Embraceable You</i> happens to be one of them.
00:38:27	Bruno	Guest	I did not know that! That's cool.
00:38:28	Morgan	Host	That's a great story!
00:38:29	Bruno	Guest	Cool fact, man.
00:38:31	Oliver	Host	Yeah, people should show up late to their recording sessions more often, 'cause you never know what happens when you piss off people and they all decide to kind of just bounce. Not that I'm suggesting this for you, Bruno, 'cause I don't want you to piss off any of your players.
00:38:40	Bruno	Guest	No, trust me, I'm late to everything, bro.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:38:45	Oliver	Host	We've been talking about favorite moments. You know. You mentioned—Bruno, you mentioned the chord change in "I Think There's a Lull in My Life". I mentioned the very beginning of "The Night We Called It a Day". Morgan, how about you? Do you have a favorite moment on this album?
00:39:00	Morgan	Host	"There's a Lull in My Life". It's the vocals on there and how about at the one and a half mark, his vocals start to build. And they change. It's almost like he's grabbing his power. He's pulling it up, and it's just an unexpected change for me.
00:39:16	Music	Music	"There's a Lull in My Life" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.
			<i>Everything stops but the flame in my heart That keeps burning, burning Oh, oh, oh There's a lull In my life</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:39:39	Bruno	Guest	It's so beautiful.
00:39:41	Oliver	Host	Bruno, I don't recall if you've ever covered one of Chet's songs in your recording career. But regardless, if you had to pick a song off of here to cover, which one would it be and why?
00:39:54	Bruno	Guest	I have covered Chet Baker. I covered—on my first album, I did "Like Someone in Love".
00:40:00	Music	Music	"Like Someone in Love" from the album <i>A Song For Every Moon</i> by Bruno Major.
			<i>Each time I look at you I'm limp as a glove Feeling like someone in love</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:40:14	Bruno	Guest	And you know what's really, really, really cool? Is my—the majority of my fanbase are between 16 and 24. And I went to Java Jazz in Jakarta just before the lockdown. I played in front of 4000 people, the majority of which were 16- to 24-year-old girls. And I played "Like Someone in Love", and the entire room sang a '30s jazz standard at the top of their voices.
00:40:45	Music	Music	"Like Someone in Love" by Bruno Major played live. The audience sings along enthusiastically.

Bump into things like someone in love
Each time, the things I do
Please tell me

00:41:00	Bruno	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> And I was like this is amazing. I've like—I've brought something that I love, which really not a lot of people of that generation are probably familiar with and giving it to them in a way that like makes sense it's something I'm really proud of.</p>
00:41:18	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i> <i>Feeling like someone in love</i> <i>Feeling like someone in love</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:41:30	Bruno	Guest	<p>I don't—what was the second question? I've been lost in my own solipsism.</p>
00:41:34	Oliver	Host	<p>No, no. If you had to pick a song off of this album to cover, which would it be?</p>
00:41:38	Bruno	Guest	<p>I'm gonna go with "Embraceable You".</p> <p><i>[Oliver agrees.]</i></p> <p>It's just—I mean, that is—I mean, they're all great songs, but as you said, like George and Ira Gershwin are no slouches when it comes to songwriting.</p> <p><i>[They laugh and Oliver agrees playfully.]</i></p>
00:41:58	Music	Music	<p>So, you know, I feel like—<i>[laughs]</i> I feel like I'd be honored to cover that song, to be honest. "Embraceable You" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.</p> <p><i>I love all the many charms about you</i> <i>Above all...</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:42:15	Morgan	Host	<p>If you had to introduce someone to the work of Chet Baker using this album as a resource, what song would you have them listen to first?</p>
00:42:25	Bruno	Guest	<p>Yeah, the first song I heard was "The Night We Called It a Day". It's the first track. And it just sets the whole album up so beautifully. So, I'm gonna go with that one.</p>
00:42:36	Music	Music	<p>"The Night We Called It a Day" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.</p> <p><i>There wasn't a thing left to say</i> <i>The night we called it a day</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>

00:42:57	Oliver	Host	<p>No, totally great. I mean, I don't know what—if there was a lot of thought put into the sequencing. I'm assuming there must have been some thought put into the sequencing, but it is a perfect way to open. I feel like if you started with the title track, it's a little too on the nose, and "Embraceable You" would've been a song that I think, obviously, people would've been very familiar with in that era, because so many people had covered it. I don't know if I know of any other version of "The Night We Called It a Day" than this one, 'cause it's not to me like part of the standard repertoire that people work with, so I like that it has this kind of element of something unexpected.</p> <p>But as I was saying earlier, about why—you know, for me this is my fire track, is just the impression it makes in just the first few seconds. It tells you like everything that you need to know or how to feel about it.</p>
00:43:40	Bruno	Guest	<p>Can we call it a sort of warm ember track. Feels more appropriate.</p> <p><i>[Morgan laughs and they agree.]</i></p> <p><i>[Inaudible].</i></p>
00:43:49	Oliver	Host	<p>Bruno, if you had to describe this album in three words, what three words would you choose?</p>
00:43:54	Bruno	Guest	<p>Drifting into dreamland.</p>
00:43:56	Morgan	Host	<p>Mmmmm! Oh lord!</p>
00:43:59	Oliver	Host	<p>Very nicely done.</p> <p><i>[Morgan agrees.]</i></p>
00:44:02	Music	Music	<p>"Embraceable You" from the album <i>Embraceable You</i> by Chet Baker.</p> <p><i>Come to papa, do My sweet embraceable you</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:44:22	Oliver	Host	<p>Before we close out, we always like to leave our audience members with something next to listen to. So, something to add to their playlist. Morgan, you wanna start us off?</p>
00:44:31	Morgan	Host	<p>If you like this album, I think you should stay with Chet Baker and go to <i>Chet Baker Sings</i>. It doesn't get better than this. Blue Note Records. He and Russ Freeman. And I would start with "My Ideal" and keep going.</p>
00:44:43	Music	Music	<p>"My Ideal" from the album <i>Chet Baker Sings</i> by Chet Baker.</p> <p><i>Maybe she's a dream and yet she might be Just around the corner waiting for me</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:44:59	Oliver	Host	<p>For me, you know, I think about the influences that Chet Baker had—not just in the States, but especially abroad. And he certainly, in terms of both his singing and playing style, had a huge impact on people who were part of the Brazilian bossa nova movement. And you can really, I think, distinctly hear how other singers from Brazil wanted to capture some of that same affect that we've been talking</p>

about. And the album that really came to my mind immediately is the self-titled 1973 album by João Gilberto that we dedicated a *Heat Rocks* episode to, along with guest Allen Thayer. And just the minimalism of that album, the minimalist approach in Gilberto's voice I think is very reminiscent of the stuff that Chet's doing on this album.

So, check out that album and, as always—just to be self-serving—then go listen to our *Heat Rocks* episode about the album. “Undiú” from the album *João Gilberto* by João Gilberto.

00:45:50 Music Music

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:46:07 Oliver Host

Bruno, how about you? What would you recommend that our audience members check out next after finishing with *Embraceable You*?

00:46:13 Bruno Guest

Does it have to be a Chet album?

00:46:14 Oliver Host

No, not at all. It can be anything you want.

00:46:17 Bruno Guest

Ooooooh. Okay. Uh, I've got one for you. Antônio Carlos Jobim. I mean, I got into Jobim through his songwriting. You know. “Girl From Ipanema” and *Desafinado*. So, the album is—I don't know how to say it. It's *Orfeu da Conceição*? 1956. Yeah. It's got like a crazy kind of new wave Picasso, fun cover. And there's a song called “Overture”, which is the opening of the album. And one of the coolest things I've ever heard. It's like seven songs in one.

00:47:03 Music Music

“Overture” from the album *Orfeu da Conceição* by Antônio Carlos Jobim.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:47:27 Oliver Host

Well, that will do it for this episode of *Heat Rocks* with our special guest, Bruno Major. As we noted, you have a brand-new album out.

[Theme song fades in.]

So, touring probably a little difficult in the world right now. So, how have you been spending lockdown to the extent—and again, I don't know what the situation is like in London compared to where we are, here in Los Angeles. But are you working on getting your live set together? Like, how are you keeping busy right now?

00:47:52 Bruno Guest

I had a very intensive period after my first album. We finished the first album, went on tour immediately, and then I was making my second album at the same time as I was touring. And we finished the album, had two weeks off over Christmas, and I was due to go straight back into touring again for the second album, and as much as I would've done it and I was looking forward to it and it would have been great, I was feeling a bit burnt out and I was feeling a bit terrified of the whole thing. 'Cause I hadn't written a song for eight months. And this—you know, this lockdown has meant I went home, stayed with my family for two months, recalibrated, reset, and didn't—you know, as a workaholic, I was forced not to do anything.

And I think, you know, as much as I wouldn't have wished it on the world and none of us would've wanted it, I think we're all probably

00:48:53	Oliver	Host	finding that there are things that we're learning about ourselves and positives to be taken out of like kind of lengthy downtime. That is such a positive spin. I love that. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Well, Bruno Major's new album is <i>To Let a Good Thing Die</i> . Hopefully, he will be back on the road at some point in time this year or next to perform behind it. Bruno, where can people find out more about you and your music?
00:49:09	Bruno	Guest	Uh, <i>[sighs]</i> there's this invention called the internet. I think it's gonna go a long way. I'm trying it out. I've got a few bits and bobs up on there. So, anywhere on there. Just type my name in on anything. YouTube, Spotify, Google. I don't know. You know. It's there. They'll find it. It's Bruno Major, and my new album's called <i>To Let a Good Thing Die</i> .
00:49:31	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under the Stairs. <i>[Music continues under the dialogue.]</i>
00:49:32	Oliver	Host	You've been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:49:36	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by Thes One of People Under the Stairs. Shout out to Thes for the hookup.
00:49:42	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:49:49	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:49:54	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
00:50:12	Bruno	Guest	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> <i>[Singing lowly.]</i> "Moon out in space. Mmmm."
			<i>[Buttons pressing. "The Night We Called It a Day" plays softly in the background.]</i>
00:50:42	Sound Effect	Transition	"And went on your way, the night we called it a day." Cheerful ukulele chord.
00:50:43	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:50:45	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:50:47	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:50:48	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.