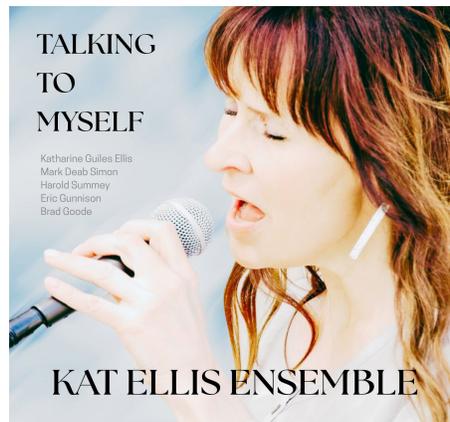


COLORADO VOCALIST KAT ELLIS UNVEILS SOPHISTICATED DEBUT WITH *TALKING TO MYSELF*

OUT SEPTEMBER 19, *TALKING TO MYSELF* FEATURES PIANIST ERIC GUNNISON, TRUMPETER/PRODUCER BRAD GOODE, AND A VETERAN COLORADO ENSEMBLE; ALBUM RELEASE SHOWS SET FOR MUSE PERFORMANCE SPACE AND DAZZLE JAZZ



Kat Ellis — a Boulder-based jazz vocalist and longtime science educator — will release her expressive, poised debut *Talking to Myself* on **September 19**. The album features Ellis alongside a veteran Colorado ensemble: pianist **Eric Gunnison**, trumpeter and producer **Brad Goode**, bassist **Mark Simon**, and drummer **Harold Summey**. Together, they support her warm, conversational vocal style with deep experience and cohesion — their résumés spanning work with Carmen McRae, Betty Carter, Sheila Jordan, Sonny Rollins, and Wynton Marsalis. Rooted in storytelling and ensemble interplay, *Talking to Myself* introduces Ellis as a vocalist who puts the song — and the musicians who bring it to life — front and center.

A lifelong educator and swing dance enthusiast, Ellis came to vocal jazz later in life after decades teaching high school chemistry and earth science. Her musical journey began unexpectedly when a vocal coach, hired to help with her speaking voice, encouraged her to sing. That moment sparked a period of rapid growth — first through the Colorado Conservatory for the Jazz Arts, and later at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studied with Goode, Gunnison, and others. Though new to recording, Ellis quickly became a fixture in Denver’s jazz community, performing with the Denver Jazz Orchestra, leading her own groups, and collaborating with some of the region’s most respected players.

Talking to Myself reflects Ellis’s desire to create something, in her words, “not just more noise” — a quiet, emotionally grounded record aimed at “a more mature audience.” Rather than vocal pyrotechnics, she emphasizes clarity, restraint, and deep musical conversation, drawing inspiration from singers like Monica Zetterlund, Blossom Dearie, Astrud Gilberto, and Susannah McCorkle. “Every musician I know that’s learning a song commits the lyrics,” she says. “They’re not singing, but the lyric is there — and I wanted my singing to complement their playing in a way that the lyric runs through every musician’s head.” That spirit is embodied in the album’s lineup — a collective of mentors and masters performing at the height of their musical maturity.

The album opens with “**Trust in Me**,” the serpentine ballad from *The Jungle Book*, reimagined as a playful New Orleans–style jam. Ellis first sang it during early jazz studies at CU Boulder, where it took on a new life amid a rowdy frontline of horns. “It just developed into this whole New Orleans kind of traditional jazz thing,” she recalls. “I wanted to introduce that playful element — something light from our childhoods.”

The title track, “**Talking to Myself**,” is a hidden gem, discovered through a recording by Danish vocalist Sinne Eeg. With no chart available, Ellis and her collaborators transcribed it by ear, preserving the spirit of Eeg’s version while reshaping it for her own ensemble. “It’s the only version I know of,” she says. “So we kept pretty true to her interpretation.”

“**Never Let Me Go**” marks a turning point on the album — shifting into emotional vulnerability. Ellis approaches the tune from a personal place. “When I was eight years old, I got left at a gas station by my parents,” she explains. “It felt like four hours, but it was probably ten minutes. Still, that experience became my emotional reference point for this song.” Her version taps into the childlike fear of being forgotten — and the lingering need for connection.

Ellis hears “**So Many Stars**” not just as a romantic reverie, but as a metaphor for creative and personal possibility. As a longtime educator, she connected deeply with the lyric’s central question: Which path will I choose? “The wind is filled with songs” becomes, in her hands, a nod to the jazz musician’s lifelong process of collecting, inhabiting, and sharing songs.

“**Annie’s Song**,” originally by John Denver, might seem an unlikely jazz choice — but in Ellis’s hands, it becomes one of the album’s emotional centerpieces. Arranged by pianist Kyle Matsuda for a Snowmass gig, the tune struck a deep chord with Ellis and Goode, who insisted it be recorded. “It’s all about being present — taking in the world around you, and linking that to the people you love,” she says.

Lesley Gore’s 1963 hit “**You Don’t Own Me**” becomes a pointed act of resistance. “This is me getting very, very belligerent in my politics,” Ellis says. “What’s going on in our country and women’s rights — it can’t be ignored.” A militaristic drumroll opens the track, and Goode’s trumpet channels the anger her soft voice leaves implied. “He knows how to bring in the sass and the sarcasm — but in a way that still carries weight.”

“**Moon River**” began as a tribute to Ellis’s sister, evoking childhood memories of ukuleles and a backyard hammock. But after Goode suggested the album needed something more up-tempo, the tune was transformed — brightened and reharmonized, with a standout solo by drummer Harold Summey bringing it to life.

“**Killing Me Softly**” serves as both a personal dedication and a compositional experiment. Ellis arranged the song as a sophomore jazz theory assignment, and it became a fitting tribute to Goode. “He is one of the few musicians that every time I go hear him, I get to experience joy, sorrow, longing, humor,” she says. “‘Killing me softly with his song’ — that’s what the song is about for me.”

“**Everybody’s Talkin’**” captures the psychic dislocation of the pandemic era. Ellis and Goode first reimagined the tune via Acapella app during lockdown. “We made a really dark and very weird version of this song — like too weird for human consumption,” she laughs. Still, the lyric’s emotional detachment rang true. “I had so much anger and confusion and worry. Not knowing if I could trust the authorities who were pulling us back to school.”

“**Take a Giant Step**,” written by Carole King and Gerry Goffin, became a personal touchstone after her friend Colin Aberdeen would sing it to her at gigs back home in Syracuse, New York. “It’s about helping someone who’s stuck in a dark emotional place connect to another person — because that’s the best way out,” she says.

“**Alfie**,” the Bacharach–David classic, becomes a meditation on ethics and empathy — and a message to her son. “Are we supposed to be hoarding wealth?” Ellis asks. “Or can we believe in the Golden Rule — and actually live it?” She frames its existential question as an invitation to compassion.

The album closes with Abbey Lincoln’s “**Throw It Away**,” which Ellis discovered through Terri Lyne Carrington’s *New Standards* songbook. “Of course I glommed onto that as a feminist,” she says. Its core message — letting go of people, possessions, illusions — hit hard. “You don’t own anything because you’re going to die. So you hold things gently — relationships, stuff, all of it.” Arranged by Gunnison, the track ends the album on a note of hard-earned wisdom and quiet vulnerability. Across these 12 tracks, Ellis might be “talking to herself,” as the title goes — but she’s communicating vital truths to all of us.

Talking to Myself will be celebrated with a release show at Muse Performance Space in Lafayette, Colorado on September 19, followed by a performance at Denver’s Dazzle on November 18.

Tracklisting:

1. Trust in Me
2. Talking to Myself
3. Never Let Me Go
4. So Many Stars
5. Annie’s Song
6. You Don’t Own Me
7. Moon River
8. Killing Me Softly
9. Everybody’s Talkin’
10. Take a Giant Step
11. Alfie
12. Throw It Away