

## FLUTIST ALEXANDER ZONJIC IS *DOIN' THE D* ON HIS NEW HEADS UP RECORDING

**Special guests include Kenny G, Rick Braun, Bob James,  
Jeff Lorber, Chieli Minucci, Maysa Leak and more**

Flutist Alexander Zonjic may be Canadian by birth and by citizenship, but Detroit – just across the river from his hometown of Windsor, Ontario – has been his second home for the better part of three decades. Regardless of the numerous roles he may be playing in the Motor City's music and entertainment scene on any given day – recording artist and performer of international stature, morning drive-time jazz radio personality, concert promoter, restaurateur and more – Detroit has adopted Zonjic as one of their own and has supported every aspect of his multi-faceted career.

Aided and accompanied by a variety of songwriters, performers and friends, Zonjic tips his hat to his adopted city on *Doin' The D* (HUCD 3126), his new album set for worldwide release on June 23, 2009, on Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group. The album features guest appearances by saxophonist Kenny G, trumpeter Rick Braun, Special EFX guitarist Chieli Minucci, vocalist Maysa Leak and many others. In addition to the many new faces, longtime collaborators Jeff Lorber and Bob James make substantial contributions to *Doin' The D*.

"It's always interesting when a new record starts coming together," says Zonjic. "I basically throw an invitation out to all my music buddies and wonder how many of them will come to the party. I was completely surprised and pleased with the number of people who participated in this record, including some people with whom I'd never recorded with before. While they are all friends of mine, I'm still also a huge fan of these great artists, and I'd like to think that they took part in this project because they respect and admire my music."

*Doin' The D* takes its title from a catchphrase that's common to residents of the greater Detroit area. To "do the D" is to spend an evening or a weekend checking out the various cultural attractions offered by a city rich with musical history and cultural diversity.

"Detroit and its people embraced me on a profound level many, many years ago, and they're the main reason that I've had such a great career," says Zonjic. "It's one of the greatest music cities in the world. All you need to do is consider that Aretha Franklin still lives here after so many years. Eminem is here, Bob Seger is here, Mitch Ryder is here, Anita Baker, Kid Rock, and the list goes on. Obviously, the city is going through its share of tough times right now – like so many other cities. But I continue to appreciate everything "**The D**" has done for my career, and I will always support it."

The album gets under way with the breezy and upbeat "Top Down," a track written, produced and arranged by Lorber, who also lends a hand with keyboards, guitar and synth bass. "I love how exposed the flute is on this track," says Zonjic, "as well as the classic Lorber vibe that comes through. This was one of the songs on this record that took me out of my comfort zone and into a new direction in terms of what I'm used to playing."

Further in, Kenny G adds soprano sax to a richly layered cover of Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower." "I've always loved this song, and since the legend Freddie Hubbard recently passed

away, it seems all the more significant that we recorded it,” says Zonjic. “It’s one of those standards that’s very modal and melodic. As a result, it plays well with contemporary jazz audiences as well as those coming from a more traditional background.”

“Passion Island” is everything the title suggests – tropical and fiery, thanks in large part to Chieli Minucci’s driving acoustic guitar, the powerful crescendos of the Motor City Horns and Bob James’ stellar melodic phrasing. “This song became a favorite of mine during the early selection process,” says Zonjic, “it made such a long journey from the original concept to the final track. Chieli sent me the demo. He had co-written the song with a keyboard player named Lao Tizer. I really liked it a lot, especially Chieli’s guitar sound, we changed it quite a bit into what you hear on the record.”

“Undun” is a unique take on the familiar 1969 hit from Canadian rockers The Guess Who, one of Zonjic’s favorite bands during their heyday in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. “Burton Cummings actually played the flute on the original Guess Who version, and it really adds a great color to the song,” says Zonjic. “I always felt that, for the rock and pop band that they were, this was a very jazzy tune, even in its original version. The real spin comes from slowing it down a bit like we did on the record, and then having a female vocalist like Maysa sing the song instead of a guy.”

Things take a Latin turn with the rhythmic “River Raisin Nights,” a track written and produced by Pieces of a Dream co-founder and keyboardist James Lloyd, who contributes some complex keyboard lines as well as synth bass and percussion. “Tongue Twister,” the understated but upbeat closer, showcases some of Zonjic’s precision acrobatics on flute, coupled with Lorber’s fluid piano work.

In the end, *Doin’ the D* is more than just a star-studded nod to Zonjic’s adopted hometown. In a larger sense, it’s part of his ongoing effort to carry the torch passed on to him by figures like Canadian jazz flutist Moe Kaufmann and jazz innovator Herbie Mann – and to perhaps even be the messenger who takes the flute to a place of higher prominence as a voice in the smooth & pop-jazz idiom.

“In the classical world, the flute has a huge stature, but it has struggled in recent years to be considered a solo jazz instrument on the same level as the saxophone or guitar and piano,” Zonjic says. “The instrument suffers from this weird stereotype that it’s somehow lightweight – something relegated to playing bird sounds in an orchestra setting. But anyone who hears this record will know that the flute is capable of delivering strong melodies and strong solos. In the right hands, the flute is a musical force to be reckoned with.”