

GERALD VEASLEY MAKES HIS MOVE ON NEW HEADS UP CD

***Your Move* set for worldwide release on March 11, 2008**

Contemporary jazz bassist Gerald Veasley makes no claim to be a master chess player, but there are certain unmistakable parallels between his line of work and the small-scale war game that has challenged great minds for centuries. Like chess, Veasley sees music as a pursuit that involves a combination of strategy, quick thinking and even a bit of blind faith.

“There’s a multiplicity of decision making in the game of chess, and there are consequences to every action,” says Veasley. “In a lot of ways, making music is like that too. There are so many choices, especially in jazz, where the situation is never the same twice. That’s always exciting to me. You’re creating new scenarios at every turn – every time you step in front of an audience, or every time you step into the studio. That’s what drew me to this kind of music in the first place – the idea that it was always fresh, there was always an opportunity and a new challenge. Unlike chess, though, winning in jazz doesn’t mean someone else has to lose.”

That same combination of challenges, opportunities and win-win is at the heart of *Your Move* (HUCD 3130), Veasley’s new Heads Up International CD set for worldwide release on March 11, 2008. The album is the latest – and perhaps most innovative and audacious – maneuver in the game that Veasley has been playing since his early days as an up-and-coming musician in his native Philadelphia.

“After all those years, after all the records I’ve made, I’m really mindful of the fact that not just music but life in general is a lot like that too,” says Veasley. “There are so many decisions that you have to make. You get the best information you can, and then you take the next step. Sometimes you have to be willing to make a leap and take a chance. There are always situations where you have to be flexible and adjust, and you have to adjust quickly.”

Any good game involves more than one player, and Veasley has a couple collaborators on hand that make *Your Move* an intriguing gambit. Guitarist Chuck Loeb steps in as a formidable session player/producer and author or co-author of several tracks. Saxophonist and longtime Veasley band member Chris Farr also shares a few song credits.

The album opens with the infectious riff of “Hear Now!” a high-energy tune written and arranged by Loeb that serves as a somewhat rare showcase for Veasley’s technical chops. “When I’m the writer or the arranger, I usually think about more than just the bass,” says Veasley. “I tend to think about what’s best for the song in general, and what all the instruments will sound like together. But Chuck wanted me to have the chance to do one of those bass-in-your-face songs. This was my opportunity to show off a little bit.”

The easygoing “Slip ‘n’ Slide” includes some playful interplay between Veasley and Loeb, with a rock solid backbeat crafted by drummer Josh Dion.

“So Close to the Sun” showcases guest trumpeter John Swana and includes atmospheric layers from organist Peter Kuzma and vocalist Mikki Korngay. “This song has a range of emotions,” says Veasley. “It’s actually a little bit melancholy in the beginning, but it has a very buoyant, triumphant flavor toward the end.”

The title track appears midway through the set, and the ease with which it came together in the studio is evident in the final playback. “‘Your Move’ is one of those songs that, from the instant it

starts, puts you in that frame of mind to just settle into your chair and enjoy the groove,” says Veasley. “It just feels right and sounds right. It was easy to work through when we were recording it. When a song comes together that effortlessly, you almost second-guess yourself. You find yourself asking, ‘Wow, could it really be that easy?’ The truth is, there’s a complexity to it, but it comes together so easily because of Chuck’s skills as a producer.”

“Three Tears” is a tribute to Veasley’s longtime friend Kip Boyer, who passed away earlier this year. Though understated and respectful, the track maintains an optimistic and even whimsical edge. “When I started writing it and recording it, I thought it would be this sort of sad-sounding song,” says Veasley. “I had intended to create this kind of solemn tribute, and it ended up being very hopeful. It had a beauty I didn’t expect. But then I realized, that was Kip. That was the essence of him.”

“Thank You (Fallettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)” is a unique take on the Sly & The Family Stone classic from 1970. “Being a lover of soul music and growing up in that era, I just see Sly Stone as the quintessential master of funk. I welcome any opportunity to tip my hat to him, and I think I’ve managed to capture some of the lighthearted spirit of the original tune.”

The set ends on a romantic note, with “Roxanne’s Dance,” Veasley’s musical tribute to his wife – the life partner with whom he makes every move. “My quest with this record was to tap into an emotional core,” he says. “I’m trying to make music about those aspects of life that are common to all of us. There’s a certain rhythm to life, regardless of what you do for a living. There are experiences you have every day – certain moves that you make – with your spouse, your kids, your colleagues, whomever. A lot of those experiences are universal, and I’m trying to bring some of them to light.”

The pieces are all in place on Gerald Veasley’s newest CD. Listen to *Your Move* and follow his next step in the game.