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GUITARIST CHUCK LOEB SPANS THE GLOBE ON NEW HEADS UP RECORDING

Between 2 Worlds Due At Retail on March 24, 2009

In many ways, each of us faces the world with multiple identities. On any given day, we are many things to many people, moving frequently from one persona to another. And in the end, the energy that emerges amid the transitions is what makes our lives sometimes challenging, but always interesting.

Guitarist Chuck Loeb understands this dynamic as well as or better than most jazz musicians. In the span of his prolific career that stretches across more than four decades, he has recorded and performed in countless corners of the world, forever balancing the bedrock elements of traditional jazz with the innovations of contemporary jazz. His ambitious schedule frequently takes him from his home in the U.S. to countless points on the map throughout Europe, Asia and beyond – places where the perceptions of his music in particular and jazz in general can vary greatly. Clearly, Loeb is an artist and musician who lives in more than one world, and moves with confidence among and between all of them.

His new album, *Between 2 Worlds* (HUCD 3151), is set for worldwide release on March 24, 2009, on Heads Up International, a division of Concord Music Group. The recording is a collection of material culled from sessions on either side of the Atlantic. The first seven tracks were cut in New York and the remaining four in Berlin. Regardless of points on a map, though, the two worlds that Loeb straddles on the album are more conceptual than geographical. *Between 2 Worlds* dispenses with much of the technology of his previous recordings and instead focuses on the basic trio of guitar, bass and drums.

“Normally my CDs are quite orchestrated, with plenty of keyboards and programming, but there’s virtually none of that on this record,” he says. “So it’s more of an open sound, and there’s more room for me to be the driving force on the record – harmonically, texturally and melodically.”

Despite the streamlined approach, he does enlist the help of a few friends along the way, including saxophonist Eric Marienthal, trombonist Brian Culbertson, trumpeter Till Brönner and several others. Even Loeb’s wife and daughter – Carmen Cuesta and Lizzy Loeb – lay down vocal tracks and take co-writing credits on a couple songs.

“I wanted to challenge myself to do something different and work a little harder,” says Loeb. “I wanted to take more responsibility for all the different textures and sounds, and provide my own harmonic bed to play on. And I have to do it at the same time that I’m playing the melody. So this record was definitely a challenge, definitely a little more difficult. But I think in the end it sounds a little more personal.”

The set opens with the punchy “Let’s Go,” an uptempo track that positions a riff-heavy guitar-trumpet melody over the solid foundation set up by drummer Dave Weckl and percussionist Bashiri Johnson. In addition to Culbertson on trombone, Marienthal spices up the affair with some tasty sax work.

The exotic sounding “Hiram” derives its melody from the seamless interplay between Loeb’s guitar and Will Lee’s fretless bass. Cuesta’s breathy vocal refrain and Johnson’s subtle percussion add a layer to the song that borders on the mystical.

The Latin-flavored title song is a collaborative effort between Loeb and his wife that happened almost by accident. “I was working on something in my studio, and Carmen was practicing the guitar in the other room,” Loeb explains. “Sometimes when she gets an idea, she’ll want to record it in its roughest form, just to remember it. So she came in with the chorus to that song and recorded it very quickly. After she left, I thought, ‘Wow, I could steal this.’ That’s not unusual for us. Sometimes we’ll collaborate without even meaning to.”

“Oh No You Didn’t” is a funky, R&B-flavored collaboration between Chuck and Lizzy Loeb, with the latter providing sassy lyrics and a worldly-wise vocal style that belie her 22 years. The father-daughter songwriting team reconvenes for the gentle and melodic closer, “Early Turns to Late,” a track that includes a stirring harmonica line courtesy of Pat Bergeson.

“Lizzy has a more spur-of-the-moment, go-for-it attitude about songwriting,” says Loeb. “I tend to think more methodically about things. That’s the good thing about writing with someone else, no matter how old they are or whether I have some kind of personal relationship with them. It forces me to do things that I just wouldn’t do on my own. It’s always a great thing when someone pushes you outside your comfort zone.”

Also noteworthy is the easygoing rendition of Antonio Carlos Jobim’s “Só Tinha De Que Ser Com Você,” featuring sensual vocals by Cuesta and a comfortable Latin backbeat, as well as “The Great Hall,” an intriguing piece written by Loeb, with minimal but effective backing by bassist Dieter Ilg and drummer Wolfgang Haffner.

Whatever new territory Loeb chooses to explore in *Between 2 Worlds* – be it on the map or in the music – he successfully carves out a place for himself and his listeners that’s rarely predictable, but always exciting. “I’m trying to push myself to be a rounder, more unique guitarist,” he says. “I think it’s important to keep challenging yourself. And I think I’m challenging my fans, because this record is a little bit more adventurous musically. If people have heard me live, then they’ll recognize this music right away. But maybe some people who have only heard me on the radio may say, ‘Wow, this is a little bit different from what he normally does.’ But in the end, it’s still Chuck Loeb, and they’re going to like it.”

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