

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

ACCLAIMED FINGERSTYLE GUITARIST KEN HATFIELD SHOWCASES THE SWINGING SIDE OF NYLON-STRING ACOUSTIC ON "THE SURREALIST TABLE," OUT NATIONALLY FEBRUARY 17

*** Trio Features Jeff Hirshfield (drums) and Hans Glawischnig (bass) ***

*"Ken Hatfield is setting new standards - both as a composer and guitarist - which mark him as a singular artist."
- Jim Fisch, 20th Century Guitar*

*"Hatfield's solos, like his compositions, are elegant, polished, and always energetic and absorbing..."
- Ron Forbes-Roberts, Acoustic Guitar*

On his fifth CD as a leader, ***The Surrealist Table*** (Arthur Circle Music), New York-based composer **KEN HATFIELD** showcases his impressive command of the nylon string acoustic guitar in a program of ten original works that run the stylistic gamut, from swinging to serene, and from harmonically-challenging vehicles to down-home blues and second line grooves. Paced by the swinging, highly interactive rhythm tandem of veteran jazz players **Hans Glawischnig** on bass and **Jeff Hirshfield** on drums, the fingerstyle guitarist dazzles and delights every step of the way.

One of just a few guitarists in jazz to focus exclusively on the classical guitar as their main axe, Hatfield combines his classical training with a deep love for straight ahead jazz and a strong affinity for Brazilian music into a hybrid style that bears the influence of such renowned and seemingly disparate guitarists as Charlie Byrd, Wes Montgomery and Ralph Towner. Jim Ferguson of JazzTimes stated, regarding Hatfield's 2002 CD *Phoenix Rising*: "*The set offers a representative cross-section of his talents, which include writing for solo guitar..., a knack for Latin rhythms and moods..., and the ability to swing and even get downright funky.... Recommended for those with an affinity for the subtle and sublime.*" And David Adler of All About Jazz noted: "*...Hatfield's technically prodigious yet soft-spoken fingerstyle work...continues to defy norms in the jazz guitar field.*"

Hatfield's longstanding love of Brazilian music is evident in his strong penchant for melodicism, as heard on lilting pieces from *The Surrealist Table* like "Castalia" and the jazzy waltz "À Demain." The urgently swinging opener "The Chimera" highlights his fluent single note prowess along with his pianistic comping approach behind Glawischnig's bass solo while the poignant minor key ballad "Iphigeneia" reveals the depth of Ken's emotional expression on his silky-toned instrument.

Elsewhere on his new offering, Hatfield plays it dark and ethereal in a Towner-esque vein on "Berceuse," which also features some gorgeous arco work by bassist Glawischnig. He digs into the laid-back, earthy blues of "Most Every Day" with soulful gusto and hopscoches around the harmonic labyrinth of "Mixed Motion" with refined aplomb. The jaunty title track, underscored by Hirshfield's brisk brushwork, bears a touch of ragtime mixed with a pinch of Wes and a hint of Monk while the odd-time vehicle "Ariadne's Thread" is a delicate balancing act expertly executed by this kindred crew. The collection closes on a decidedly funky note with the infectious N'awlins flavored second-line groover "Funkissimo," which again features some remarkable bowed bass from Glawischnig.

A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Hatfield grew up playing steel string guitar and Dobro. *"Because I grew up down South the first music I loved was the blues,"* he says. *"I'm a direct descendent from the Hatfields of the famous Hatfield-McCoy feud. My father grew up right where that feud happened. So there are all these other elements and influences in my music aside from blues and jazz that are part and parcel of being an American from the South. To me, it's important to tell your own story in a way that resonates with people. And ultimately what that means is: tell 'em the truth."*

After studying classical guitar, he enrolled at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he immersed himself in jazz and took up the electric guitar with a fervor. Following four years at Berklee, he moved to Baltimore and began working with the great Charlie Byrd while also playing in a local funk band called Pockets. *"I was such a hardcore bebopper when I met him,"* he recalls of Byrd. *"I wanted to play everything as fast as I could and I worshipped the ground that Pat Martino and Wes Montgomery walked on. I was probably driving him crazy at the time with the way I played."* (Twenty years later, Hatfield met up again with Byrd, who was surprised and pleased to see his young protégé playing nylon string acoustic guitar and mixing jazz and Brazilian music, a direction that Byrd had pioneered back in 1962 on his landmark, chart-topping collaboration with Stan Getz, *Jazz Samba*).

Relocating to New York City in 1977, Hatfield began working the Newark-Harlem organ circuit with Hammond B-3 masters Jimmy McGriff and Jack McDuff. (He recorded an homage to McDuff, "Riff for Brother Jack," on 2002's *Phoenix Rising*). He later got invaluable bandstand experience around New York with such jazz greats as drummer Chico Hamilton, pianists Harold Mabern and Dom Salvador and bassist Bob Cranshaw while also working as a freelancer on the Manhattan studio session scene.

Before switching to classical guitar and focusing more intently on composition in the '90s, Hatfield wrote scores for film as well as for the Judith Jamison and Maurice Béjart ballet companies. His debut recording as a leader on classical guitar came in 1998 with *Music for Guitar and Bass* (with Hans Glawischnig) for Arthur Circle Music. Subsequent recordings by Hatfield include 1999's *Explorations for Solo Guitar*, 2000's Brazilian-flavored *Dyad* featuring violinist Valentin Gregor, bassist Glawischnig, Brazilian drumming great Duduka da Fonseca and vocalist Maucha Adnet, and last year's *Phoenix Rising*, which features Billy Drewes on tenor sax, Dom Salvador on piano and Claudio Roditi on trumpet along with the rhythm tandem of Glawischnig and da Fonseca.

As on his previous offerings, many of the titles for the tunes on *The Surrealist Table* bear various arcane mythological, literary, and artistic references, which Hatfield takes great delight in explaining: "The Chimera" refers to a mythological beast that has the head of a lion, the body of a goat and the tail of a snake, serving as an apt metaphor for Hatfield's vision of the trio. As he puts it, *"I wanted to have these three disparate elements that could go anywhere at any point in time, that could stop on a dime and change shape rapidly, where it could be the Jimi Hendrix trio one minute and the Bill Evans trio the next minute."*

"Castalia" is the name of a spring on Mount Parnassus near the oracle of Delphi, where it is said that poets would come to drink the magical waters in order to regain their memories; it also refers to Herman Hesse's futuristic novel *The Glass Bead Game*. And the title track was inspired by Alberto Giacometti's evocative drawing *The (Surrealist) Table*, which is reproduced on the CD's cover. *"All of those things don't make the music work or not work but they can be clues to certain aspects of things,"* Hatfield says of the various literary, mythological and visual references strewn through *The Surrealist Table*. *"Who knows if that stuff means anything to anybody, but it does to me so I incorporate it when I build the structures of things. In a sense it's like I'm trying to write musical crossword puzzles. That's something that intrigues me."*

Intrigue aside, the music on *The Surrealist Table* stands on its own and firmly establishes Ken Hatfield as a talent deserving of wider recognition both as player and composer. Sit back, relax and enjoy.

www.kenhatfield.com

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