

**BRAD MEHLDAU**  
**NEW ALBUM: HIGHWAY RIDER**  
**RELEASE DATE: MARCH 15, 2010**

*'If proof were needed of the vitality and relevance of jazz, then Mehdau is it.'* [Guardian](#)

*'There are plenty of inspiring piano trios lighting up jazz, but none of them quite has the capacity to spring surprises the way that groups led by Brad Mehdau do. He and his colleagues constantly come up with fresh ideas and brilliant execution.'* [Independent](#)

Nonesuch Records releases *Highway Rider* – a double-disc of original work by pianist and composer **Brad Mehdau** – on **March 15**. The album is his second collaboration with renowned producer Jon Brion and features performances by Mehdau's trio – drummer Jeff Ballard and bassist Larry Grenadier – as well as drummer Matt Chamberlain, saxophonist Joshua Redman, and a chamber orchestra led by Dan Coleman. Mehdau also orchestrated and arranged the album's 15 pieces for the ensemble. *Highway Rider* is available now for pre-order at [nonesuch.com](http://nonesuch.com) with an exclusive bonus track: Mehdau's spoken notes and piano demo of the title track. Mehdau returns to the UK for three concerts in June, including dates at **London's Wigmore Hall** on **June 2** (with mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter) and **June 4**, and the **Howard Assembly Room** in **Leeds** on **June 5**.

Although Brad Mehdau is best known as a jazz composer and improviser, he has written several long-form compositions and songs, including an orchestral piece called *The Brady Bunch Variations* for the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France and two Carnegie Hall commissions: *Love Songs* for mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter and *Love Sublime* for soprano Renée Fleming.

"It's so exciting to write something and have it in your head and then hear it for the first time being played by these magnificent musicians," he says. "It's really an emotional experience. I'm still reeling from it."

"For me, the biggest challenge was the orchestration – which notes to assign to what instruments. I've been studying lots of orchestral scores for a while now – Strauss, Brahms, Tchaikovsky; a lot of big romantic stuff in particular. But while I was writing, I was also listening closely to modern orchestrators and arrangers, and there are two who have made an impact on me especially – Francois Rauber in his work with Jacques Brel, and Bob Alcivar in his work with Tom Waits."

Jon Brion also produced Mehdau's 2002 *Largo*, and Mehdau had been hoping to work with him again since then. "I knew from working with Jon on *Largo* that he was the guy who would find a way to put all the pieces together for this project. It was really quite a beast sonically at some points – two drummers playing at the same time, bass, sax, and piano, and then the orchestra on top of that. I wanted to record everything live whenever possible but wasn't sure if we could do it. The first conversation with Jon about the music, that was for him a done deal – it had to be live, with the orchestra and the jazz group playing together. Jon had the foresight during the recording, and then a great deal of craft during the mixing, to bring it all together and sound like it does. And we were able to avoid what the conductor Dan Coleman jokingly referred to as 'disco strings' – that is, adding the orchestra onto the jazz group's performance after the fact."

*Largo* was a step in a new direction for the pianist, incorporating horns, strings, vibes, and electronic instruments – as well as Brion's unique production touches. As Brion points out, though, "This time around – having done these classical things of late, and these different commissioned pieces he's had to write – was a completely different thing. It's like, 'OK, I know what I learned from doing that last one. This time I have a specific angle.'"

Visit the official **Brad Mehdau** website: [www.bradmehldau.com](http://www.bradmehldau.com)

Visit the official **Nonesuch** website: [www.nonesuch.com](http://www.nonesuch.com)

For more information, please contact:

**Siân Williams** at **Riotsquad Publicity** on **0207 223 7456**, or