



AVISHAI COHEN

New album: *Aurora*

Out 27th April 2009 on Blue Note Records

Jazz is now moving into a great era. After many years of opposition between traditionalists and modern jazz proponents, fans are now discovering a new approach to the genre which gives priority to mixing, intermingling, swing and the pure pleasure of music.

Pleasure is certainly one of the driving forces behind the work of **Avishai Cohen** – that together with an insatiable desire to share his passion for jazz with his audiences. There have been too few musicians throughout the history of jazz who were able to create a direct bond between their instruments and the audience. But with his talent and energy Cohen is able to summon the perfect ambiance in a matter of seconds, move his listeners with just three notes and bring joy to the hearts of all who come to see him perform. Constantly raising his artistic standards, he has been able to weave this solid but invisible link throughout his career. It is this link that touches the listener deeply and makes a jazz artist a star. The phenomenon that is Avishai Cohen now unites spirits well beyond the borders of jazz. Having moved outside any clearly defined categories, he electrifies the audiences at each of his concerts. And now, already enjoying a well-deserved reputation as a gifted and imaginative composer and one of the best living bass players, Cohen reveals himself to be a talented singer as well.

Avishai Cohen was born in 1970 near Jerusalem to a very musical family. As a child he began learning piano, but switched to electric bass guitar after discovering the legendary Jaco Pastorius. When he set off from Tel Aviv to conquer the world after two years of service in an army band, New York was a logical first destination. But the young Israeli had a difficult first year, at times even working in construction to make ends meet. Then came the Latin bands. A child of the Middle East, already well acquainted with atypical rhythm sections, Cohen could soon be found playing alongside Panamanian artist Danilo Perez on the Latin borders of today's jazz.

It was around this time that he formed his first group, an orchestra with multiple influences that found an admirer in a certain Chick Corea, who soon offered him a record deal under his label Stretch as well as a spot in his group.

This would be the beginning of Corea's sextet Origin – a rejuvenating new project for Corea and the best of training grounds for Cohen. This group took the young artist to the best stages around the world. During this period he acquired discipline, expertise and control and learned how to bond with an audience. He also sharpened his skills as a composer and gained an intimate rapport with melody. He was soon in very high demand, accompanying artists such as Alicia Keys, Bobby McFerrin, Roy Hargrove, Herbie Hancock, Nnenna Freelon, Claudia Acuña and Paquito D'Rivera. He performed with the London and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras and the Boston Pops Symphony.

After releasing four of his own albums under his mentor's label and acquiring international renown, he decided to take the plunge and launch a solo career.

He created his own label and began exploring new directions that interested him. For almost seven years he dedicated himself to forging his own path, never refusing an invitation to perform. Step by step, concert after concert, he succeeded in building a strong network and an intimate bond between his music and his fans.

Avishai Cohen remains a composer above all. Over the years his exploration of his roots, his history and the blending of his influences has become deeper, denser and more moving. Returning to Tel Aviv, he surrounded himself with several choice associates. He now works closely with lifelong friends and young artists ready to go anywhere he will take them. **Amos Hoffman's** oud, **Itamar Douari's** creative percussions, **Shai Maestro's** delicate touch and **Karen Malka's** unique vocals create fertile soil for countless possibilities.

With his new album *Aurora*, Avishai Cohen has reached a certain essence of expression, using voice as a direct and powerful vehicle for his emotions.

He now sings – in Hebrew, English and Ladino. His music draws its source in the earth of his home country, at the crossroads of many cultures. Arab-Andalusian and Hebraic, it tells the story of Bedouins of the desert and speaks of life, love, youth and freedom.

Jazz naturally remains at the heart of this original universe – the ideal meeting place for encounters of all kinds. *Aurora* is a work of synergy under the Blue Note label, which for years seems to have been at the centre of all futures in jazz, of which Avishai Cohen is undeniably the most modern and irresistible standard-bearer.

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