



PRODUCED BY LEVIN BROTHERS AND SCOTT SCHORR

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LEVIN BROTHERS



What you're holding is much more than an album. It's a reflection of a lifelong sibling friendship, mutual interests and shared passion. Pete and Tony Levin were aficionados of "cool jazz" growing up in the suburbs of Boston during the '50s through early-'60s. Both were classically trained musicians, but exposure to the '50s output of bassist and cellist Oscar Pettiford and French horn player Julius Watkins remained influential even as they went on to global musical adventures and renown. Tunes such as Pettiford's "Cable Car" and "Tricotism" from his self-titled 1954 Bethlehem 10" featuring Watkins had a big impact with their deep grooves, tight solos and catchy melodies.

Pete, who started out playing French horn before switching to keyboards, went on to grace myriad jazz recordings and performances by the likes of Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Jimmy Giuffre, Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter, and Lenny White, just to name a few. Tony became the bass and Chapman Stick voice for Peter Gabriel and King Crimson, in addition to contributing to countless rock and pop sessions, including Dire Straits, John Lennon, Pink Floyd, Lou Reed, and Tom Waits. As for jazz, Tony also has major credentials, having worked with Chris Botti, Gary Burton, Chuck Mangione, Herbie Mann, Buddy Rich, and Steps Ahead.

Though Pete and Tony crossed musical

paths for five decades, having both served in Paul Simon's band in the late '70s and each other's ensembles ever since, they had never recorded a co-led album until now. The fact that they now live 15 minutes away from one another in the Woodstock, New York area, coupled with Tony's acquisition of an NS electric cello spurred the Levin Brothers project into action.

"I had been playing an NS upright bass for years and went on to get the NS cello, which I used with Peter Gabriel," said Tony. "That led me to playing lead jazz stuff on both instruments and writing pieces on them. It gradually occurred to me that I could use this work as part of a group with Pete related to Pettiford's music we heard growing up."

From there, Tony reached out to Pete and the creative spark quickly caught fire.

"Tony would start calling me up, asking me to come over and listen to these pieces he wrote," said Pete, who largely used a Nord organ on the album. "They were short and melodic, without extended solos. We both realized this was a direction that had a lot emotional and musical value for us and chose to make it a recording project. It mirrors the feel of the '50s music we loved growing up. It's about music that's more focused on compositions, rather than individual performances."

The duo amassed material across a couple of years and invited several outstanding players familiar with the territory to participate, including guitarist David Spinozza, saxophonist Erik Lawrence, and drummers Jeff Siegel and Steve Gadd. The collaborative process was straightforward and familial.

"There's a unique level of openness with two brothers," said Tony. "We can spend a lot of hours working things out without getting tired of each other. We can also be very honest and not worry about hurting each other's feelings, which benefited the compositions."

"While keyboards historically serve as a lead jazz voice, this album represented a unique opportunity for Tony to be front and center too," said Pete. "It was great for us to be able to co-lead and play in a highly-focused, concise way like Pettiford and Watkins. Having said that, we use electric instruments, which didn't happen in the '50s. So, it's not completely retro. You'll hear some contemporary harmonies and rhythms from our experiences beyond the era we're exploring."

The breadth and depth of the compositions and approaches on the album are impressive. It kicks off with the effervescent "Bassics," featuring Tony playing melodies and solos on bass, accompanied by Steve Gadd on

brushes. "In essence, it's a fun instrumental nursery rhyme that, what the heck, lets the bass take the lead," said Tony.

"Brothers" is an addictive bebop piece that explores the unique nexus only siblings with a multi-decade working partnership can evoke.

"It's a three-part guitar-cello-organ arrangement, with several interesting interludes that really harken back to the '50s jazz sound," said Pete.

The duo offers their take on Latin-infused jazz on "Havana." "The bass work is in Slam Stewart's style, with me playing bass while I'm vocalizing an octave higher," said Tony. "There's also some great drumming from Jeff Siegel on it, playing the side of the snare to give it a feel somewhere between tango and mambo."

"I Got Your Bach" is a unique look at the first movement of Bach's "Cello Suite No. 1." "The piece has such a great bass line running through it, with me soloing on organ on top of it," said Pete. "It goes back to our classical roots as kids with bridges back to the jazz world we found later."

The album also features "Matte Kudasai," an elegant, gorgeous take on King Crimson's most melodic piece. "It's an intimate version that uses cello as the primary melody instrument,"

said Tony. "It moves through several feels and emotions, with a really beautiful Pete solo at its center."

Ultimately, Pete and Tony created this album for the world to enjoy as a tribute to their earliest influences, but also with the desire that it elicits its own modern resonance.

"When I was a kid, Pettiford and Watkins captured my imagination and their work stuck in my head all these years," said Tony. "It's a dream for me to think that someone might hear the

album and have it stick in their head for even half that long or influence them half as much."

They also hope the album transcends genres so listeners hear nothing but the music when they press play.

"Some people say to me 'I should listen to more jazz, but I don't understand it,'" said Pete. "I tell them, 'You don't have to understand it to listen. If it sounds good, then it is good.'"

—ANIL PRASAD



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ALL SONGS WRITTEN BY PETE AND TONY LEVIN, EXCEPT MATTE KUDASAI
BY ADRIAN BELEW, BILL BRUFORD, ROBERT FRIPP AND TONY LEVIN

PETE LEVIN: PIANO AND ORGAN

TONY LEVIN: CELLO AND BASS

JEFF SIEGEL: DRUMS

DAVID SPINOZZA: GUITAR

ERIK LAWRENCE: SAX

STEVE GADD: DRUMS ON BASSICS AND FISHY TAKES A WALK

ENGINEERED AND MIXED BY SCOTT PETITO AT NRS RECORDING STUDIO
STEVE GADD'S DRUMS RECORDED BY CLARKE RIGSBY AT TEMPEST RECORDING
MASTERED BY LARRY DEVIVO AT SILVERTONE MASTERING

ALL SONGS PUBLISHED BY CAT FROM GUATEMALA MUSIC (ASCAP)
EXCEPT MATTE KUDASAI PUBLISHED BY EDITIONS EG (ASCAP)
AND UNIVERSAL MUSIC CAREERS (BMI)

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY EDWARD AISH AT PRO-VISION

COVER PHOTO BY DION OGUST

PETE THANKS: NORD CLAVIA AND RANDY FUCHS AT ARTIST RELATIONS.
THE ORGAN USED ON THIS ALBUM IS A NORD MODEL C-1.
TONY THANKS: NED STEINBERGER AND NS DESIGN, WHOSE INSTRUMENTS,
THE NS BASS AND CELLO, WERE INTEGRAL TO THE MUSIC OF THIS ALBUM.

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