

March 2006

~~\$4.95 U.S.~~

FREE COPY

THE

Nashville Syndicate

"Changing the World of Music"

Dave Matthews
Band

THE
GREAT
UNKNOWN

Michelle
Curray

COUNTRY
RADIO
SEMINAR

THINGS YOU
DIDN'T KNOW.....

Red Foley, Little Jimmy Dickens, Billy Robinson

Stand Up may sound like a call to attention, but for Dave Matthews Band, the title of their brand new RCA Records album was not about command performances. Instead, the band took a decidedly fresh approach towards the recording sessions for their sixth studio album.

With more than 30 Million albums sold over the past 12 years and a permanent position as one of America's top concert draws, Matthews, bassist Stefan Lessard, drummer Carter Beauford, violinist Boyd Tinsley and saxophonist LeRoi Moore took a collective leap of faith and, in doing so, discovered a new strength.

Working for the first time in their redesigned Charlottesville recording studios with a brand new producer, the band aimed not so much at re-invention, as reinvigoration. "Recording Stand Up felt like the beginning of the band again" says Tinsley.

That sentiment is also shared by Moore and Beauford, who "felt a door open for us to be more creative."

"This album is the first time that we have been captured in the process of being creative, when we were all witnessing the fireworks together," says Dave Matthews. "It's what we've always wanted to get out of being in the studio. Not just making the record, but that we're all equal contributors to a great band."

From the massed choral voices that open the loping, lazy-days-of-summer romantic ballad "Dreamgirl" to the insistent rock of "You Might Die Trying" to the jazz-funk rave-up title track, Stand Up builds on the dynamic range that DMB consistently achieves on stage and in the recording studio. This collection of 13 new compositions travels a world of soundscapes from South American samba sway to Louisiana swamp stomp.

The sessions for Stand Up, recorded in the band's hometown, gave Dave Matthews Band an opportunity to reconnect as a recording combo after Matthews and Tinsley released solo CDs in 2002. Mark Batson, a Grammy Award winning producer, jazz pianist, and multi-instrumentalist whose recent credits include Eminem, India.Arie, The Game, 50 Cent and Anthony Hamilton, was the catalyst. In the sessions for Stand Up, each member of the band



pulled up a chair and made thoroughly contemporary music with an old-fashioned vibe.

"I don't know that we made a conscious decision to make a different record," explains Beauford. "But I think we made a conscious decision to go through a different process, trying to find a way to make the experience fresh and Mark played a big role in all of that." Batson's organic approach captured DMB at their most relaxed and authentic.

"Although the songs are spare and carefully orchestrated," says Matthews, "there's a kind of playing-on-the-back-porch indifference, a real spontaneity to the music. It feels like when we do a sound check and just start jamming and fall into a groove. There's something cool about that music -- there's no intention, there are no strings attached -- and there was that quality all the time we were in the studio."

Each of the members of DMB imprinted their musical personality in unexpected ways on Stand Up. Matthews created a piano drone for "Out of My Hands," a hushed and haunting prayer of resigna-

tion, told by a man contemplating suicide. The album's first single, "American Baby," began with Tinsley finger plucking a folksy riff on his violin, which became the plaintive underpinning of an anthem about the promise of life in the United States during such divisive times. Moore's saxophones weave the melody through "Stolen Away On 55th & 3rd." The angelic voice singing the refrain in "Old Dirt Hill" is none other than Carter Beauford's. Swapping bass for guitar, Lessard thrashes out a grungy rhythm on "Hunger for the Great Light," a song that begins like a sacred hymn then goes in an entirely different direction.

"Each member got to create their own sound and make a complete statement," says Batson. "This album represents the vision that Dave Matthews Band has as a modern continually progressing band in the tradition of jazz greats like Miles Davis. When you look at the great musicians, there's the young lion stage and then you get to the more mature and beautiful place, where they realize there's more coming from two or three notes instead of ten."

Matthews credits Batson with helping him to find a new tone for his already expressive vocals. "He pulled a voice out of me that I had not used before. I never sounded so relaxed, because I didn't have any time to get uptight. Mark would just say sing now." While there are mellow moments that reveal tenderness, such as the consoling tone of "Steady As We Go," Matthews also rises to the rowdy role of

rabble-rouser on the title track and leering lover man on "Smooth Rider."

"I don't think I was as self-confident in the past," Matthews admits. "I'm not saying I sucked as a singer, but I learned a lot from Mark about letting my self get inside of the songs."



"I remember sending him home to write the lyrics of a song we had just finished and he gave me this look like 'What did you just say?'" Batson recalls with a laugh. "And the next morning Dave came in with this big wolf grin on his face and had the words to 'Dreamgirl.'"

"There's been a realization that we are more of a family than just musical peers and we all look out for each other," Matthews says. "In the past, we have made records that tried to capture our live sound. When the 'record' light went on, we would stand

at attention and stiffen up a bit to achieve our best performance. With this album, things unfolded so naturally and at such a great pace that some of the best things on it were recorded before we even knew we had come up with them. We had a great time making this record."

We're having a great time listening to this smooth and delightful creation at The Nashville Syndicate. We're looking forward to hearing more Dave Matthews live this summer when his concert series gets him back to Tennessee. We encourage you to do the same! •