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All-star cast joins keyboardist Rob Whitlock on an eclectic set of musical sketches

Sketchin' 2 will be unveiled April 18th, "The Colours Of Life" heading to radio

Keyboardist Rob Whitlock has drawn from an array of musical styles including jazz, blues, and fusion to create Sketchin' 2, an album that boasts a stellar supporting cast. The artist's own independent record label, Sketchin' Records, will release the CD on April 18th, the second disc spawned from a series of recording sessions that took place over a two-year span from coast-to-coast with Michael Brecker, Vinnie Colaiuta, Anthony Jackson, Scott Henderson, Othello Molineaux, Cliff Almond and Pat Kelley, amongst others. Whitlock composed or collaborated on four new songs while producing and arranging the entire album. "The Colours Of Life" (instrumental reprise), a beautiful, sensitive piano and sax duet between Whitlock and Brecker, will be serviced to smooth jazz radio stations next month.

Whitlock likes to merge his music with art. Sketchin' 2's artwork is by Julius Pastorious, which is comprised of a series of intricate sketches of the musicians captured in the recording studio. The concept was for the artwork to tell a story of the music and the musicians involved as album artwork used to back in the days before music videos. However, to please the video inclined, the disc is an enhanced CD that contains illustrations and still photos from the recording sessions set to music in a video format. Pastorious is the son of the late legendary bassist Jaco Pastorious. Jaco was a student of Bob Whitlock, Rob's father who makes an appearance playing guitar on the CD. The circle of life continued as Jaco went on to have a great influence on Rob's musical career.

Sketchin' was released last year. The new disc is a bit edgier and has a "retro jazz" feel. Musically, Whitlock challenges listeners by presenting compositions culled from traditional and contemporary jazz, blues, and fusion. Sometimes his keyboard artistry leads and other times he takes a back seat to allow a sax, a guitar or a vocalist to pilot the track. On the album, he plays piano, keyboards and Hammond B-3 organ, the latter of which he's best known for. The production is warm and organic because Whitlock feels that that performing these songs live is what it's all about. "We were really careful not to overproduce (the tracks)," he explained. "While the music is diverse, I tried to make sure that it was accessible and palatable for the average listener. This collection of music is a labor of love: love of music, of fellow musicians and their gifts, and for the music enthusiast whom I hope will enjoy this album."

The disc opens with the aptly titled "2nd Service," which sets the stage for the diverse music mix to follow. Rob's wife, Amber Whitlock, contributes a stunning rendition of "Them There Eyes," originally made famous by Billie Holiday. Henderson lets his guitar rip with abandon on the bluesy "Gotta' Insulator." "Cold Duck Time" is a jazzy blues number. The fusion scorch-

es on the rollicking and frenetic “At Freedom Chicken Dance.” Dramatically the tempo slows with a heartfelt version of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s “Do I Love You,” which Rob dedicates to his wife. The album closes with “The Colours Of Life” (instrumental reprise).

Born in West Virginia, Whitlock grew up in South Florida, lived in Washington, DC and now calls San Diego home. He believes that having lived on both coasts has helped color his music. Whitlock is in demand as a musician, producer, arranger and a composer. Over the years, he has recorded and performed with artists that span from pop to jazz, including Joe Sample, Joe Williams, Rita Coolidge, Kathie Lee Gifford, The Jazz Crusaders, Tom Scott, Eddie Harris, Max Bennett, Miki Howard, Grant Geismann, Jeff Kashiwa, Fattburger, A.J. Croce, The Dazz Band, and, of course, Jaco Pastorius, whom he first met when he was 17-years-old.

Additional information on Whitlock can be found at www.robwhitlock.com.