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Keyboardist Rob Whitlock takes his place on center stage backed by a stellar supporting cast on *Sketchin' 2*

Duet with Michael Brecker at radio while the critics praise the new collection of jazz, blues and fusion

After more than two decades of recording, performing and touring in support of jazz, pop and R&B stars, keyboardist-producer-composer-arranger Rob Whitlock is ready for his close-up. This time, the luminous cast is supporting him on *Sketchin' 2*, the album that hit the streets this week on the artist's own Sketchin' Records label.

A "musician's musician," Whitlock is a sought after Hammond B3 organist, who also plays piano and keyboards. He was joined in recording studios throughout the U.S. over a two-year span to work on the eclectic *Sketchin'* project. Along with Michael Brecker, Vinnie Colaiuta, Anthony Jackson, Scott Henderson, Othello Molineaux, Pat Kelley, and Cliff Almond, Whitlock recorded enough musical sketches that incorporate a variety of genres to populate two albums. The first disc was released last fall. Last month, smooth jazz radio stations were given an advance taste of the second collection with "The Colours Of Life" (instrumental reprise), a simple, heartfelt piano and sax duet between Whitlock and Brecker.

Whitlock composed or collaborated on four new songs while producing and arranging *Sketchin' 2*. He 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. The production is warm and organic because being able to play these songs live is important to Whitlock. To that end, he will bring a band comprised of Jackson (bass), Almond (drums), Mike Miller (guitar), and Amber Whitlock (vocals) to perform music from the *Sketchin'* series to San Diego (May 27th at Dizzy's), San Juan Capistrano (May 28th at KSBR-FM's Birthday Bash) and Los Angeles (June 2nd at the Baked Potato), with additional dates and cities soon to be announced.

Although the album just hit the streets, it was greeted with positive buzz. All Music Guide wrote, "The veteran keyboardist fully embodies the art of independent jazz-making on this engaging and wildly eclectic project...As a follow-up to 2005's *Sketchin'*, the new collection has a bit of an edgier and 'retro' feel to it, but the results are always engaging and provoke a wide range of emotions. The mix also offers some cool surprises." EJazzNews.com stated, "Whitlock directs his band-mates through an affable course of action, where jazzy funk grooves, soaring horns and a synthesis of cross-genre components coalesce for an enticing set of musical notions. The keyboardist's sweeping B-3 lines generate a peppery edge within Brazilian-tinged jazz-grooves, and R&B drenched motifs...Whitlock's muse is immersed within a multihued musical

palate. He injects hard-driving mosaics spanning divergent rhythmic forays, complementing his substantial writing/arranging faculties amid the musicians' obvious sense of conviction." All About Jazz added, "Filled with a catchy mixture of rock, funk and jazz beats, Sketchin' 2, with first-rate musicians easily weaves between the lines of what used to be called 70's rock & fusion... 'The Colours of Life' (is) a haunting mixture of Rob Whitlock's animated keyboards and Brecker's amazing tenor... If you've been missing the work of Donald Fagen and Walter Becker (Steely Dan), Sketchin' 2 is a worthy alternative that demands attention." SmoothJazz.com concluded, "There is some serious jazz on this disc... make no mistake about it... seriously great jazz... We can't overlook the stunning vocal performance from Rob's wife, Amber, on the Billie Holiday staple, 'Them There Eyes'... Overall, Sketchin' 2 from Rob Whitlock is first-rate material performed by first-rate musicians, and the results are awesome!"

Julius Pastorius, son of the late bass legend Jaco Pastorius, did the album artwork for Sketchin' 2, which is comprised of a series of intricate sketches of the musicians captured in the recording studio. The concept was for the illustrations to tell a story of the music and the musicians involved as album artwork often did in the days before music videos. However, to please the video inclined, the album is an enhanced CD that contains still photos and sketches from the recording sessions set to music in a video format.

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