



Bass Virtuoso Brian Bromberg, Utilizing 11 Unique Basses, Creates a Funkified Time Machine on *Thicker Than Water*

Available July 13 on Artistry Music

Album Features One of the Last Performances from the Late George Duke

Brian Bromberg's career began as a teenager backing saxophonist Stan Getz. In the nearly forty years since and over 20 projects in his catalog, Bromberg has established himself as a first-call master of the upright as well as electric basses, releasing more than 20 albums globally as a leader and providing low-end for the likes of Chris Botti, Lee Ritenour and Michael Bublé.

"*Thicker Than Water* is a record I've been wanting to make for a very long time," says the dynamic bass virtuoso Brian Bromberg. "I love the upright bass. It's where my heart and soul is. My connection with that instrument is unlike anything in my life. I also love the electric bass and really wanted to explore its endless possibilities on this project." That love of the bass is evident across the wide-range of irresistible grooves found on *Thicker Than Water*, available July 13 on **Artistry Music**.

Across 13 tracks, Bromberg utilizes 11 different basses to create an orchestra of unique tones and rapid-fire runs. Helping Bromberg wield the groove are trumpeter **Randy Brecker**, saxophonists **Marion Meadows, Najee, Everette Harp, Brandon Fields** and **Gary Meek**, as well as one of the last performances from the late keyboard master **George Duke**.

Punchy brass and powerful energy from saxophonist **Everette Harp** ensure that everybody is going to have a good time on the album opener "Is That the Best You Can Do?". Bromberg immediately displays a technical mastery that is focused like a fine-point laser. "Minneapolis 1987" is a funkified time machine cleansed by the waters of Lake Minnetonka. "Take your pick. It could be Jimmy Jam, Terry Lewis, Prince. It could be Larry Graham. It could be Morris Day. Pick one or all," says Bromberg. "It's all a vibe and a sound. Minneapolis absolutely had a sound. Look at the talent that came out of there. You hear the first eight bars and you are done. It says everything."

The title track comes from the bond that Bromberg shares with the album's resident beatmaker, his nephew **Zach Bromberg**. "He's a computer guy," says Bromberg. "He writes loops and on this CD he came up with some grooves that are badass which inspired me to write songs around those grooves that work in the instrumental world of contemporary jazz." Breezy handclaps and a percussive pulse provided by **Lenny Castro** keep the mid-tempo tune in the pocket. Zach also contributes a vibe for "Changes," a soothing stroll carried by Bromberg's steel string piccolo bass. He plays no less than five completely different basses on the track.

"It's not for the sake of playing a lot of basses," explains Bromberg. "It's not for credit or how many notes I'm going to play. What's going to work for the music? Because the music dictates what I'm going to play and the end result is all about the music. The music always wins! It's rewarding to be able to use all these instruments to express what I'm feeling inside."

“Coupe de Ville” also addresses the feelings on the outside. “Sometimes songs just show up in my head,” says Bromberg. “This one just showed up and the name popped into my head immediately. We’re just cruising here in a big Cadillac.” Tenor saxophonist **Najee** and rhythm guitar work from **Paul Jackson, Jr.** takes the tune into the stratosphere with ebullient brass encouraging fleet-fingered runs from Bromberg.

The slow groove of “Trials and Tribulations” gives Bromberg ample space to highlight his electric bass talents. “This is the most powerful song on the CD. It’s the epic. I’m really proud of it. It’s so cool to have strings and horns together on the same song.” The large ensemble is in sync with Bromberg’s outrageously funky fills while the song “Your Eyes,” which Bromberg wrote as a homage for his cat, cruises with sensitive strings and Bromberg’s piano debut. “I play the melody and a little solo. I’m not a piano player. I have no chops but for a solo ballad with one note at a time I can do it.”

“That one is for my mom,” says Bromberg about the sweetly personal “It’s Called Life.” “The tune showed up in my head. Sadly, she passed away before she got to hear it, but this is one of those songs that really has emotional calories.” The ballad’s gospel swing is amplified by **Brandon Fields’** rich tenor saxophone, which works in tandem with Bromberg’s piccolo bass, gelling easily into a natural partnership.

Bromberg calls in the big guns for “Uh-Huh,” a fiery funk number that features trumpeter **Randy Brecker** and one of keyboardist **George Duke’s** last performances. The tune rises to the prestige of the performers with a big band heft and a finger-popping beat. “Land of the Rising Sun” is Bromberg’s homage to Japan. With help from **June Kuramoto** of the band Hiroshima on koto, the ensemble embarks on a languid tour of the island nation.

“When I write songs, especially if they have a vibe of a specific culture, I just want the sound to sound as much like the culture as possible,” says Bromberg. “It’s very rewarding to hear something in my head. Until it’s finished you don’t know if you did a good job or not but when you hear this, first thing you think of is Japan.”

“I started on upright. I was a purist jazz guy,” Bromberg proudly explains but when he got electrified, his palette expanded beyond his wildest imagination. He returns to those early experimentations by closing out the album with a solo soulful hymn entitled “A Familia.”

Recorded comfortably at his home studio in Southern California, Bromberg surrounded himself with musicians he trusts to record an album that resonates with personality and personability. Bromberg’s virtuoso skills are in service to the groove and each track moves with a refreshingly funky honesty.

“I hope people listen to it with open mind and open heart,” says Bromberg. “A lot of people familiar with me may not be expecting a record that grooves this hard. I think a lot of people are going to be surprised by the vibe and the pocket. Some people think the bass should sound like it did in 1965. Thump, thump, thump. But, hey, that’s not for everyone.”

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