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**Canadian Jazz Icons Kirk MacDonald, Lorne Lofsky and Derrick Gardner Form The Canadian Jazz Collective and Announce Debut Album 'Septology - The Black Forest Session', out March 31, 2023**



**HGBS Blue Records** is proud to announce the **March 31, 2023** release of ***Septology - The Black Forest Session*** by the newly assembled all-star ensemble, the **Canadian Jazz Collective**. The CJC is fronted by three of Canada's most acclaimed and accomplished jazz treasures: saxophonist **Kirk MacDonald**, guitarist **Lorne Lofsky** and trumpeter **Derrick Gardner**. Augmented by clarinetist **Virginia MacDonald** and supported by a noted rhythm section comprised of pianist **Brian Dickinson**, bassist **Neil Swainson** and drummer **Bernd Reiter**, this innovative septet takes a collaborative

approach to the presentation of original Canadian jazz, and blends the unique artistic visions of the leaders into one creative and cohesive voice.

Since the 1950's, Canada has played an indispensable role in the jazz vista. Oscar Peterson, Maynard Ferguson and Gil Evans are just some of the iconic figures that called Canada home. Today, Canada continues to be a reliable source for some of the world's best jazz artists, with a robust and vibrant musical scene. The Canadian Jazz Collective strives to uphold that tradition, and to display their virtuosic, world-class artistry through the performance of original work. "The idea is to put together musicians with a similar aesthetic, who approach the music with openness and respectfulness of each other's personalities, and to bring them to the forefront," shares MacDonald, adding, "it's the idea that the whole should be greater than the sum of the parts."

Simply put, MacDonald, Gardner and Lofsky are icons of Canadian jazz. **Kirk MacDonald**, a 2x Juno Award winner and recipient of the Toronto Music Association's Lifetime Achievement Award is one of the most well-established Canadian musicians of his generation. Having appeared on over 50 albums as either leader or sideman, and with over 100 compositions to his credit, MacDonald's influence and reach cannot be overstated. Chicago-native **Derrick Gardner** has performed with a who's-who of jazz greats as well as some of the most revered large ensembles in jazz including the Count Basie Orchestra, Frank Foster's Loud Minority Band, Harry Connick Jr.'s Big Band and more. An Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba for over a decade, Gardner has garnered international attention for his two most recent works, *Still I Rise (2019)*, with the Big dig! Band, and *Pan Africa (2023)*, with the Jazz Prophets. **Lorne Lofsky** is a master guitarist known for his pianistic voicings and virtuosic skill. For 40+ years, the Toronto native has left an indelible mark through his definitive solo work, fruitful collaborations with fellow guitarist Ed Bickert, and earlier as a member of the Oscar Peterson Quartet. With so much history between them, it is no exaggeration to say that the members of the Canadian Jazz Collective are the torch bearers of this storied tradition.

The CJC is the pre-Covid brainchild of artist manager Judith Humenick, who had a hunch that putting three powerhouses like MacDonald, Lofsky and Gardner together would result in something truly special. In May 2022, the septet embarked on a string of dates in Europe, which culminated at London's famous Ronnie Scott's in front of a sold-out house. The recording of *Septology* was the centerpiece of this first outing. "The tour was wonderful. The reception we had was great everywhere. And the recording at MPS Studios was a real throwback to how things used to be done," MacDonald shares.

Deepening the CJC's rich musical lineage is the studio *Septology* was recorded at: the iconic MPS Studios (Most Perfect Sound) in Villingen, Germany, located on the Eastern edge of the Black Forest. In Canadian jazz canon, MPS holds a very special distinction as one of Oscar Peterson's favorite places to record. Some of Peterson's most notable recordings were born there, including the *Exclusively For My Friends* series (1963-1968). Lofsky, a former member of Peterson's Quartet in the 1990's, admits a strong sense of "delayed synchronicity" in recording there himself, so many decades later.

Six striking, original compositions make up the collector-edition vinyl album *Septology*. It swings right out of the gate with Gardner's "Dig That!", which showcases Gardner on a ferocious solo that takes no prisoners. Virginia MacDonald and Kirk MacDonald also shine on their respective solos. The reflective and pensive "Silent Voices", penned by Kirk MacDonald for the "people who are no longer with us" features stunning two-part writing for the saxophonist and clarinetist. Kirk's daughter, Virginia, shows the apple doesn't fall far from the tree on this gorgeous display. Lorne Lofsky's nods to Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't" on the next track, with "Waltz You Needn't", which first appeared on Lofsky's landmark 1992 self-titled solo album. The three-decades later update takes on a new life as Lofsky and his bandmates soar above the changes. "Terre de DuSable" is Gardner's homage to his Chicago roots, and its clever construction allows each member of the band to marvelously shine. Beautiful harmonies shine through on Kirk MacDonald's "Shadows", before the program comes to a close with Lofsky's "The Time Being", which, as the composer reflects, "relates to my musical development thus far in my life," and alternates between the deftly ordered polyphony of the writing for horns, and giving freedom to pianist Brian Dickinson.

"I've been playing with several members of the CJC for over 40 years. The kind of trust and rapport that has developed over this period of time has certainly contributed to a deeper connection within the group and the current repertoire," shares Lofsky. Anchored by these long-standing ties, as well as their respective musical histories, with *Septology*, the Canadian Jazz Collective ushers in a new era of Canadian jazz excellence.

*Septology - The Black Forest Session* will be available digitally, and on compact disc on March 31, and as a collector-edition vinyl LP by mid April. The digital and compact disc versions include two bonus tracks, Lofsky's *Highway 9* and Gardner's "One Thing Led to Another". The ensemble will tour in Canada in April and Europe in May, followed by a New York debut at Birdland Jazz Club in July. Full list of dates to follow.

Track listing:

1. Dig That! (Derrick Gardner) (7:25)

2. The Time Being (Lorne Lofsky) (4:38)
3. Waltz You Needn't (Lorne Lofsky) (6:33)
4. Silent Voices (Kirk MacDonald) (7:46)
5. Highway 9 (Lorne Lofsky) (5:49)\*\*
6. Shadows (Kirk MacDonald) (8:44)
7. Terre de DuSable (Derrick Gardner) (9:35)
8. One Thing Led to Another (Derrick Gardner) (8:08)\*\*

\*\*Bonus tracks on CD and digital