

SAXOPHONIST KAREL RŮŽIČKA RELEASES “GRACE & GRATITUDE,” A NEW ALBUM FEATURING INTERNATIONAL JAZZ STARS



Saxophonist and composer **KAREL RŮŽIČKA** has lived in New York for more than twenty years. At an early age, he was recognized as a major talent on the Czech music scene. Yet, after having recorded his first solo album, “You Know What I Mean,” participated in recording projects of formations such as The Four and Spring Rolls Quartet, and featured in “Flight,” an album which he recorded together with his father and namesake, he relocated to the world jazz centre, where he has built a respectable career as a sought-after player (most recently as member of Michael Franks’ band) and teacher. Already in New York, Růžička recorded his second album, “Brooklyn Moods,” and now, 14 years later he comes with his long-expected next recording project, **GRACE & GRATITUDE**. Růžička’s partners in the studio have been some of the best players in the field; his “all-stars” team includes double bassist **JOHN PATITUCCI**

(collaborator of jazz legends such as Al Di Meola, Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Roger Waters, Mike Stern, Herbie Hancock, Paul Simon and Norah Jones), pianist **JON COWHERD** (known in the world of jazz as member of bands such as Brian Blade Fellowship, but renowned also as a versatile musician well-versed in other genres, including collaborations with Iggy Pop, Cassandra Wilson, Lizz Wright and Rosanne Cash), and drummer **NATE SMITH** (who maintains a long-term collaboration with Dave Holland and Chris Potter). Having named his new formation **KAREL RŮŽIČKA QUARTET**, Růžička has suggested that we may expect the group to keep on collaborating, be it in the studio or on stage. The connection with the place where all four performers have lived or been born and where the recording took place, inspired also the name of the first piece on the album, “Brooklyn Brotherhood” (it is interesting to note that the name of the borough also appears in the title of Patitucci’s album “Brooklyn”). The recording comprises Růžička’s own pieces composed in a quick succession just before the recordings. The compositions were all been written with respect to the style of performance and the musicality of these particular players and are dedicated to the memory of the recently deceased members of Růžička’s family, including his father, Karel, with whom he had collaborated on many occasions in the past. The recordings were made in



collaboration with the sound engineer Aaron Nevezi at the Bunker Studio in Brooklyn, using analogue methods; the mastering is by the renowned Tony Cousins of the London studio Metropolis.

The cover is by graphic designers from Studio Najbrt; the singular approach to the design of CD and music album covers by Aleš Najbrt and his colleagues has been a unifying element of all titles published by Animal Music since 2007. The project has been supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and is released as part of the Animal

Music 2018 Edition which has been kindly supported by the City of Prague. The album is distributed by SUPRAPHON both on CD and digitally. From the e-shop of Animal Music at www.animalmusic.cz, the album is available both on CD and digitally, in the uncompressed format (WAV), as well as in the MP3.



Karel Růžička has remarked on the album's origin: *"I still remember the occasion on which the Chick Corea Elektric Band performed in Prague in 1988 where our father took us all as a family. This was a decisive moment for it was there and then that I realized I would want to be a professional musicians. And guess who played the double bass in that formation? John Patittuci. I met John many years later in New York and for a long time I was hoping to have an opportunity to record some of my own music with him. And with this album, the opportunity has finally come. John agreed to be part of it and I had to choose the other players. My main criterion was to have a real band which is, of course, much harder to achieve than to just put together an "all-star" studio team. I wanted a quartet of people who would have known each other and performed together: Jon Cowherd and Nate Smith both play in a trio with John so it made a lot of sense to invite them to the project. They all were keen to accept so the last thing for me to do was to write pieces that would be tailor-made for them. To these masters, jazz is not simply a genre but a form of communication and my objective was to create something more than just another jazz album. I wanted it to be about Grace and what it meant to me, and to express Gratitude for everything that God has bestowed on me. I also wished to express my gratitude to my mom, dad and grandma who, sadly, have all recently passed away. The guys have done a brilliant job and we also had a lot of fun (and sushi) during the recording sessions. We deliberately rehearsed in the studio and went directly to recording, which is something that can only be done with world-class musicians, such as these gentlemen obviously are. Being the main characteristic of jazz as such, spontaneity is the distinguishing feature of this recording."*

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