



**RESONANCE RECORDS INTRODUCES  
ROMANIAN PIANO VIRTUOSO MARIAN PETRESCU  
RESONANCE BIG BAND PLAYS TRIBUTE  
TO THE LEGACY OF OSCAR PETERSON**

Some may call it hubris to introduce Marian Petrescu with an album in which he is asked to step into the shoes of a uniquely accomplished and intimidating virtuoso.

But that assumption evaporates in an instant, once the music of **Resonance Big Band Plays the Legacy of Oscar Peterson** begins.

That's all it takes to make clear that this remarkable album is inspired not by bravado but by Petrescu's respect and even love for the artist he credits with inspiring his commitment to jazz. The album will be released by RESONANCE RECORDS on May 12.

More to the point, it pays tribute by exemplifying what it means for one artist to influence another, as Petrescu follows Peterson's example by combining the highest order of technique and musicianship into a sound that is all his own.

This standard is set on the opening track, the Peterson composition "Waltzing Is Hip," a blaze of big band brass and keyboard wizardry that impresses equally through chops and taste. Petrescu then delivers with the same authority in a variety of settings, through the intimacies of "Little Girl Blue," the alternately reverent and ecstatic medley of "Hymn to Freedom" and "John Brown's Body," a triumphant re-examination of Peterson's "West Side Story" arrangement, and finally on solo piano with a Peterson gem, "A Little Jazz Exercise," whose modest title slyly belies its devilish difficulty.

For Petrescu, the seeds for this project were planted as far back as the notion to play jazz at all. Born in 1970, he received a thorough musical education, beginning with piano lessons at age 4 in his hometown of Bucharest, Romania. Just two years later, he happened to catch a performance by Peterson on television. With that, the door opened through which Petrescu would pursue classical and jazz studies in Sweden and subsequently at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland.

By age 15, Petrescu was playing formidably enough to debut at the Pori Jazz Festival. At the same event two years later, he would witness a performance by Peterson, an experience that he remembers as "one of the greatest musical moments of my life."

Though he drew deeply from the work of Art Tatum, Kenny Barron, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Michel Petrucciani and many other pianists, Petrescu has always held a special regard for Peterson. "To me, the most important aspects of Oscar's style are the beauty of the sound he gets and the way he phrases," he says. "People may feel that Oscar was just a great swinging technician on the keyboard, but he was far more than that. He was one of the greatest pianists to play the instrument, and his ballad playing and chord selections were just as brilliant as his up-tempo burning."

Petrescu's ascension can be measured by the second prize he received at the Martial Solal International Jazz Piano Competition in Paris (1989), his first-prize finish at the Bucharest Masters of Jazz Festival (1992), and engagements throughout Europe as a solo artist, as leader of his own trio, and onstage with Tony Williams, Arturo Sandoval, Toots Thielemans, Al Jarreau, Didier Lockwood and many other

luminaries of jazz. His concerts mixed originals, highlights from the American songbook, and on one show with his trio and vocalist Johanna Iivanainen, a thematic program prophetically titled "An Evening with Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson."

George Klabin was among the first American jazz insiders to get hip to Petrescu. As president of Resonance Records as well as a lifelong Peterson enthusiast, Klabin put the pieces together for an album that would celebrate the complete artistry of Peterson, the composer as well as the virtuoso - and having already recorded Petrescu on a session for guitarist Andreas Öberg in 2006, he knew that no musician was better equipped to honor Peterson on this project.

"I had no hesitation at all when George asked me to make this recording with him," Petrescu says. "I just looked at it as a great honor and an exciting opportunity to perform music that has been an important part of my life. I was already familiar with many of the tunes selected, and I was confident I could bring my own interpretation to them while maintaining Oscar's pianistic approach and his incredible vitality and passion."

Bill Cunliffe lined up an Olympian assembly of L.A.-based players to comprise the Resonance Big Band and a smaller ensemble for chamber strings, with Öberg, Petrescu's longtime friend and now a Resonance artist, added to the mix as a perfect final ingredient.

That it does, but it also marks a landmark event in jazz history - a passing of one of the music's brightest torches, handed to Peterson years ago by his mentor Art Tatum and offered now to a most worthy successor. Martial Solal has already hailed this young dynamo as "the Horowitz of jazz piano, and through his Resonance debut the case is made that at some future date a new giant in this genre will receive the strongest accolade, as the Marian Petrescu of his or her time.

June 16: Duo performance with guitarist Andreas Öberg at the Jazz Standard (Jazz Journalist Association afternoon showcase)

June 16: Quartet performance to pay tribute to Oscar Peterson with Andreas Öberg, David Finck and Adam Nussbaum at the Jazz Standard

June 17: NPR "Piano Jazz" taping with Marian McPartland

June 18: Rochester International Jazz Festival solo performance

**RESONANCE BIG BAND featuring Marian Petrescu  
PLAYS THE LEGACY OF OSCAR PETERSON**

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For further information on this and other Resonance Records releases, visit [ResonanceRecords.org](http://ResonanceRecords.org)

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