



HEADS UP
INTERNATIONAL

**GRAMMY-NOMINATED SAXOPHONIST/MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST/
COMPOSER/BANDLEADER GERALD ALBRIGHT'S
NEW HEADS UP RELEASE IS A *SLAM DUNK***

**August 5, 2014 recording features classics by Phil Collins and James Brown,
with special guest vocalist Peabo Bryson**

“As a composer, instrumentalist, arranger/producer/artist, he truly redefines the word ‘consummate’ and raises the bar for the meaning of the word ‘musician.’”

– Michael McDonald, from the liner notes

For four decades, the million-selling, GRAMMY®-nominated saxophonist/multi-instrumentalist/composer/bandleader **Gerald Albright** has put his serpentine-fired, solo signature on many of the greatest hits of the latter half of the twentieth century; from Patrice Rushen’s “Forget Me Nots,” to Quincy Jones’ “Setembro.” And, he’s been one of the most accomplished contemporary/traditional jazz artists on the scene, as evidenced by his fourteen records as a leader.

With the August 5, 2014 release of *Slam Dunk* on Heads Up, a division of Concord Music Group, Albright continues his reign supreme as the genre’s most compelling and consistent artist. Fans will hear his searing and soulful sax lines on this twelve-track recording. And, they’ll be in for a surprise, as Albright shows off his chops as a bassist, along with his ebullient tenor, baritone and soprano saxophone arrangements on his own compositions, and his super covers of classics by **Phil Collins** and **James Brown**, with special guest vocalist **Peabo Bryson**.

“This record is synonymous with my previous records, in that it has the direct influence of James Brown, the Philly International sound, and the Motown sound,” Albright says. “But what we wanted to do on this record was to take those instruments that are normally in the background – bass, flute and horns – and bring them up front. In terms of being a bassist, I was inspired by Louis Johnson [of the Brothers Johnson] back in college. A lot of people don’t know that I play bass, flute and some of the other instruments...so we decided to make it – no pun intended – a slam dunk project, and bring all of those elements to the forefront.”

Recorded in Denver, Colorado and Wallingford, Connecticut (hometown of co-producer/co-writer/keyboardist **Chris “Big Dog” Davis**), Albright is also supported on this CD by drummer **Jerohn Garnett**, guitarist **Rick Watford**, and his daughter, **Selina Albright**, on vocals.

“The musicians are handpicked,” Albright says. “They’re guys I’ve known for a long time, and I trust their artistry. Chris has been my keyboard player on and off for several years. I like his energy. And the way he approaches both production and the keyboards is unique. My regular drummer, Jerohn, the newest member of my touring band, is also a dynamic multi-instrumentalist in his own right. Rick is from Atlanta. He’s a dynamic guitarist in the gospel world, but he also plays R&B. And my daughter, Selina, is a recording artist in her own right.”

Slam Dunk rings with Albright’s moving and muscular alto saxophone sound, laced over some ingenious synth shadings and his punchy, baritone, tenor and soprano sax arrangements. The title track pulses with Albright’s funky, thunder-thumbed basslines and his driving sax conjures the spirit of a basketball game. “Split Decision,” which features bass and sax alternating in the lead, and the Chuckii Booker-bounced “Sparkle in Your Eyes” are both high-energy tracks. “Because of You” is Albright’s poignant, mid-tempo tribute to his wife of forty-two years, Glynis, and the reverent Sunday service air of “The Gospel Interlude” and “The Gospel” are moving elegies to his late mother-in-law. The festive Latin spirit of “Fiesta Interlude,” which features Albright’s flute solo, is a worthy companion piece to his earlier composition “Bobo’s Groove;” his tribute to the great Afro-Latin drummer Willie Bobo, who hired him as a bassist and saxophonist.

Another touching tribute is “The Duke,” an upbeat, medium-grooved track dedicated to the late George Duke, who tragically passed away last year. “I always called him my Poppa G, my industry dad,” Albright says. “We used to hang out and talk about music; talk about anything. I was blessed to spend a lot of time with him. George was one of those wonderful, approachable brothers you felt close to. I’m still processing his loss.”

The beautiful ballad “Where Did We Go Wrong?” features the legendary tenor voice of R&B/Quiet Storm icon **Peabo Bryson**. “We’ve been friends for a long, long time,” Albright says. “I had the pleasure of doing a saxophone solo on his hit, ‘Show and Tell.’ We recently performed together at the Berks Jazz Fest, and his voice was in rare form. After the show I said, ‘man, I’m doing this record, and I have a song that you’d be ideal for. Would you be interested?’ He said, ‘absolutely.’ So we have this wonderful friendship and camaraderie, and it’s reflected on ‘Where Did We Go Wrong?’”

What has made Albright such an enduring artist is his genius at putting his own jazzy John Hancock on another artist’s music, as he does with Phil Collins’ “True Colors.” “I had the privilege of working with Phil for several years,” Albright says. “And whenever we did this tune, I looked forward to my soprano sax solo. Even though I loved Phil’s arrangement, we decided to do more of an R&B type of thing and make it our own.”

Albright’s down-home rendition of “It’s a Man’s, Man’s, Man’s World,” is the highlight of the CD. “It’s hard for me to do a record without channeling James Brown,” Albright says. “We didn’t want it to be like the original version. We started with a kind of subtle, chordal thing that led up to the initial sax melody. It’s one of my favorite tracks.”

Slam Dunk is a testament to the musical longevity of the Los Angeles-born, Colorado-based, Albright; which spans the entire saxophone spectrum. “My sound is a marriage between Cannonball Adderley and Maceo Parker,” he says. “Cannonball expanded on the improvisational side of my playing, and Maceo alluded to the rhythmic sound of my horn. Those are the bookends of my influences, along with Grover Washington, Jr., and Stanley Turrentine.”

The entire range of Gerald Albright’s saxophone artistry is in full effect on *Slam Dunk*.

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