

Mp3 Jon Hammond - Hammond's Bolero



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Jazz Funk Blues "The music of Jon Hammond has Universal Appeal" 12 MP3 Songs

BLUES: Funky Blues, JAZZ: Smooth Jazz

Details: Letter to the Listener from Jon Hammond: November 28, 2002

Dear Listener! This record marks a new beginning for me, and I would like to dedicate it to all those who like myself are striking out on their own and going it alone. Don't be afraid to follow your dreams. I did and now this record is for you! On November 5th, 2002 at 11:00 hours I entered in to Studio "D" of UNIQUE RECORDING STUDIOS in Times Square NYC with my producer/engineer Joe Berger along with S.F. Bay Area musicians Ronnie Smith (drums) and Alex Budman (tenor sax). I had just come back from performing in Shanghai at the first MUSIC CHINA. My mission was clear...because of all our busy schedules and logistical problems, we had a 4 hour window to play down 13 of my original compositions live to Pro Tools recording format with Joe Berger at the controls, ably assisted by Heath Aiken. From the first tune I knew that this would be my best record ever. Twelve of the tracks made this record and the 13th will be on the next record! As I was telling the musicians...on this record each of us is larger than life. I am very proud to feature the undeniable pocket feel of Ronnie Smith, the great left-handed funk drummer from East Oakland. Also it is my pleasure to feature one of the finest and most musical tenor saxophonists to come out of the Bay Area in a long time: Alex Budman. The incredible guitar work features my long-time partner Joe Berger (Ham-Berger Productions). Joe has played with John Entwistle, Vangelis and many greats, plus he is responsible for the fine sound of this recording and mastering. Joe joined the band on tracks 1 3, title song Hammond's Bolero and Cannonball 99. Bobby and Joanne Nathan's Unique Recording Studios was the perfect studio and environment for our live recording. Special thanks to Bobby and Joanne and the Unique staff! I fired up the house HAMMOND organ and felt right at home immediately. Although we cut these tunes in one session, (a new speed record at Unique

Recording Studios!), it took my whole life to refine my songs and get to this point where I was ready to record them...and ALSO to select musicians who could not only play their asses off, but are very nice cats who play my music with much enthusiasm and uplifting spirit. Like all bandleaders I have had more than my share of nightmare situations with "difficult" musicians so I am always happy when I can record and play with trouble-free musicians on the band! These are the guys. This was Ronnie's first trip to New York City. The night before our session he and Alex went to hear the Village Vanguard Monday Night Bigband while I stayed home in my Times Square apartment preparing the music for the session. There is a story behind every one of these compositions. The title track "Hammond's Bolero" (track #1) means literally Romantic Music. Even if you are not a dancer you'll want to dance to this track! As on every track all the musicians are featured with the addition of the totally amazing guitar work of JOE BERGER. He does some "terrible things" to the strings on his guitar ladies and gentlemen! Guitar Heads and even Carlos Santana...look out!! On every one of my albums I like to do something original that has never been done before. On this record the very first sound that you will hear is the sound of me popping the cork out of a very nice bottle of Red Bordeaux wine! I have always thought this to be a "happy sound", so kick back and enjoy a glass of Bordeaux with my music if you have the possibility to do so. Also I announce the title of every one of my songs. The reason I do this is because so often on the radio song titles are not announced...well, I fixed that! I recorded the cork and my voiceovers on my new acquisition, which is a fine Chinese manufactured Tube Microphone from SUPERLUX in Shanghai. My EXCELSIOR tonechamber accordion has custom SENNHEISER microphones in it with a very slick modification by main man ALEX of Alex Accordions Guitars shop around the corner from Unique Recording Studios on W. 48th St. in New York (on the famous strip of music shops). This was my first outing using the electronics in my hand-built accordion and I was very pleased with the natural sound we got on the recordings. Track #2, "Jennifer's Song" I wrote for my girlfriend Jennifer. She is the Queen of the Skies...a special angel who flies for United Airlines. This is a rough time for all those at United and in the entire airline family, so I would like to call attention to how difficult these airline jobs are and have become. Folks...be nice to your flight crew on your next flights! Once you have heard "Jennifer's Song" you'll never be able to get it out of your mind. Melody is King! Perhaps you will hear my Russian/Hungarian heritage coming from this melody. "Cannonball 99" (One More Time!) #3 is a rollicking shuffle that I would like to dedicate to all those out there on the superslab with the hammer down driving cross-country.

"Cannonball" means non-stop, coast to coast. I have driven more miles than most people will ever live to drive. I've seen 18 wheel trucks drive off the side of a mountain in black ice...drivers falling asleep at the wheel and angry people driving like idiots. Buckle up for safety, keep a CB radio and a cell phone in the car and please drive safely out there everybody! JOE BERGER joins us for a rockin' solo on this one, ala ZZ TOP. He's been cannonballin' on the big-time tour busses with everybody from The WHO's JOHN ENTWISTLE who we unfortunately lost last year, to boy band DREAM STREET. We call him the "Berger-meister"! You might see me out there one more time...my handle on the CB radio is: "T-Bone Steak". They'll be playing the hell out of this one down in the Bayou on my friends' radio station KBON in Eunice Louisiana...laissez les bon ton roulette, Cannonball 99...One More Time! This next song, (#4) "Soon I Will Be Free" is sure to be the theme song for a future TV show or movie! Ronnie's Gospel and Shuffle beats are undeniable. I wrote the tune in D flat (5 flats)..the tonality of the bass lines I played on my MZ2000 CASIO monster bass keyboard will shake the china in your neighbor's kitchen! Smokin' track...dig the accordion I layed down and soulful saxophone playing from Alex. This one will make you snap your fingers until they're too sore to snap no more! "Thing In C Minor" (#5) is a serious 3-way jam featuring Ronnie with an East Bay Funk groove and solo in the middle. We jam so hard at the end that when we hit the final slam together, I think you'll agree when I say that this track has one of the greatest endings ever recorded! (the other greatest ending is on Czechoslovakian Salsa Song..track #9!) "Cosmo Lane" (#6) was a song I wrote while looking out of the window at my San Francisco apartment. There is a little street called Cosmo Lane where the pigeons make and the crackheads smoke and whatever else they do. I often would face my keyboard out the window and play while looking at this little street. Soon after I wrote the song a friend of ours in Germany named his new son "Cosmo". I thought...oh that is pretty cosmic, because how many Cosmo's do you know?! Only one I can think of was on the old TV show "Topper". And now the hotel around the corner has changed it's name to "Cosmo Hotel"...and last week when I played for first time in Osaka Japan, there Jennifer and I were in a fine hotel on Cosmo Place! So here it is for you..."Cosmo Lane". The guys think this would be another good one for TV show theme. Track #7 "Remembering Stanley" is my tribute to recently deceased tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, featuring our saxophonist Alex Budman. I never played with him, but our main man Joe Berger worked with Stanley on the road and mixed his last record. This tune starts out with a quote from J.S. Bach Prelude and Fugue in C Minor...I always wanted to do that because it so firmly establishes the

tonality of the key like nothing I have ever heard! The head of the tune is a little bit reminiscent of The Pink Panther. Well ladies and gentlemen...the Pink Panther is dead..and so is Stanley, so here you have it.. "Remembering Stanley"! Some fine tribute playing by Alex on the tenor sax...check it out! "Six Year Itch" (#8), is a very strong tune. I was telling the cats...this song is like an anthem! I could imagine a very hip marching band doing this song someday. I actually wrote it as I completed the first 6 years of my television show (The Jon Hammond Show) in New York. I had heard about the famous 7 year itch that married couples experience. And then in 1985 I was offered a major contract from then President of Sony Software, John O'Donnell. I'll never forget how at our meeting on the 48th floor of 9 W. 57th St. in New York at Sony Headquarters he told me, "Jon, we here at Sony believe that you will be tremendously successful within 3 years."..And then here I was 6 years on the air with my show and I was thinking...well Mr. O'Donnell...I hope you are right but I guess you are off by just a few years! And now I am just about to wrap up the 19th year of my TV show on Feb. 2nd, 2003 I begin my 20th consecutive year of broadcasting The Jon Hammond Show. Stay tuned, and here it is now for you..."Six Year Itch"! "F.P. Blues" (#9) is a song I wrote during my days living in the famous St. Pauli section of Hamburg Germany by the Reeperbahn. There was a club there I played at which had a very unusual name that I finally shortened to these initials so I will not be blamed for being a sexist...hey, I didn't name the club! But anyway we have a good friend also with the same initials-Francoise Pujol, a fine musician in Paris...so it can be for Francoise also. A swinging shuffle blues with some growling tenor sax from Alex...this is a very common kind of feel to what I was playing 7 nights-a-week in Boston's Combat Zone strip clubs back in the '70's "Czechoslovakian Salsa Song" (#10) has a very interesting story! I wrote this song during one of my frequent visits to play in Prague. Even though now they call it Czech Republic I prefer to think of it still as Czechoslovakia. I have enjoyed performing and giving seminars (as they are called there) in Prague several times. And in my travels there I have found it very interesting that in this place where there is a rich history of music and culture, there is a big movement of Salsa Music. Yes that's right...they love Salsa Music in Prague! And so while there I met the main Czechoslovakian salsa cat and we composed this song with the very memorable melody together. Does anybody out there know the name of the main Czechoslovakian salsa cat? His name is: Saul Salsoskovitch!....cymbal hit please!! Have a nice Czech beer from Pilsn and enjoy the song! "Train Song" (#11) is a melody that came in to my head while riding on the AMTRAK passenger train across the country. I was looking out the window at the beautiful

Colorado Rockies while hearing the melody in my mind. The train is very close to my heart because I originally came out from Chicago to Berkeley California with my mother and sisters on the "California Zephyr" in the year of 1957..I was 4 years old then and didn't quite understand the concept of "going to another state"...well, after some days on the Zephyr, I knew what that meant! I often used to like to play by the train tracks as a young cat and even today I gravitate towards the tracks when I feel like just kicking around. Yesterday we took some photos of the trio and it naturally came in to my mind that we should shoot the pictures down by the Berkeley train tracks. I used to like to squish pennies on the track and so I put down 3 pennies for good luck before we did our photo shoot. It's not always so easy to find the coins after they are squished by the train. Then they fly around in the gravel and debris...Jennifer found all 3 coins, so now I know we will have good luck with this record! And so not to make it too complicated as my old friend Al "Jazzbeaux" Collins would say...I call this one, "Train Song"...swingin' down the tracks! Track #12, the final track of this record album is a very special track for me....this is my tribute to all the victims of the horrible attacks of September 11th 2001. I told Jennifer and all my friends after receiving the terrible news that, "Now is the time for the musicians to do our work." Because I live in Times Square New York and also my girlfriend works in the airlines and so like everyone else this event has hit very very close to home. In some ways it brought us all closer together. One week after Sept. 11 we went to Hamburg Germany to visit my close friends there and I was also moved by how deeply our friends in Germany and all over the world were affected by the tragedy. In many ways we live in a different world today now. The American flags were out in Hamburg and everywhere we went folks! We have a great country and so as introduction to my composition "Get Back In The Groove" I play some strains of "America The Beautiful" in medley with my song. I wrote G.B.I.T.G. when I was only 15 years old and coming through a tough time in my life. For all the people out there who are getting back in the groove, this song and album is dedicated to YOU. I'm writing these liner notes on Thanksgiving Day which is a beautiful American tradition. I have plenty to be thankful for this year and so I would like to thank all of the people who helped me somehow to make this album of my compositions a reality. It's been a long time coming even though we recorded it in record time. Please read my special thanks and if I somehow omitted your name and you know you belong on the list, please forgive me as my mind gets a little cloudy the older I get, but I didn't really forget even one person who has helped me on this long journey up to the release of "Hammond's Bolero". Now buy the record and come out to our gigs! Come by

the bandstand and say hi, I'm easy to find...I'll either be behind my HAMMOND organ or strapped in to my EXCELSIOR Accordion. As my friends from Russia and Ukraine say: "Nastarovya!" However you say it...here's to your health and my romantic music here on this disc comes from our hearts to all people around the world in the international language of instrumental music...in the rhythm of life! Sincerely yours, Jon Hammond "The FINGERS...are the SINGERS!"

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