

Street Date: June 15, 2010

Eric Hofbauer *American Fear*



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Creative Nation Music CNM 019
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Tracks

01. Everybody Wants to Rule the World (5:29)
02. Twenty Questions (2:38)
03. Her Hiding Place (1:18)
04. Hot for Teacher (4:41)
05. Bailout Blues (3:20)
06. Monsters In The Closet (0:56)
07. Monsters Under The Bed (1:25)
08. Moose The Mooche—Cash Style (2:26)
09. Black And Lost Blue Highway (6:18)
10. The Jump Jump (1:32)
11. La Ligne de Chance (2:35)
12. Smells Like Teen Spirit (7:03)
13. Black Fire (4:46)
14. Broke Down...Brakedown (1:42)
15. American Wonder (1:33)

All compositions by Eric Hofbauer (Spice-E Music, BMI), except tracks 1 (Hughes/Orzabal/Stanley, EMI Virgin Songs, Inc.), 4 (Anthony/A. Van Halen/E. Van Halen, WB Music Corp.), 8 (Charlie Parker, Atlantic Music Corp.), 9 (Waller/Payne, Wixen Music/SONY ATV), 12 (Cobain/Novoselic/Grohl, EMI Virgin Songs, Inc.) and 13 (Andrew Hill); recorded January 2009 at CNM Studios in Somerville, MA.

Description

American Fear, Boston-based guitarist/composer Eric Hofbauer's second recording as a solo guitarist and third under his own name, is the sequel to his 2004 debut, *American Vanity* (CNM 003). Like that earlier release, *American Fear* dissects and examines American culture through spontaneous original compositions, stripped-down interpretations of music from the likes of Andrew Hill, Nirvana, Tears for Fears and Van Halen, and eccentric real-time mash-ups of Johnny Cash and Charlie Parker and Fats Waller and Hank Williams.

"You might call this a biography of fears," Hofbauer explains. "I'm examining not only my own fears, but also how fear is reflected and manifested in American culture and society—the fear of death, childhood fears, racial fears, fears about failure and the current political and economic environment, etc. The jazz historian in me finds a lot of fear—and overcoming of fear—in the history of the music, making it perfect for this type of exploration of the human condition. That said, most of this music is fun and playful, and I think fear is a powerful force for creativity, not just a negative. After you deal with fear, you come to a sense of wonder about yourself and the human condition—and about America, too."

Musicians

Eric Hofbauer, guitar

Distribution sources

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Eric Hofbauer

American Fear

About Eric Hofbauer

For more than a decade, Eric Hofbauer has been an integral member of Boston's jazz scene as a musician, bandleader, organizer and educator. Critics have called him "a brilliant player" (Ron Wynn, *Nashville City Paper*) who creates "intriguingly original music" (Bill Milkowski, *JazzTimes*) that features "a good sense of humor as well as great musical intelligence" (Richard Kamins, *Middletown Eye*). AllAboutJazz.com's Troy Collins adds, "Hofbauer brings a wealth of historical antecedents to his playfully inventive compositions. A refreshingly original voice, [he] reveals an affable yet mischievous sensibility in his writing and improvising."

When not leading his own quartet, Eric Hofbauer & The Infrared Band, collaborating with local luminaries such as Garrison Fewell and Charlie Kohlase, or supervising Creative Nation Music, a label he founded in 2004 to document the area's most distinctive jazz personalities, he teaches jazz guitar and jazz history at Emerson College and The University of Rhode Island. In 2009, Hofbauer was honored with the prestigious Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellowship in Music Composition, which included a large grant he used to complete a new book on modern improvisation methods, mix and master *American Fear* and compose new music for the Infrared Band's next recording.

Learn more at <http://cnmpro.com>



Photo by Marcus Stern

Additional Talking Points

- + "This project is meant as a tribute to the resiliency of the human spirit," says Hofbauer in the liner notes, which find him being interviewed by Fear Itself. "Yes, fear is a part of the human condition, from birth to death. We experience it in every stage of our lives. That's why I have tunes with titles like 'Monsters Under the Bed,' which is a childhood fear, and 'Smells Like Teen Spirit,' which is about teenage angst, and 'La Ligne de Chance,' which is about destiny and personal responsibility. But people have the capability of turning fear into a powerful force for growth, change, self-discovery and creativity. It depends on how you handle fear."
- + The tracks on *American Fear* fall into three basic categories: 1.) original pieces such as "Twenty Questions," "Bailout Blues" and "The Jump Jump" developed in the studio through improvisation on a pre-conceived theme, 2.) reinterpretations of songs from his youth such as Van Halen's "Hot For Teacher," which also happens to poke fun at his status as a jazz educator, and 3.) innovative versions of classic material, in this case "Moose The Mooche" infused with a bit of Johnny Cash and a musical merging of "(What Did I Do to Be So) Black and Blue" and "Lost Highway," that re-define the term mash-up.
- + Hofbauer has earned critical acclaim for his work in a variety of musical projects, including recent recordings with the Garrison Fewell/Eric Hofbauer Duo, Garrison Fewell's Variable Density Sound Orchestra and The Blueprint Project with special guest Han Bennink. In 2007, after years of solo performances and co-leading ensembles, he founded his own group, Eric Hofbauer & The Infrared Band, which released its debut, *Myth Understanding* (Creative Nation Music) in June 2008. AllAboutJazz.com's Nic Jones called the recording, which embraced Hofbauer's trademark whimsy and longstanding interest in mythology and wordplay, "something special, not least because this is a group that seems to realize that the tradition is no end in itself but rather something that retains its validity only through periodic but ranging renewal."



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