



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Paulina Phillips 410-972-7325
Phil Ravita 443-465-3342

RAVITA JAZZ RELEASES ORIANA IN APRIL 2023

Ravita Jazz releases *Oriana* in April 2023. Writing in the liner notes, jazz journalist and author Bill Milkowski says: "Together with his like-minded colleagues, bassist-composer-bandleader Ravita takes listeners on a kinetic, contemplative and ultimately expansive ride on *Oriana*." Ten tracks feature originals by Ravita and other band members with creative takes on "Black Coffee" and "Caravan."

This is Ravita's first album as sole leader. The acoustic/electric bassist is one of the Mid-Atlantic's busiest players. Having worked with such jazz greats as Jimmy Heath, Bobby Shew, Claudio Roditi and Ruby Glover, Ravita also appears in numerous classical engagements. He holds a master's degree in jazz performance from University of Maryland, College Park (2011) and earned a doctorate in music education from Boston University in 2020. He is also a university jazz professor radio show host.

Oriana, follows his highly praised 2021 album *Jagged Spaces* recorded by Grasso-Ravita Jazz Ensemble. George Harris of *Jazz Weekly* lauded the "impressive sounds" of the earlier recording featuring an almost identical band. *The JW Vibe's* Jonathan Widran called them "a stellar group." Ravita Jazz features pianist Greg Small, drummer Nucleo Vega, saxophonist Benny Russell, vibe/conga player Mark Leppo and vocalist Deirdre Jennings. Highly collaborative, the new project features tunes by four of the six band members.

Several members have worked closely together in the Mid-Atlantic since their graduate school days at University of Maryland, College Park. Ravita, pianist Greg Small and drummer Nucleo Vega have known each other since 2007 and since shared gigs in New York City, Washington, D.C., Baltimore and many other Maryland towns.

Some of Ravita's music was written in or inspired by the City of Baltimore, where Ravita resides. The tunes tell the story of a person's journeys through the city. The album cover captures the Charm City skyline in a golden moment.

Track 1 is “Sepia” by Phil Ravita. The funky tune features the composer on 6-string bass and captures the vibe of rush hour traffic. “Black Coffee” on Track 2 is a 1948 bluesy classic (music by Sonny Burke, lyrics by Paul Francis Webster), featuring vocalist Deidre Jennings, with Ravita switching to upright bass. “Boo’s Blues” on Track 3 is also penned by Ravita. On Track 4, pianist Greg Small contributes a buoyant jazz waltz, “December 2021.” The group’s second cover is found on Track 5. This version of Ellington’s “Caravan” features vocalist Deirdre Jennings, who contributed to arrangements on Tracks 2 and 5. Track 6 is Ravita’s “Peace and Love.” Written 22 years ago, the theme of the bossa nova flavored tune remains as compelling as ever.

Saxophonist Benny Russell contributes to eight tracks on the album and Track 7 features his Afro-Cuban flavored composition “Sisters.” Track 8 features Greg Small’s minor key samba “Stormshine” and” Track 9 holds Ravita’s “City Lights.” The composer is captivated by the city lights in the wee hours of the morning (often witnessed after late-night gigs). He originally selected the tune as the title track, later opting to capture the golden light with the album title and cover. The recording closes on an inspiring note with gospel flavored “Heaven” by Benny Russell.

Released on the Ravita Music label, the album goes to radio and is on sale in April 2023. Sample and purchase tracks from all major streaming services. Visit <https://www.baltimorebass.com>

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