

GRAMMY-NOMINATED TIERNEY SUTTON BAND SEEKS THE PATH TO THE TRUE SELF IN NEW TELARC RECORDING

***Desire* due at retail on March 3, 2009**

For better or worse, we live in a society that is fascinated by wealth and fame – indeed, even obsessed with it. Our film stars, sports figures, financiers and pop icons are elevated and even worshiped as something more than human. Nearly all of us are fascinated with these larger-than-life figures. For some of us, the secret desire is to actually become one of them.

Tierney Sutton, a leading figure in vocal jazz for nearly a decade, maintains that the obsession with fame and material things – a phenomenon that has been accelerated and amplified in this media-centric new century – is wasted energy. Worse yet, it comes with a dark aspect that can infect the soul. Such is the premise of *Desire*, her new album set for release on Telarc on March 3, 2009.

While the songs in this eleven-track set are mostly jazz standards, they are framed by opening and closing tracks that are embellished with lyrics lifted from sacred religious and spiritual texts that speak to the evils of greed and the inordinate desire for fame and worldly goods. “To me, this record is about stepping back and recognizing the difference between the voices we hear that are not our own and the ones that are truly within us,” Sutton explains, “and discovering that the material things that we want or desire are not usually a path to happiness, and are not usually a path to ourselves.”

This philosophical and spiritual approach to cutting a jazz record is not as new for the Tierney Sutton Band as it may seem. Sutton and her fellow musicians – pianist Christian Jacob, bassists Trey Henry and Kevin Axt and drummer Ray Brinker – have been interpreting various standards from this perspective for the fifteen years that they’ve been together. “We’ve just never been as clear about it as we are on this record,” she explains. “Even on our very first records, I was singing standards, and what was in my head was definitely about these principles and ideals. I just had never put it out there in a literal way like I’m doing with this record.”

Helmed by GRAMMY-winning producer Elaine Martone and GRAMMY-winning engineer Robert Friedrich, *Desire* opens with the standard, “It’s Only a Paper Moon,” prefaced by lines from “The Hidden Words” of the Baha’u’llah, the sacred book of the Baha’i faith. Presented in this context, the song’s theme of materialism is even more pronounced, says Sutton. “I think great artists are inspired in ways they aren’t even conscious of,” she says. “The writers of this song – Billy Rose, Yip Harburg and Harold Arlen – were probably very intelligent and intuitive thinkers. No doubt they were probably pretty well read. So somewhere within them, they were able to express, in the form of a musical standard, something that is mystically based. I’ve been singing this song from this perspective for twenty years. So it seemed like the next logical step to finally frame it in this way, and show you where I’m coming from when I sing it.”

Sutton delivers Cole Porter’s “My Heart Belongs To Daddy” with a coarse and cynical sneer in her voice that’s completely intentional. “I sing it from the standpoint of wanting something that you know is taking away a part of who you are,” she explains. “But at the same time, you’re okay with the exchange. The song is about selling out, and being okay with the idea of selling out.”

The following track, an insidious rendition of David Frishberg and Blossom Dearie's "Long Daddy Green," is an even more profound and literal expression of the allure of material things. It starts quietly, but the arrangement surges to a crescendo in more than one place, like something that sneaks up on the psyche. "In a way, the lyric is even more about fame than it is about money," says Sutton, referencing a line lyric that captures the essence of the song: "The lies he tells aren't new to you. You're not naïve. You know he won't be true to you, but still you believe."

"Long Daddy Green," along with "Whatever Lola Wants," which appears much later in the sequence, are what Sutton calls "the dark hearts" of the entire recording. "These are the songs that say, without nuance, 'Check this out. This is evil.' Think about the lyric: 'Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets. She always gets what she aims for. And your heart and soul is what she came for.' That's pretty much the essence of evil, isn't it?"

The closing track, a stirring reading of Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael's "Skylark," derives its ethereal qualities from Christian Jacob's cascading piano lines, with a subtle underscore from Ray Brinker's brushwork. As with "Paper Moon" at the opening of the set, this track is prefaced by additional lines from "The Hidden Words" of Baha'i. The track serves as a brighter and more peaceful resolution to the various dark shadows that lurk in and around the corners of the preceding tracks.

As a performing artist whose career is often subject to the whims of the commercial market, Sutton is no stranger to some of the very same temptations she sings about on *Desire*. "I've had to battle these demons," she admits. "I know them well. They are very present in my life. At the same time, I feel unbelievably happy and satisfied with the career that I've built, the music I've been able to make, the band that I've been able to keep together and all the rest of it. I have one of the most profoundly satisfying artistic lives of just about anyone I know."

While a record like *Desire* is made with a certain amount of risk, it was also Sutton's chance to put the dynamics of this personal struggle – one that is shared by so many others in so many walks of life – on the table for all to see, and perhaps even learn from. "What choice do I have if I'm not really going to be sincere?" she says. "It wasn't an easy choice to make, but once I made it, I just said, 'Well, yeah. This is really logical. It makes sense. It's absolutely what I should do.'"

Tierney Sutton's *Desire* (CD-83685) is due at retail on March 3, 2009.

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For more information, contact:

Press: Mike Wilpizeski (718) 459-2117

Email: mikew@telarc.com

Tour Press: Kelly Johanns-DiCillo (216) 464-2313 ext. 247

Email: [HYPERLINK "mailto:kjohanns@telarc.com" kjohanns@telarc.com](mailto:kjohanns@telarc.com)

Marketing: Jason Linder (216) 464-2313 x257

Email: jlinder@telarc.com

TELARC International

23307 Commerce Park Road

Cleveland, OH 44122

HYPERLINK <http://www.telarc.com> www.telarc.com