

TIZER

Downbeat

Driven by an explosive mix of jazz, rock, classical, jam band influences and Afro Cuban and world rhythms, **Downbeat**—the first studio album by TIZER, a multi-cultural band led by Boulder, CO native, keyboardist/composer Lao Tizer—throws down a high powered collection of 12 brand-new originals on this scintillating release of fresh instrumental music from one of today's rising stars of the world-fusion genre. Establishing themselves in the contemporary jazz world over the past few years, TIZER has spurred comparisons of a modern twist to the 70s and early 80s heyday of jazz fusion, when trailblazing ensembles like Return To Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra and Weather Report set the aesthetic standard.

Truly embodying the title and spirit of his 2007 solo album *Diversify*, Lao assembled a group of veteran world-class musicians to create a dynamic rich with new melodic, harmonic and improvisational possibilities. Co-produced by Lao and guitarist Jeff Kollman (*Glenn Hughes*, *UFO*, *Chad Smith's Bombastic Meatbats*), the eclectic set includes five original compositions by Lao and numerous collaborations with his cohorts, including the first single "World In Rhythm," co-written with *Emmy* winner and *Grammy* nominated guitarist Chieli Minucci, best known as founder and leader of *Special EFX*.

Over the past few years, TIZER—a 2011 nominee for "Jazz Group of the Year"—has taken their multi-faceted world fusion vibe around the globe, galvanizing thousands at events including the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta, the Joy of Jazz Festival in Johannesburg, the Dubai Jazz Festival, Barbados Jazz Festival, the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival and the Festival International Providencia Jazz in Santiago, Chile. In addition to their usual whirlwind of U.S. dates, their 2012 schedule in support of **Downbeat** includes the Jarasum International Jazz Festival in South Korea and four shows in Russia. While Lao was a "Best New Jazz Artist" nominee in 2002 and *Diversify* spent many weeks on the *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz chart, TIZER has a multi-genre, multi-national appeal that expands beyond just jazz enthusiasts. Their diverse resume includes performance slots alongside Zappa Plays Zappa, Jethro Tull, Isaac Hayes, Al Jarreau, Spyro Gyra, George Benson, Soulive, Babyface, Bruce Hornsby and Robin Thicke.

Those who haven't yet experienced TIZER's intensity, expansive arrangements and exciting soloing in concert got the next best thing with the group's 2010 debut release *TIZER Live*, which captured the vibrant interaction of what Lao calls "the ultimate cultural and musical melting pot"; Italian-American New Yorker Minucci, African American violin great Karen Briggs (*Yanni*, *Stanley Clarke*, *Chaka Khan*) and Cuban born drummer/percussionist Raul Pineda (*Michel Camilo*, *Chucho Valdes*), in addition to Kollman, multi-instrumentalist Steve Nieves (*Kenny Loggins*, *Loggins & Messina*, *Jagmo*) and Lao himself, who grew up in Boulder, Colorado. Bassist Rufus Philpot, who joined TIZER after that recording, hails from London. The concert recording at the world renowned Musicians Institute in Hollywood was TIZER's very first live performance as a group; it included fresh interpretations of seven songs from Lao's earlier recordings, including *Diversify* and *Golden Soul* (2001).

Downbeat marks the first time that Lao has co-produced one of his albums. Loving the big sound of the band and all the intricacies it has in the live setting inspired his simple concept when it came time to write and record the album. "Producing and mixing with Jeff, my goal was to give listeners a taste of the energy TIZER creates in the live setting, so most of the recording was done live in the studio," he says. "While no solo on disc can capture what happens onstage, we wanted **Downbeat** to have the same blend and balance via strong, detailed arrangements and studio production. It all starts with a completely live rhythm section—drums, bass, percussion, keys—and that translates to an organic foundation to build from."