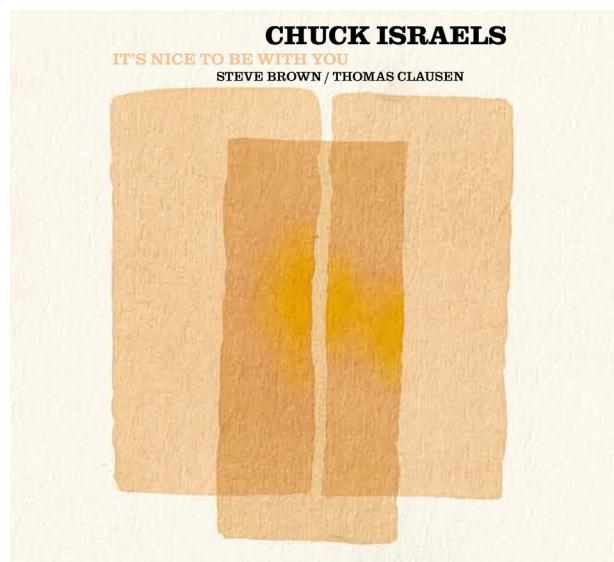


CHUCK ISRAELS

IT'S NICE TO BE WITH YOU



Stunt Records
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IT'S NICE TO BE WITH YOU grew out of Thomas Clausen's visit to the United States in 2011. The Danish pianist and American bassist Chuck Israels go back a long way. They have worked together in Europe and the US, and whether for professional or purely social reasons, Thomas has always found time to visit Portland, Oregon, where Chuck Israels lives. But this time Chuck had planned a studio session to record an album.

First he thought of using one of the many fine Oregon-based drummers for a piano trio recording, but in the end, he decided to use another solo instrumentalist, guitarist Steve Brown. With the addition of this extraordinary musician, they developed on the piano-bass-guitar trio tradition.

"Steve Brown (b.1942) always has material ready, and he's always ready to play", Chuck says. Years ago, Brown chose a career in teaching, and despite numerous other offers, he has been associated with Ithaca College in New York for the past 40 years. He plays regularly with Chuck Israels and has worked with a diverse collection of musicians: Claudio Roditti, Paquito D'Rivera, Phil Woods, Ray Charles, Jimmy Smith, Marian McPartland and Barry Harris. He has written educational literature and recorded in his own name as well as performing as sideman on numerous recordings.

Pianist Thomas Clausen (b.1949) is among Denmark's very finest pianists. He has covered a wide range of styles. He played bebop with Dexter Gordon and Johnny Griffin, joined the jazz-rock wave, made wonderful music with vibraphonist Gary Burton, and has led his own "Brazilian Quartet" and various trios. He has done solo recordings and written numerous pieces for classical ensembles and much, much more.

Chuck Israels (b.1936) is known mainly for his work with Bill Evans' trio, but the list of other musicians is virtually never-ending, and includes many giants of jazz: Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Stan Getz, Herbie Hancock, Gary Burton and John Coltrane. Apart from his own releases, he is documented on many of the classic recordings in jazz. He also works as a teacher.

Steve Brown brought "Sweet Pumpkin" and "It's Nice To Be With You" to the session, as well as two originals, "Two Birds With One Stone" and "Ventilation". Chuck Israels always insists on a blues. The choice fell on John Lewis' "Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West". "He's a master within the idiom, always at home, fresh and articulate", explains Chuck Israels. His experiences recording Swedish folk tunes with Monica Zetterlund and Bill Evans inspired his choice of "All The Pretty Horses", a traditional American lullaby dressed in an arrangement made "in my appreciation of Evans' use of harmonic textures". Thomas brought a Swedish folk tune, "Ack Värmland" and "Even The One Who Loves Jesus".

The end product is a lucky combination of three different musical backgrounds: Steve's unswerving musicality and creative interpretation of the jazz guitar tradition; Thomas' insatiable appetite for jazz and European classical music; and Chuck's appreciation of such diverse influences as Bill Evans, Billy Strayhorn, Oscar Pettiford and Red Mitchell.

"When combining interests as diverse as ours, it is important to work in an atmosphere where each musician has space to influence the result", explains Chuck.

The result is musical interplay on the highest level, and a warm, poetic recording.

Two Birds With One Stone / Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West / Ack Värmland... / Ventilation / All The Pretty Horses / Even The One Who Loves Jesus (Såll Den Som Haver Jesus Kår) / It's Nice To Be With You / Sweet Pumpkin.

Chuck Israels (bass), Steve Brown (guitar), Thomas Clausen (piano)

Chuck Israels - It's Nice To Be With You - STUCD 12062 - Stunt Records.



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