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UNCONVENTIONAL VOCALIST LAURA CAMPISI
EXPLORES THE ARTIST'S INNER LIFE ON *DOUBLE MIRROR*
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LAURA CAMPISI is a unique, new voice on the jazz scene, and ***DOUBLE MIRROR***, her debut CD, is an introspective and unconventional exploration of the complex inner life of the artist. Campisi was born and raised in Palermo, Sicily, and though she now lives in New York City, her heart and soul reside in both places. ***DOUBLE MIRROR*** is an examination of how an artist stays true to herself while forging an identity from the grist of two very different cultures. Campisi says, "Everyone needs a mirror to look into, to recognize themselves, to see their flaws and good qualities as they really are. The double mirror is the search for balance. It is the acknowledgement that my heart is divided between my art and real life, between Europe and America. The double mirror reflects my dual nature, strong and weak, determined and lazy, passionate and afraid."

The tunes on this CD are eclectic. Campisi wrote seven of the 13 tracks, with the rest of the album comprising songs from the Great American Songbook and pop tunes by Björk, Lou Reed, and Jeff Buckley. The project, which took several years to coalesce, has a truly international provenance. Campisi initially conceived of the project before leaving Sicily, but decided to wait until she got to the U.S. to bring it to fruition. The initial band tracks were recorded in New York in 2012, just one year after she came to the States.

Campisi's original concept was to keep it simple and just use a trio for her accompaniment; however, she decided she wanted the CD to reflect her new life, so she opted to use a double rhythm section, one American and the other Italian. Campisi's music is genre-bending because her influences are many. She's performed with various musical ensembles throughout Europe, America, and Canada, playing jazz and folk, as well as traditional Sicilian and Mediterranean songs. Because she's always looking for new ways to express herself, for this project she decided to eschew a chordal instrument and just use bass and drums. The American rhythm section includes **AMEEN SALEEM** on upright bass and **GREG HUTCHINSON** on drums. The Italian rhythm section includes **GIANLUCA RENZI** on electric bass and **FLAVIO LI VIGNI** on drums.

To better define her artistic pursuit, Campisi shelved the project until 2016 when she was contacted by **EMILIO D. MILER**, the Latin Grammy-winning producer and composer. Miler is a fan of Campisi, and the two of them decided to re-animate the project. She flew down to Buenos Aires, Miler's home town, to record the final vocal tracks at a beautiful studio just outside the city, where the lush natural surroundings provided just the right setting to summon inspiration. Post-production was completed by award-winning engineer **ARI LAVIGNA** and mastered by world-class engineer **ANDRÉS MAYO**. Working with Miler, the concept of the project changed and expanded. She decided to add new textures to several of the tunes with the addition of a roster of stellar players from Buenos Aires, Italy and New

York, including; **VINCENT HERRING**, alto sax; **GIOVANNI FALZONE**, trumpet; **JONATHAN SCALES**, steel pan; **ZACH BROCK**, violin; and **MARTIN PANTYRER**, baritone sax.

For Campisi, the essence of jazz is the interplay between the musicians. She prefers not to write set lines for the individual instruments; instead, she creates the basic structure of a song and allows the music to unfold from the conversation between the musicians. The music that emerges is very appealing yet complex.

Campisi's original songs tend to be introspective and philosophical. *Chorus Angelorum* (Choir of Angels), the opening number, is a moody, spare piece that invites the listener to join her on a journey fraught with existential questions. To achieve the desired vocal effect, Campisi actually sang into a gong. *Luckier* is a sexy tune with an almost New Orleans-feel in which Campisi states that love is so important that she's lucky to have loved more than one person in her life. Campisi says about the album, "This project is an invitation into the inner self, a journey that starts softly, like falling asleep, and then goes deeper into different, colorful scenarios, each with its own lights and shadows, like walking along an unexplored new path, a path that leads to a newly found self and sense of purpose."

Campisi can take an old standard, like *Love for Sale*, and make it her own. She uses the song, which was originally written from the viewpoint of a prostitute, as a metaphor for the times we live in by combining the song's 20s vibe with a funky feel and philosophical sensibility that embraces the overall concept of love itself. She even adds original lyrics to Miles Davis' instrumental *Nardis*, which she considers the beating heart of the album, wherein the subconscious itself becomes music.

Laura Campisi is a storyteller, but unlike other singers who tell stories of love and longing, she tells stories of the inner life of an artist just trying to understand her place in the world. With a warm voice full of colors, Campisi has a wide-ranging imagination informed by musical influences from both sides of the Atlantic. Although her music is firmly rooted in the jazz tradition, Campisi's original songs and her singular versions of jazz standards create a world that is both unique and universal.

About Laura Campisi

Laura Campisi is an award-winning songwriter and jazz singer based in New York City. Hailing from Palermo, Sicily in Italy, she is an expert in the Sicilian musical tradition. Campisi has performed with various musical ensembles throughout Europe, Canada and America, and sings in Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Sicilian, Neapolitan and Punjabi.

Her parents encouraged her musical predilections at a young age, and she started performing around Sicily with a band at just 17 years old. Her diverse musical influences, including the music from her native Sicily and the Mediterranean region, give her a unique perspective and soundscape from which to draw.

Campisi has established herself on the New York City jazz scene and has performed at most of the major clubs in the area. She has also collaborated with the Pakistani cultural community in New York, getting Pakistani players involved in her bands, mixing their traditional music with jazz and Italian music, creating her own unique sound.

Campisi is featured on *Walnut Street Station*, a documentary about the Italian/American jazz scene in New York and New Jersey by director Gianluca Bozzo. Her story is also featured in the book *Dall'altra parte della luna*, a recollection of interviews to Sicilians who made their way in the United States. She's been a guest on many radio and TV shows both in American and Italy. Campisi is the recipient of the Rosa Balistreri e Alberto Favara Award for her active role in spreading Sicilian music and culture around the world; first place at the 2010 Bianca D'Aponte Award, a competition dedicated to female songwriting; and first place at the Lucca Jazz Donna Award.

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