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MATT MARSHAK BAND CD101.9 FM SHOW – HARRY CHAPIN THEATER

By Val Vaccaro [with photos by Baz Chapman]

On Friday, August 18th, Long Island guitarist **Matt Marshak** performed a great show at the Harry Chapin Theater in Eisenhower Park in the Long Island town of East Meadow, New York. Joining Marshak were two band members, super-steady, versatile drummer **Chris Marshak**, the ever-cool keyboardist **Tim Regusis** and special guest - the funky bassist **Bakithi Kumalo**. (Kumalo has his own CD, tours with **Paul Simon** - and has played on Simon's classic CD *Graceland* - as well as on Marshak's CDs.) The show also included another special guest, the soulful vocalist **De'adre Aziza** (the voice on the CD101.9FM jingle).

Fittingly, Marshak and band were introduced by Nassau County Legislator **Roger Corbin**, who represents a diverse community of towns surrounding the Eisenhower Park area. Marshak



acknowledged his pride in Long Island's diversity, as reflected by the audience, which mirrors the appeal of his music to people of different backgrounds and ages. Marshak's show was an example of the universal power and beauty of music to bring people together in an uplifting celebration. Corbin introduced Marshak's music as a refreshing mix of smooth jazz, chill,

retro soul vibes, world beat, and more.

The Matt Marshak show at the Harry Chapin Theater at Eisenhower Park was sponsored by the New York/Metropolitan area smooth jazz station **CD101.9FM**. A talented guitarist and gifted composer, Marshak won the CD101.9 FM original music contest sponsored by Absolut Vodka in 2003, opening at Bryant Park in NYC (site of ABC TV's *Good Morning America* summer concerts) for the *Guitars & Saxes* show with smooth jazz artists **Peter White, Jeff Golub, Richard Elliot** and **Steve Cole**. Last year, CD101.9FM sponsored shows at Eisenhower Park with established smooth jazz artists such as **Jonathan Butler** and **Chuck Loeb**.

Marshak and band performed a wonderful show on a beautiful summer night. From a beautiful sunset to a starry night, while the birds flew across the sky over the Eisenhower Park lake, the hour and a half plus show brought music filled with joy and delight to the audience.



Marshak was a fine host, confidently relaxed and friendly, talking with the audience in between songs; he sounded great on guitar, with some vocals and scatting and played tunes from all three of his CDs. Marshak has a knack for playing guitar solos that are both sonically expressive and visually animating. From the well-received, current CD *Groovosphere*, the band played the energetic "Summerfunk" - the first single on radio charts for the past few months in the Top 50. The band also performed the pretty, inspired "Montauk Moon" – the

second single released recently to 300 smooth jazz radio stations across America. (review of *Groovosphere*). The audience also heard the upbeat tune "Be With You" and the beautiful ballad "Quietly" from Marshak's second CD *This Time Around* (2004), with moving solos from the band, including keyboardist **Tim Regusis**. (review of the CD *This Time Around*).

Guest vocalist **De'adre Aziza** was a bright spot in the show singing the bluesy "Nuthin' But Time" from Marshak's debut CD *Preservation* (2003) and the sultry R&B tune "Seduction" from the CD *This Time Around*. "Seduction" is one of many of Marshak's songs which have been played across the U.S. on **Rafe Gomez'** syndicated radio show *The Groove Boutique*.

Marshak's band also played some new material. One of the highlights of the show was the super-charged, funky "Feelin' It" – in which Marshak fuses funky guitar lines reminiscent of the **James Brown** band and melodic influences of **Larry Carlton**; there was also an exciting, dynamic jam by drummer **Chris Marshak** and bassist **Bakithi Kumalo**. (Kumalo also has his own CD out *Transmigration* (GuruProject))

Another audience treat was also the gorgeous "Sanibel," a memorable, laid-back tune co-written by Marshak and Kumalo with tropical island flair and a South African vibe. The band also did excellent versions of two cover tunes, the classic **George Benson** tune "Breezin'" and the funky "Low Rider" by the 70s pop-rock group **War**.

Over the past five years, Marshak's been busy. Back in 2004, Marshak opened for **Spyro Gyra, Stanley Jordan, Marcia Ball, Mose Allison** and other artists at the Brookhaven Theater's Hilltop Jazz & Blues Festival in Long Island. This year in April, Marshak co-headlined a show at IMAC Theater, a national venue where top smooth jazz artists often play (e.g., **Peter White, Jeff Golub, Rick Braun, Kirk Whalum, Marc Antoine**) in Huntington, New York.



This June, Marshak was a finalist at the Capital Jazz Fest Challenge original music contest (in Baltimore, Maryland). Also, Marshak has been playing across the U.S. in other places such as Washington D.C. and Nevada. During the summer, Marshak appeared regularly with his band at a trendy restaurant in Long Island often with renowned guest musicians such as keyboardists **Mike Ricchuiti** (Chuck Loeb, Patti Austin) and **Tim Regusis** (Patti Austin, Jonathan Butler, Ruben Blades, Najee, Chuck Mangione), and bassists **Ron Jenkins** (Jeff Golub, Chuck Loeb), **Paul Ossola** (G.E. Smith) and **Bakithi Kumalo** (Paul Simon), as well as many others, including newcomer saxophonist **Vallynda Voz**.

In September, Marshak performed in Melbourne, Florida with WGRV 'the groove' Smooth Jazz 107.9 at the Crowne Plaza overlooking the Space Coast near the Kennedy space center. In August, Marshak joined the **Mighty Music Group** marketing/promotion/booking agent firm which represents artists such as **Nick Colionne, Brian Simpson, Nils, Rafe Gomez** and others. On October 1st, Marshak is doing a concert for WPKN, with **Gale Storm** at Martha Clara Vineyards (in Riverhead, New York).

In addition, Marshak is looking forward to bringing his music to other parts of America and around the world. Later in October, Marshak is also scheduled to play three days in Europe in the Czech Republic for some great jazz festivals. On October 21st Marshak will be playing at the Jazz Festival Nove Zamky. The next day, on October 22nd, Marshak will be appearing at the Jazz Festival Bratislava Jazz Days, and on October 23rd, he'll be playing at the Agharta Prague Jazz Festival.

The band is currently seeking sponsorship of their Czech Republic/Slovakia tour. Marshak says, "We are very excited. We are working to find a sponsor for this journey to this great part of the world. If interested, we would be happy to put your business on our site, and include you in our emails as part of our sponsorship program."

Back in the U.S., on October 27th, Marshak will be playing in Charlestown, West Virginia at Charlestown Casinos. Marshak's music can be heard on the radio in the U.S., Canada and around Europe. For more information, see www.MattMarshak.com, www.myspace.com/mattmarshak and www.NuanceMusicGroup.com.

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