



...no mistaking the energy and soulfulness of Etkin's work...quirky, funky rhythms and buoyant melodic invention... Chicago Tribune
Ebullient swing rhythm... New York Times

Acclaimed Bandleader/Composer/Clarinetist Oran Etkin Salutes
Benny Goodman and The Launch of the Swing Era on
What's New? Reimagining Benny Goodman Featuring
Sullivan Fortner, Steve Nelson, Matt Wilson and Charenee Wade

Oran Etkin moved from Israel to the United States at age four. Surrounded by classical and Israeli music, he heard Louis Armstrong at age nine and became entranced by the trumpeter's soulful sound, swing and melody. Armstrong inspired Etkin to search for a way to express himself through music with honesty and integrity. Etkin's search led him to Benny Goodman, a musician also raised in a Jewish immigrant home and transformed by hearing Armstrong.

Like Goodman, Etkin is a clarinetist and bandleader who calls upon classical, Jewish and African-derived music traditions. Described as "a composer of eminent individuality" by his mentor Yusef Lateef, Etkin's unique sound emanates from an openness to discovering the world in himself and exploring it through his music. On this imaginative tribute to Goodman, Etkin taps into the melodicism of Armstrong and the bandleader statesmanship of Goodman while remaining true to his own creative voice. Etkin is riding a career high with this unique recording, which follows three previous award-winning Motéma Music releases.

What's New? Reimagining Benny Goodman (September 25, 2015) is inspired by two historic moments when Goodman used music to transform American society. The first was Goodman's famous concert at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles on August 21, 1935, a show cited by historians as launching the Swing Era. Shares Etkin, *I see the Swing Era as a spiritual awakening in the midst of the Great Depression. Through his clarinet, Goodman brought the swinging rhythms of black America, the soulful cry of the blues and the wailing moan of the Jewish prayer into American homes, creating a positive movement of music and dance that carried the country through a difficult period and quickly spread throughout the world.* **What's New?** will be pre-released on iTunes on August 21, to celebrate the concert's 80th anniversary.

A few months after the Palomar show, the newly ordained King of Swing revolutionized society again by inviting pianist Teddy Wilson to join him and drummer Gene Krupa to form America's first mainstream racially integrated band - the Benny Goodman Trio - which would soon expand to a quartet with the addition of Lionel Hampton on vibraphone. Inspired by Goodman's contribution to a struggle for freedom that continues to this day, Etkin penned the composition, "When Every Voice Shall Sing" and dedicated this album to that groundbreaking trio/quartet.

Produced by Etkin and Matt Pierson, the CD features **Etkin** on clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone; **Sullivan Fortner**, recent winner of the American Piano Association's Cole Porter Fellowship in Jazz, on piano; **Steve Nelson** on vibes; **Matt Wilson** on drums; and guest vocalist, **Charenee Wade**, a frequent collaborator of Etkin's and a Motéma labelmate. Etkin employs this unique instrumentation of clarinet, piano, vibes and drums – rarely explored other than on Goodman's 1930s recordings – to push the music in new directions and to honor Goodman's spirit of daring innovation. Etkin will feature this music on an international tour that includes the New York City premiere on October 30 at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

What's New? opens in a beautiful and mysterious way with "Prelude," a piece Etkin created using fragments of motifs from Bach and from Goodman's version of Louis Prima's "Sing Sing Sing." This reimagining of one of Goodman's most popular big band hits is followed by a playful version of "Dinah" that shifts between a dirty New Orleans swing and an African 6/8 rhythm. Next Wade joins on "Why Don't You Do Right" by Joe McCoy, singing in duet with Etkin's clarinet in a groovy reprise of this classic tune Peggy Lee originally sang with Goodman's band. "Running Wild" picks up the pace and features Nelson's sparkling vibes in a fast-paced duet with the clarinet. "When Every Voice Shall Sing," Etkin's homage to Goodman's battle against segregation, comes next and then "What's New?" by Burke/Haggart. Together these songs pose the central question of the recording: what's new in the ongoing search for freedom in music and in society? Etkin reimagines "Brink," his composition from his album *Kelenia* with Malian musicians, in a way that brings to mind the vaudeville era. Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter Stomp" is a nice chaser for "Brink" and allows the band to expand on one of Goodman's most famous recordings. Wade returns on "After You've Gone" by Layton/Creamer, highlighting the vocal dominance of the Swing Era and showcasing how the concept of singing is central to Etkin's album and central to how he plays his horn, a result of his early embrace of the music of Armstrong and Goodman. "Be Good Lady" is inspired by four notes in the introduction to Goodman's recording of "Lady Be Good" and reflects the influence of klezmer music on both clarinetists. The melancholy tune "Where or When" by Hart/Rodgers leads into the spirited finale, Etkin's version of Louis Prima's "Sing, Sing, Sing," a pop tune which Goodman famously put his stamp on. Fragments of this tune are incorporated throughout the CD in the opening of "Prelude" and in the Krupa-inspired drum part of "Brink" before finally revealing its full form in this climactic closer.

About Etkin. An award-winning composer, performer and educator, Etkin played piano, violin and saxophone by age nine and added clarinet by 13. A year later, he was studying with renowned saxophonist George Garzone and later with Yusef Lateef. Etkin studied classical clarinet and composition at Brandeis University and received his masters in jazz performance from the Manhattan School of Music. He has a robust international career as a leader, and has collaborated with many artists including Mike Stern, Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Wyclif Jean. Etkin's music was featured on a Grammy Award-winning children's compilation, and his previous Motéma releases *Kelenia*, *Wake Up Clarinet!* and 2014's *Gathering Light* have garnered international acclaim and multiple awards. This year Etkin presented *Gathering Light* at the Montreal International Jazz Festival and was invited by Herbie Hancock to perform at UNESCO's International Jazz Day celebration on April 30, which also featured Marcus Miller and Wayne Shorter. Etkin pioneered the Timbalooloo Method, in which children learn that music is the magical act of getting an instrument to talk, and tours internationally with his Timbalooloo band, which often features Charenee Wade.

Select Touring

September 11 – Portsmouth Music Hall, Portsmouth, NH

September 13 – Ridgefield Playhouse, Ridgefield, CT

October 30 * CD RELEASE * Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Jazz at LC, New York, NY

November 8 - Exit Zero Jazz Festival, Cape May, NJ

November 26-27 - NDR Concert Series, NDR Studios, Hamburg, Germany

November 30-December 1 – Pizza Express, London, ENGLAND

Press Contact: Jana La Sorte / press@motema.com / 347.726.8325

www.OranEtkin.com / www.Motema.com