

BIG·BAD·VOODOO·DADDY

BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY's eighth studio album, *HOW BIG CAN YOU GET? A Tribute to Cab Calloway*, captures the essence of an American icon in a rowdy celebration of musicianship, mischief, genius, street smarts, and fun. It's also possibly the timeliest and most welcome album of the year -- bringing a much-needed high-voltage jolt of winning, feel-good energy to a country slogging through tough times that may be getting tougher...exactly the way that Calloway's music did in the Depression-era America of his own youth.

Longtime fans of "America's favorite little big band" will immediately recognize the album as a milestone in Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's multi platinum-selling sixteen-year career. "Making the album was one of our biggest musical moments," says lead vocalist, guitarist and songwriter Scotty Morris, who co-founded Big Bad Voodoo Daddy (BBVD) with drummer Kurt Sodergren in southern California. "Delving into Cab's songs made us all realize how relevant they were to our time, and working on someone else's music inside out caused a growth and depth in my work as a songwriter, arranger, and producer." *How Big Can You Get* is not only an illuminating revival of Cab Calloway's songbook: the making of the album was also the revelation of a lifetime for the band as a whole, whose ensemble playing, arranging and interpretive powers were honed to an all-time high by the excellence of Calloway's songs. Trumpeter Glen "The Kid" Marhevka recalls being captivated by Calloway onstage as a seventh-grader: "I was 11 years old, and I was blown away; he had so much energy and so many great musicians. This album concept seemed a perfect fit for us, because of Cab's visuals, performances and intense energy. As soon as we rehearsed and played these songs live, it was musically challenging and refreshing to all of us."

Recorded in Los Angeles' legendary Capitol Studios, located at the famous record-shaped building at Hollywood and Vine, *How Big Can You Get* came out of the rooms where innumerable classics had been recorded by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nelson Riddle, Billy May, and many others. Using Capitol's vintage microphones and studio equipment, "we achieved a real marriage of his music and our arrangements and the group's voice," says Morris. The vibed-up excitement is unmistakable throughout the album: "We played songs top-to-bottom live, and chose the best takes for the album, because so many of Cab's definitive performances are live in films and radio broadcasts. This is the best and most ferocious we've ever sounded." With the band's stated mission to broaden the image of Cab Calloway beyond his signature tune, "Minnie the Moocher" (a BBVD live staple from the beginning), Calloway's frequently hilarious -- and just as often socially aware -- material held its own keys to completing the album in a way that did justice to him. "'How Big Can You Get' was the first song we cut with the big band in Capitol's Studio A," says Morris. "Hearing the playback, we immediately felt that this was what the band was always meant to sound like." He adds: "'Call of the Jitterbug' seems like a fun little tune to put up, but then you get into it and see how complex, intricate and stylized it is. Hearing that song with just two extra horn players showed us where to go with the sound of the album."

Since their arrival on the music scene in 1993 in a legendary residency at Los Angeles' Brown Derby nightclub, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's irresistible live show and aggressive, musically perceptive approach has proven them over time to be the singular standout among the numerous bands that launched the Nineties swing revival. The seven-man group forged a massively successful fusion of classic American sounds from jazz, swing, Dixieland and big-band music,

building their own songbook of original dance tunes, and, sixteen years later, BBVD is a veteran force that to this day adds new fans by the roomful every time they play.

BBVD's originals rocketed the group into its first phase of stardom, when "You & Me and the Bottle Makes Three (Tonight)" and "Go Daddy-O" were featured in the 1996 indie film landmark *Swingers*. Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, named famously after an autograph by blues legend Albert Collins, sold more than two million copies of the albums *Americana Deluxe* and *This Beautiful Life*, and received national critical acclaim while the band's music has appeared in over sixty movies and television shows. With their 2003 New Orleans-inspired album *Save My Soul*, BBVD began playing in theaters and performing arts centers, selling out shows at the Hollywood Bowl, Walt Disney Hall, Lincoln Center, Chastain Park and Constitution Hall, just to name a few. They have appeared as special guests with the great symphony and pops orchestras of the nation, including their first symphony show with the US Air Force Orchestra. The band's career milestones have included appearances in the Super Bowl half-time show, writing theme music for ESPN and network television, and performing for three American presidents. They have appeared numerous times on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brian* and *Live with Regis & Kelly*, and wrote, performed and recorded the current theme song for the Carson Daly show after appearing multiple times as the show's house band.

And now, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's songs have passed into the classic American songbook, playing alongside pop standard songs in film and television, and even on reality competitions like *Dancing With the Stars*.

Key to the depth of the new album is Calloway's unparalleled gift for vivid storytelling, as well as his pointed social commentary. "We all noticed that the lyric of 'How Big Can You Get' is unbelievably poignant to our time," says Morris. "In 'The Ghost of Smokey Joe,' we were excited going in to cut a trilogy of three big songs from Cab's early days, making the stories cohesive." Scotty points out: "Cab's early songs from Cotton Club era have a more vaudeville/cabaret feel, and storytelling is crucial in those songs. After Cab became a huge phenomenon, he had his own language, and he's vamping on his image and lifestyle in songs from the 1940s like 'Calloway Boogie,' 'The Jumpin' Jive' and 'Hey Now, Hey Now.' Having feasted on his music in the studio, and headed out to the road to perform Calloway's music, "I'm even more in awe of him now," agrees Marhevka. "I want people to come from hearing our album, and find out who Cab was. You can see videos of him so easily on the Internet. He was larger than life – the blueprint of a superstar."

The many breakthrough qualities of *How Big Can You Get* have now brought the band's horizon into exceptionally clear focus -- both on a musical and a group level. "We just turned sixteen this month. I couldn't be more proud that this is the album we've made at this moment," says Morris. "I *did* think it would last this long," reflects trumpeter Marhevka, who joined BBVD over fourteen years ago, when the band was 1 _ years old and still a trio. "I had played in many groups, and stopped doing everything else – I put 100% in, and never looked back. People ask: 'Are you gonna be here in five years?', and I say: *Yeah!* Every guy in the band has that feeling about it. The greatest moment is being here right now, doing this. The goals are always the same: getting better at what we do individually, and moving forward in the same direction. We're still playing, and have something to say."

How big can you get? From the proof on record and on stage, there's just no telling with Big Bad Voodoo Daddy how big the next level will be.

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