

# JESSE FISCHER & SOUL CYCLE

Keyboardist/composer Jesse Fischer & Soul Cycle to independently release highly anticipated album *Homebrew* on September 27, 2011.

Drawing influence from 70's-era jazz fusion, Memphis soul, singer-songwriter pop, and psychedelic rock, *Homebrew* features guest appearances from Stefon Harris, Gretchen Parlato, Sean Jones, Rogiérs, Brian Hogans, and Jean Caze.

*"Fantastic playing all around, sonically warm, interesting and adventurous arranging — this is an entire set that you need to listen to, not a series of singles."*

— Ivan Orr, GrownFolksMusic.com

*For immediate release* — Brooklyn-based keyboardist/composer Jesse Fischer is proud to announce the release of his latest album, *Homebrew*, available September 27, 2011. Featuring an all-star cast of special guests, including Stefon Harris, Gretchen Parlato, Sean Jones, Brian Hogans, and Jean Caze, as well as his close-knit band Soul Cycle, *Homebrew* is Jesse's most ambitious yet personal record to date.

"I wanted to give a warm, intimate feel to the record," reflects Fischer, "as if we're all just hanging out in my living room and playing for the love of music." To this end, Fischer produced and engineered *Homebrew* himself at his own studio, trading the over-produced and polished sound of many of today's recordings for the raw, funky and homemade vibe of yesterday's classics. Fischer also composed and arranged the ten original selections, and provided striking re-workings of songs close to his heart, Carole King's "You've Got a Friend" and John Lennon's "Imagine". His playing features lyrical, economical lines and a sensitive touch, whether on keyboard, organ, or synthesizer.

Sounding as if Herbie Hancock teamed up with Booker T. & the MG's to take over Abbey Road Studios for a few days in 1974, *Homebrew* draws influence from a wide range of sources, reflecting Fischer's eclectic taste. "When I was a kid, I listened to all my parents' records, which ranged from Bach to the Beatles to Jobim to Otis Redding to Balkan folk music." Fischer laughs, "Then in one year I discovered both Nirvana and A Tribe Called Quest and nothing was ever the same!" All of these influences and more went into the making of *Homebrew*, which seamlessly merges 70's-era jazz fusion, Memphis soul, singer-songwriter pop, and psychedelic rock, with a few touches of hip-hop, electronica, and world music.

What keeps *Homebrew* cohesive is the joy and wonder of music itself. "I remember being a kid and just loving music in such a pure way," recalls Fischer. "Now that I'm older, I tend to approach music from a more professional perspective — but *Homebrew* is my attempt to recapture that energy of childhood, when music was new and exciting and there were no rules, and I felt free to try anything and express myself."

Two seemingly unrelated yet life-changing experiences were at the genesis of *Homebrew*. “Last year I visited the Stax museum in Memphis while I was on tour, and it was so inspiring to see the actual room where all these classics were recorded,” remembers Fischer. “It amazed me that even though Stax didn’t have all the modern equipment that Motown had, without access to so many orchestral instruments and arrangers, they ended up with a sound that to me was so much more personal and meaningful.”

At the same time, Fischer was reading Steve Wozniak’s autobiography. (Wozniak co-founded Apple Computer with Steve Jobs). “Wozniak started a revolution, not through his day job at Hewlett Packard, but in his spare time at a hobbyist group called the Homebrew Computer Club,” Fischer says. “I realized that I don’t need a huge label, high-end studio, or access to corporate money to make meaningful music — all I really need are my ears, and the passion and determination to express myself.” This do-it-yourself spirit led to *Homebrew*’s unpretentious, downhome appeal.

*Homebrew* showcases a maturing composer and orchestrator in Fischer. With a strong emphasis on catchy, infectious grooves and memorable melodies, Fischer’s compositions easily cross boundaries between jazz, soul, and pop music. From his haunting re-harmonization of “You’ve Got a Friend,” to the lush woodwind arrangements on “Dark Waters” and “A New Beginning”, to the punk-rock boogaloo of “Basement Jam”, to the psychedelic coda to “Imagine”, *Homebrew* exposes Fischer as a deft colorist with a wide tonal palette and a keen sense of history. “For me, there’s a clear line you can draw from Impressionist composers like Debussy through big-band arrangers like Fletcher Henderson, and on to the cool jazz pioneers like Gil Evans, all of which inspired Herbie Hancock, who was then sampled by Dilla, who was then imitated by Questlove and the Roots, and so on.”

Fischer’s band Soul Cycle is a tight-knit group of like-minded individuals whose distinctive sound has been cultivated through years of studying and touring together in various settings, from jazz to hip-hop to reggae gigs. “I’m so lucky to be supported by the guys on my team — not only for how they play, but how they *listen!*” Fischer continues, “It’s so rare to have a band with this level of musicianship and yet no one on the bandstand has an ego — everyone puts the music and the group first, and that’s really what matters.” Composed of saxophonist Brian Hogans, guitarist David Linaburg, bassist Josh David, percussionist Shawn Banks, and drummer Jerome Jennings, Soul Cycle’s strong group identity shines in their ensemble playing and sensitive accompaniment.

With *Homebrew*, Jesse Fischer and Soul Cycle deliver a testament to the power of self-determination, the DIY spirit, and the joy and wonder of music — a message that is both highly personal yet universal.

# BIOGRAPHY

The keyboardist behind Atlantic recording artist Laura Izibor, Brooklyn-based Jesse Fischer is an important new voice in jazz and soul music. Appearing with Stevie Wonder on the eve of President Obama's inauguration, he has also toured the world with Izibor, as well as performing with legendary R&B crooner Freddie Jackson, Afro-European soulster Celia Faussart (from Les Nubians), Broadway star Elisabeth Withers, and hip-hop legends Black Moon. Fischer graduated *cum laude* from Rutgers College with a degree in computer science and linguistics, while simultaneously studying jazz piano with Stanley Cowell at Mason Gross School of the Arts. A triple threat as a musician, engineer, and producer, Fischer self-produced and independently released four critically-acclaimed albums with his group Soul Cycle, as well as engineering/producing recent releases by indie artists Andre Henry and Gabriel "Manuals" Wallace. His television credits include Conan O'Brien, Craig Ferguson, the Mo'Nique Show, BET's Rising Icons, Jools Holland, 90210, and One Tree Hill.

## PRESS QUOTES

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— Ivan Orr, GrownFolksMusic.com

*"I wallowed in the rich yet delicate treatment provided by Soul Cycle. Accomplished jazz singer Gretchen Parlato delivers a beguiling vocal that is beautifully complimented by Jesse's sweet arrangement that, as per usual, features some enrapturing keyboard work."*

— Paul Cutting, SoulCuts.org

*"Soul Cycle is a group of talented and eclectic musicians who know how to think outside of the box. The integrity and honesty of the music is always of the utmost importance."*

— Onaje Allan Gumbs, jazz pianist and composer

*"Parlato joins Soul Cycle on a charming remake of Carole King's 'You've Got a Friend'... Their cover is jazzy and soulful, with Parlato delivering a mesmerizing vocal performance."*

— Kim Hines, SoulBounce.com

*"'You've Got a Friend' is taken through an updated soulful polish with the band Soul Cycle... It's a great song, and with luck this will gain a lot of attention."*

— John Book, ThisIsBooksMusic.com

*"Very refreshing and innovative look at urban grooves steeped in fusion jazz."*

— Ronald Jackson, JazzReview.com