

New West Guitar Group Releases Its 5th Studio Album, *Big City*, on Summit Records

The Los Angeles-based trio grooves in *Big City*, a sophisticated sonic streetscape showcasing hot original tunes and captivating covers of Tears for Fears, Simon & Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell and The Police.

Praised as “sharp and refined” by the *Seattle Times*, New West Guitar Group infuses its latest disc *Big City* with its signature blend of laid-back virtuosity and expert arrangements that “sometimes verge on the orchestral” (*All Music Guide*). The album, the group’s fifth studio disc and second released on Summit Records, drops on September 10th.

Big City is the follow-up to 2011’s critically acclaimed *Round Trip Ticket* that was described by *Downbeat* as “an open-spaces, sunlight-dappled record that feels like it was recorded in plein air, with the three musicians surrounded by Redwoods.” This time, New West sets out to find serenity in the midst of a thriving, frenetic metropolis. With their infectious pulse and driving rhythms, original charts like “Every Big City,” “Inspiration Point,” “Train Bump” and “Pacific Blues” capture the urban hustle, while the more tranquil tunes—“Mission Creek,” “Proud Day’s Work” and “Evergreen”—offer contemplative respite. Intricate yet faithful covers of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” (Tears for Fears), “All I Want” (Joni Mitchell), “Bleeker Street” (Simon & Garfunkel) and “Wrapped Around Your Finger” (The Police) surface throughout the disc, like favorite songs emanating from open windows and evoking wistful memories.

The three members of New West—Perry Smith, Jeff Stein and John Storie—share composing and arranging credits on the album. Firmly rooted in classic jazz, the trio’s versatility as both players and composers has given them a reputation as pioneers in the realm of guitar ensemble repertoire. *Acoustic Guitar* has praised the group for its ability to shift seamlessly “from chamber-like elegance and fragile introspection to exhilarating swing and gritty blues.”

Big City fully embraces this open-minded quality and showcases the group’s intimate understanding of the guitar’s melodic, harmonic, timbral and percussive capabilities. The sonic palette includes acoustic steel- and nylon-stringed instruments as well as electric guitars with ample effects, plus innovative strumming and fingerpicking techniques.

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Big City is New West’s fifth studio album. The group’s previous album, *Round Trip Ticket*, reached number 28 on the national jazz charts and was featured frequently on NPR’s Morning Edition and All Things Considered. Since their earliest days as music students at the University of Southern California, New West has tapped into its straight-ahead jazz roots to develop a sound that embraces various

shades of folk, country, rock and pop. The Los Angeles-based group currently includes Jeff Stein, John Storie and Perry Smith.

Over the years, New West Guitar Group has piled up numerous awards and accolades, and has enjoyed broad international exposure. Before they even left USC, they were the first group to receive the coveted Thornton Protégé Grant. During this same period, the Los Angeles Sister Cities Committee honored the group as musical ambassadors of L.A. – which in turn created the opportunity for them to perform at the 2005 World Exposition in Nagoya, Japan, and the 2007 German-American Volksfest in Berlin. They have continued to perform in major venues throughout the U.S. and Canada, Europe and Asia. In August 2009, they performed as the opening act for Diana Krall at the Britt Festival in Southern Oregon.

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