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## The recording of "Chasin the Sun" Susan's all star band

*"This album's not just plugged in. It's plugged all the way in, past the wall and into Calloway's own electricity."*

You could almost see Hollywood pulling this one off: a group of the industry's top musicians walking together in slow motion and in silhouette. As they reach one another, they stop, count off, and one of them strikes a power chord. Then they pull together some sort of music miracle.

Well it wasn't Hollywood, and there was definitely no slow motion, but all the rest seemed to happen over the weekend when the foundation for Susan Calloway's new album, Chasin the Sun, was first recorded.

Producer Gerard Smerek (Anita Baker, Aretha Franklin, Donna Summer, Pavarotti, Bob Seger, Kid Rock, New Radicals, Natalie Merchant, etc.), coupled with the talent of programmer / assistant producer Mark Chu, assembled a band that knew and respected Calloway's work. Like a who's who of modern music, these talented players came together and delivered a whirlwind weekend of recording magic that turned out everything needed for the final album.

Greg Suran of the Goo Goo Dolls (who also did Avril Lavigne's latest album) took guitar. Lee Levin, heard on Teddy Geiger's record and well known from the Miami session scene, brought his talent to the drums. And Tony Levin -- best known with Peter Dinklage, but a master of bass over two decades with top artists -- filled out the sound.

Tony even added the exclusive sound of his unique instrument, the stick, used in the title track "Chasin the Sun."

As you could guess, when you put that kind of talent in a room, you end up with a raw, real sound, very different from the cookie-cutter pop music that usually hits the airwaves. On top of that, Calloway brings her soul-searching lyrics to life with a clear voice set free with razor-sharp production that often calls on down-to-earth, analog sound.

Already followed by thousands who know her sound from past singles, shows across the U.S., and her recent performance of "Memora de la Stona" from Final Fantasy, Calloway infuses a proud, strong female energy into her music and brings up themes that everyone can relate to.

From the first riff of the title track, "Chasin the Sun," you hear Calloway's gutsy energy sticking out its chin and daring defiance. And that challenge carries right into the lyrics as the artist grabs you by the collar and asks, "What? Did you think it was all going to be handed to you? Get out there. Run for it."

As always, Calloway is singing from her heart with these lyrics, knowing first-hand that success isn't handed to you and life isn't always easy. Her mom was in a car accident and was in and out of the hospital through Calloway's years growing up, which had her father working two jobs to try paying medical bills.

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So as a kid, Calloway herself would trudge through a field, no matter what the weather, to practice her music in a nearby church. It's a vivid image of how much she loved music and how long she's worked on perfecting her art.

The album continues with "Divided," which brings with it a buoyant feel, yet is the first of several songs echoing a theme most of us face: the challenge of being pulled in too many directions at once.

After this, the unique percussion opening to "Safe" gives a new direction to the music. It's a sound that, like so much of what Calloway does, makes her feel like a real artist in a world of homogenized music. You can feel aggression and belligerence in this song -- a strong example of her passion and the power of a woman standing up for who she is.

The album then takes a more melancholy turn with "Learning to Live," where fans of Tony Levin will appreciate the bass playing a stronger companion role. In this song, you hear the utter and painful confusion of a woman who's hanging onto someone she knows she needs to leave, she knows she will leave, but can't.

"The biggest thing that I try to do with my writing, always, is just to be honest, which means being vulnerable; admitting things you don't want to admit; and saying things that you maybe don't want people to know," says Calloway. "It's almost letting people see inside your diary." By this point in the album, you already feel that this is true.

Probably the album's most relaxed and acoustic piece, "Don't Fall in Love" is a tease to any guy who listens, and the girls will know exactly where Calloway's at. You can hear her wanting someone, welcoming someone, yet holding off commitment -- in word only. The kind of tug of war many of us know all too well in love.

The final song, "Lay It Down," is like a release. It lifts the energy of the album to a vibrant end while inviting you with sincerely open arms to let it all go: the pain, the confusion, the burdens of life. The invitation seems genuine because it's as if you can hear reverberations of her own pain in the music, telling you down to your cells that she understands what life throws at you. And it makes you feel like the whole song, the whole album, was written and sung for you.

Bottom line, ***Chasin the Sun*** isn't just plugged in. It's plugged all the way in, past the wall and into Calloway's own electricity. It's an album that brings together real lyrics, passion, and talent, and if you're looking for bold, original music, no need to keep holding your breath. Calloway delivers.

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