

In the 40 years since Dave Holland's recording debut as a leader, with his landmark album *Conference of the Birds*, the bassist, composer, and bandleader has produced a remarkable series of recordings and groups documenting his eclectic musical journey. On *Prism*, his latest album set for September 3, 2013 release on Dare2 Records (Holland's imprint, with distribution from Redeye), he introduces his latest working band (of the same name) to the world: an all-star quartet comprising Kevin Eubanks on guitar, Craig Taborn on piano and Fender Rhodes, and Eric Harland on drums. With each band member contributing distinctive compositions, *Prism* sets forth a new musical direction for Holland - a horn-less quartet with an explosive and visceral edge.

Debuting at the 2012 TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival, *Prism* brings together four musicians who are each forging their own musical path and together have created a unique and contemporary musical statement. Holland's groups have always been driven by a collaborative spirit, with the goal of creating a distinctive, cohesive sound within which the musicians are free to express their creative individuality. That concept is vividly reflected in the new band's name. "I liked the image of a prism dividing light into spectrum of colors," says Holland. "A visual symbol of the one becoming many. The music being a unification of diverse parts."

The sound that emerges on *Prism*, Holland's first album in nearly three years, is electrifying and vibrant, with intense grooves and a ferocious edge. *Jazzwise Magazine* has already described the new project as Holland's "...most visceral recording for many years, recalling the uncompromising onslaught of his work with Miles [Davis] in 1970, and his own *Extensions* band in the late 1980s."

Holland attributes this new musical direction to the instrumentation. "I've had at least one or two horn players on every album I've done as a leader," he explains. "But I wanted a different sound for this group and a different context for the music to happen in, so that certainly has opened up some different musical directions."

*Prism* was born when Holland finally managed to coordinate schedules for a reunion with longtime friend and collaborator, guitarist Kevin Eubanks. The two worked together on various projects in the late 1980s, shortly before Eubanks began his fifteen year stint at the helm of *The Tonight Show Band*. "I've always felt a strong affinity for playing with Kevin," Holland says. "The guitar and bass as instruments work so well together, and Kevin has his own sound, his own very recognizable and personal approach to playing, which I love. When we got together it felt like we'd only just been playing together last week. The continuity was there."

Holland had met Taborn at the beginning of the multi-faceted keyboardist's career, when he guested on a recording by saxophonist James Carter, who Taborn was working with at the time. He kept tabs as Taborn went on to play with the likes of Dave Douglas, Tim Berne, Roscoe Mitchell, and as a member of Chris Potter's *Underground*, and invited him to play with the *Dave Holland Big Band*. "He's such a creative musician and his music spans a tremendous amount of styles and space in a very individual way," Holland says. "So he was perfect for *Prism*."

Harland's path first crossed the bassist's on a session with trumpeter Terence Blanchard. "I right away became a fan of his playing," Holland recalls. He called on the drummer for his sextet with three horns and the late Mulgrew Miller on piano, and again for his Overtone quartet with pianist Jason Moran and Chris Potter on saxophones. "I always felt a great connection with Eric," Holland continues. "He's a very warm and all-embracing player, a great communicator and listener with a lot to contribute to the music, so that was a pretty easy decision."

While Holland had an idea for the sound of the band simply from knowing the work of the artists he'd enlisted, but his approach is always to let an ensemble's identity evolve organically from working together and from asking each member to contribute compositions. "You don't really know what it's going to sound like until all the elements come together," he explains. "It's very much a collective experience, putting it together and finding all the different relationships that are going on musically. It's always a surprise once it all starts to come together. And that's the way it should be, I think."

While a definite, decidedly plugged-in personality is established on *Prism*, the music is remarkably diverse, from the teeth-bared grooves of opener "The Watcher" to the intricate rhythms of Taborn's mesmerizing "Spirals." Jim Hendrix (and his influence on Eubanks) inspired Holland to pen the hazy blues tune "The Empty Chair," while Eubanks evokes a church organ by running his axe through a Leslie speaker for the gospel-tinged exuberance of Harland's "Choir." Taborn is at his most delicate on the introspective solo piano intro to "Breathe," a hauntingly ethereal piece by Harland, in contrast to his hard-charging Rhodes on Eubanks' "Evolution."

*Prism* is only the latest vital reinvention in a career full of them for Holland. The native of Wolverhampton, England first came to prominence sharing the stage with Miles Davis during the legendary trumpeter's electric *Bitches Brew* period, and went on to work with such landmark artists as Anthony Braxton, Stan Getz, Cassandra Wilson, Jack DeJohnette, Chick Corea, Joe Henderson, Thelonious Monk, Betty Carter, Pat Metheny, Kenny Wheeler, Bill Frisell, Roy Haynes and Herbie Hancock. Holland has received Honorary Doctorates from the New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music in Boston and Birmingham University in the U.K., and an Honorary Fellowship from the Guildhall School of Music in London.

Holland formed Dare2 Records in 2005 after a long-standing relationship with ECM Records, the label where he had developed into a signature artist. He has since released six albums on Dare2, including the GRAMMY®-award winning *Overtime* (2005), *Critical Mass* (2006) and *Pass It On* (2008). Holland also won GRAMMY® awards for his first big band project, *What Goes Around* (2002), and as part of the supergroup on *Like Minds* (1998), which featured Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Pat Metheny, and Roy Haynes.