



Photos by Jim Goldsmith

CHICK COREA

SOLO PIANO CONCERT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2009
8 PM, FARTHING AUDITORIUM

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Chick Corea - About the Artist

"Life is only worth living when you can have the pleasure of accomplishment. As long as I can take that pleasure, I'll be challenging and fooling around with The Muse." —Chick Corea

At an age when most people have already quietly slipped into retirement, Chick Corea, who turned 68 in June, has no interest whatsoever in idly resting on his laurels. The master pianist-keyboardist-bandleader-composer has not only been a peripatetic road warrior in recent years, but has also revved up his lifelong prolific artistry a notch or two. One of the most creatively restless and indefatigably imaginative jazz artists in the history of the music, Corea defies easy categorization—equally at home in acoustic and electric settings, eager to find new ways of expression with old friends and quick to explore new partnerships with youthful adventure-seekers.

In the past two years alone, Corea has been tilling incredibly fertile soil. He reunited the seminal jazz-rock fusion band **Return to Forever**, with its classic lineup of Stanley Clarke on bass, Al Di Meola on guitar, and Lenny White on drums, for their first tour in 25 years. Hot on the heels of that triumph, he co-led a new ensemble, **Five Peace Band**, marking the first time he and guitarist John McLaughlin have joined forces in a group setting of their own fashioning (they both appeared together on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* album in 1969). But these two powerful accomplishments only scratch the surface of what Corea has been passionately engaged with in recent years. He creates, and he's propelled to do more because, he says, he's at his happiest when faced with new creative challenges.

"Nothing in my creative world has changed in a major way since the very beginning of my music making," says Corea, who started his recording career as a leader in 1966 with *Tones for Joan's Bones*, followed by the classic *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* in 1968. "I still, as always, love pursuing something new and refreshing. I consider that the only experience I want to give others with music is one I'm totally immersed in. I like the audience to sense the challenge and risk that's being taken in the act of improvisation. When that excitement of discovery is communicated through the music, I feel the goal has been achieved—at least for that moment."

As for the variety of disparate projects Corea has been involved in recently, he notes that they all form different facets in his vision as an artist. “Each one has its own life based on the musicians I’m creating with,” he says. “I find it rewarding to make music with so many different and great musicians. It fulfills my desire to learn from them.”

With a seemingly bottomless wellspring of musical ideas, Corea continues to perform with old friends as well as new collaborators. Friendship, he says, is like the act of creation itself—timeless. “I never consider that I’m doing a reunion when I play with old friends,” he says. “That would be like thinking that each night of a tour is a ‘re-union’ of the same band that played last night—kind of a silly idea.”

As for his “new” friends, Corea says, “I’m always learning something new. I heard Béla’s music and wanted to learn something of what he was doing. It’s the same with Stefano. It’s like covertly being an apprentice to different masters all the time.”

In looking back at the last few years, Corea says that there’s no rhyme or reason to how it’s developed. “I have never looked at my own work as a musician to have some logical progression from one thing developing into another,” he says. “I see each new project as a totally new act of creation. I feel blessed to be so rich in such amazingly talented friends and musical partners.”

Corea’s career has been rich and diverse. He collaborated with Miles, forged fusion explorations with **Return to Forever**, performed solo piano improvisations, composed children’s songs and formed new groups (such as his ’80-90s **Elektrik** and **Akoustic** bands) when his creative expression called for the gathering of new mates. At this period of time, Corea continues to create abundantly. “I see a lifetime of an artist as having two opposite vectors,” he says. “One is the pleasure of constantly learning and improving and expanding upon the art form. The other vector goes the other way, and that’s the body as it grows older. The body is born and is young with the vitality of youth, then it grows old, starts to decline then dies. Two opposing trends. The body just needs to be managed as well as possible, but the fertility [of creating] is fortunately all spiritual—and in this sense I feel creatively the best I’ve ever felt.”

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