

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 2011

**VOCALIST CATHERINE RUSSELL'S "STRICTLY ROMANCIN"
AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 14, 2012**

World Village/Harmonia Mundi is proud to announce the release of *STRICTLY ROMANCIN'*, jazz/blues vocalist CATHERINE RUSSELL's fourth solo release for the label, on FEBRUARY 14, 2012. "a masterful singer who knows how to inject her personality into the heart of a great song." (Philadelphia Inquirer)

Strictly Romancin' is a paean to natural attractions; to a lover, an art form, and to one's family heritage. On the album, Catherine explores love's foibles, failures, and bliss, from amorous to humorous, embodying the lost art of song savvy, inhabiting the lyric, and allowing each melody to shine. On this 14 song collection, this ever soulful vocalist takes us on a journey; from Harlem dance hall, to Parisian Café, to Store Front Church, to New Orleans Gin Joint, to Uptown Cabaret, blurring distinctions between the carnal and the eternal, in a musical tour de force.

For these sessions, Catherine reunites with the team from her previous chart topping album, *Inside This Heart of Mine*, including recording engineer Katherine Miller, producer Paul Kahn, and Musical Director/Guitarist/Banjoist/Arranger, Matt Munisteri, who contributes his expansive vision. Also returning are the cream of New York City based players, trumpet great Jon-Erik Kellso, trombonist John Allred, saxophone/clarinetist Dan Block; this time joined by veteran saxophonist/arranger Andy Farber. Joe Barbato on accordion and Aaron Weinstein on violin add a gypsy flavor on two tracks. The rhythm section includes players from Catherine Russell's road tested band, including stride and swing connoisseur Mark Shane on piano, the always solid Lee Hudson on bass, and Mark McClean on drums.

The album opens with "Under The Spell of The Blues"; a newly minted version borrowed from the original Chick Webb / Ella Fitzgerald recording. Alone with heartache at the dawn, Catherine sets a mournful tone with her mesmerizing lament.

The classic Dorothy Fields – Jimmy McHugh composition, "I'm In The Mood For Love", was plucked from the fruitful recording collaboration of Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell. "Everything's Been Done Before", from the same source, is an unusual melody. Both are impeccably rendered by Catherine's lush croon. "Ev'ntide" comes from the same rich period in 1936 when Louis Armstrong was churning out masterpieces for the Decca label, this one written by Hoagy Carmichael, and rarely recorded since. This sunset stroll with that special someone now belongs to Catherine. The sensuous slow dance of "Romance In The Dark", written by the great Lil Green (who coincidentally toured as featured vocalist with the Luis Russell Orchestra in the mid-1940's), dazzles the senses.

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The Ellington-Strayhorn spin on breaking up, “I’m Checkin’ Out Goom’bye”, becomes a hilarious conversation between our femme fatale and hard swinging’ trombonist John Allred, aided and abetted by a jet propelled Matt Munisteri arrangement. “No More” is serious soul cleansing, Catherine’s homage to the late Abbey Lincoln, found on Abbey’s very first studio album.

“Satchel Mouth Baby” is a fun and bouncy infatuation written by Mary Lou Williams (a nod to Louis Armstrong). Catherine first performed this at the Kennedy Center’s Women in Jazz Festival in 2010, and it’s highlighted her repertoire ever since; fitting, as Cat’s mom worked with Mary Lou Williams and her dad with Satchel Mouth.

Cat implores “Don’t Leave Me”, a tune written and first performed by blues singer/pianist Ivory Joe Hunter, whose signature style is expertly channeled by pianist Mark Shane. “I Haven’t Changed A Thing”, once recorded by the hit-maker Kay Starr for Capitol Records, and mysteriously unissued, allows Catherine to reassert loyalty and devotion, while unearthing another gem.

“He’s All I Need”, was written and originally recorded by Gospel- cum early rocker, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and her singing partner of many years, the late Sister Marie Knight. The duet is now reimagined by Catherine & her mother Carline Ray (who turned 86 years young just prior to this recording.)

And who better than Catherine Russell to jump start the spirit of Swing Era giants like Cab Calloway (“Wake Up and Live”), and Henry “Red” Allen (Whatchya Gonna Do When There Ain’t No Swing?), and bring them into the 21st Century with utterly contemporary flair!

Vocalist Catherine Russell is a native New Yorker born to musical royalty. Her father, the late Luis Russell, was a pioneering pianist/composer/bandleader, and Louis Armstrong’s long-time side-kick. Her mother, Carline Ray, is a bassist, guitarist, vocalist, who has performed with Mary Lou Williams and International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Catherine’s professional life began early. After graduating with honors from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, she embarked upon a rich journey backing artists like Carrie Smith, Steely Dan, David Bowie, Cyndi Lauper, Paul Simon, Jackson Browne, Michael Feinstein, and Rosanne Cash.

Her 2006 debut album *Cat*, (World Village/Harmonia Mundi), garnered rave reviews, paving the way for her 2008 sophomore release, *Sentimental Streak*. Catherine has been a guest on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien", PBS-TV’s “Tavis Smiley Show”, and NPR’s "Fresh Air", “Piano Jazz”, Mountain Stage”, “World Café”, “JazzSet”, and “Riverwalk Jazz”. She has won a prestigious German Record Critics' Award and a Hot Club of France Discovery Award. Catherine Russell's third album, *Inside This Heart of Mine*, reached #1 on JazzWeek, Roots Music Report, and I-Tunes Jazz Charts. The acclaim has enabled Catherine to join elite company on various compilations, including the Soundtrack Album for the award winning HBO-TV show "Boardwalk Empire", NPR’s "The New Jazz Divas", "Putumayo Presents Rhythm & Blues", and "Walkin’ and Swingin’" from The Kennedy Center’s Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival.

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Catherine Russell has headlined on three continents, performing at major Jazz Festivals including North Sea, JazzAscona, Montreal, Bern, Rochester International, Panama, and at sold out venues like The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Scullers in Boston, The Dakota in Minneapolis, Dizzy's Club in NYC, and Yoshi's in San Francisco. "Russell emerged as a retro old school vocalist for the ages." (All Music Guide)

A curator of lesser known blues, jazz and swing tunes from the American Songbook, Catherine Russell breathes new life into standards - and "should be" standards. *Strictly Romancin'* establishes Catherine Russell as one of the greatest interpreters and performers of American Popular Song.

"one of the most heralded newly discovered jazz figures in recent years – a key to Russell's success is her honesty." (Bob Blumenthal, Discover Jazz Festival Program Notes)

2012 Tour Dates

Feb 18	North Adams, MA	MASS MoCA
Feb 19	Wellfleet, MA	First Congregational Church
Mar 1	Boston, MA	Scullers Jazz Club
Mar 30-31	New York, NY	Jazz at Lincoln Center/Allen Rm
Apr 13	Washington, DC	Kennedy Center Jazz Club
Apr 28	Syracuse, NY	Palace Theatre

<http://www.worldvillagemusic.com>,
http://www.concertedefforts.com/artists_russ.html
<http://www.catherinerussell.net>

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