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**ACCLAIMED VOCALIST & SONGWRITER**

**LIZZ WRIGHT RECORDS *GRACE*,**

**HER LATEST STUDIO ALBUM PRODUCED BY AMERICANA ICON JOE HENRY**

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**Concord Records Releases *Grace*on September 15, 2017**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –*Lauded American singer **Lizz Wright**’s latest project, ***Grace***, reveals the web of deep-running roots of story and song that bind together the vastly diverse traditions that are the soul of the American South. Wright summons her Southern heritage and the spirit of the earth to usher us into a nurturing space that pulses and hums with the unspoken suggestion that *grace is a cornerstone of our original state of being.*

Produced by acclaimed singer and songwriter **Joe Henry**, ***Grace*** is a stark reflection of Wright’s sense of place and belonging that’s deeply woven into the cultural fabric of America. ***Grace*** is set for release on Concord Records on Friday, September 15, 2017.

***Grace*** was tracked live on Sunset Blvd in Los Angeles alongside a standout cast of musicians at United Recording Studios – the sessions feature her nearly 20-year collaboration with Atlanta-based pianist and choir director **Kenny Banks Sr.**, special guest guitarist **Marc Ribot**, bassist **David Piltch**, guitarists **Chris Bruce** and **Marvin Sewell**, drummer **Jay Bellerose**, and keyboardist **Patrick Warren**. An expansive collection of 10 songs and an original co-write with **Maia Sharp** (“All the Way Here”), ***Grace***is Wright’s testament of devotion to speaking and embodying the fullness of her humanity through music. Her most clear statement to date, ***Grace*** finds Wright standing center stage in the complex dialogues of coexistence and interdependence between all walks of life.

On ***Grace***, the warm and weathered colors of her voice speak with assurance that she is a tireless steward of freedom and change. Leaning into curated classics and contemporary covers, Wright pierces form with gentle and unfettered individuality. By virtue of the bold arrangements, Wright and the musicians depict an unencumbered enclave where grace sparks a feeling of exploration and leads to the discovery of an umbilical place of trust that must be uncovered.

The vast landscapes portrayed on ***Grace*** are brimming with Wright’s singular translations of music by **Ray Charles**, **Allen Toussaint**, **Nina Simone**, **Sister Rosetta Tharpe**, **k.d. lang**, **Bob Dylan**, **Frank Perkins**and **Mitchell Parish**, as well as emerging artists **Rose Cousins**and **Birds of Chicago**. From a body of about 70 covers collected primarily by Joe Henry, 10 works were selected that mirror Wright’s rural upbringing and the trail of stories and songs that have brought her to the world stage. Having a strong sense of intention to speak of grace from the inception of the project, Wright forwent writing the title track after hearing “Grace” by Rose Cousins – the first title track Wright didn’t compose from her catalogue of six studio recordings.

***Grace*** opens with “Barley,” a song penned by Birds of Chicago based on the traditional blues format of word repetition. With its sweeping march and repeating phrases, “Barley” has Wright churning an ancestral force of affirmation and encouragement.

Spanning the entire album, Wright culls inspiration from the 2015 documentary, ***What Happened, Miss Simone?***, where Simone states in an interview segment, “It’s the duty of an artist to respond to the times.” With her rendition of “Seems I’m Never Tired Lovin’ You,” Wright renders a patient and affectionate statement to reflect her life as an American in 2017.

For the Sister Rosetta Tharpe song, “Singing in My Soul,” she channels Tharpe’s conviction that there’s an outpouring of song that can be voiced in the world at any time and despite the times. Joe Henry’s years of friendship and collaboration with Allen Toussaint brought “Southern Nights” to the pre-studio listening session. Allen’s spirited trail of rural imagery made “Southern Nights” the song that felt like home.

Ray Charles’ “What Would I Do” brings a swinging Georgia gospel feel to ***Grace*** with Kenny Banks’ southern church piano work and bold choir arrangements bolstering Lizz’s swelling vocals. “Stars Fell on Alabama” is a romantic account of the spectacular Leonid meteor shower of 1833 and has since been covered by over 100 artists. Wright uses the standard to relish in the sentiment that it’s good to take your time when you’re lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.

Dylan’s “Every Grain of Sand” found Wright singing through stacked frames of poetry where bliss and misery overlap to reveal the human experience in a tender light. Wright’s interpretation of k.d. lang’s “Wash Me Clean” is a portrayal of intimate communion, mixing the two worlds of sensuality and prayer. ***Grace***concludes with “All the Way Here,” Wright’s co-write with Maia Sharp depicting how our names carry both the meaning of who we’ve been and the story of what we have become.

“Lizz Wright and I have been friends for nearly fifteen years; I’ve hungered for the chance to stand in service to her as she sang, so powerful do I find the expression of her humanity,” says Joe Henry. “It was and remains an honor to have been Lizz’s scout along the journey of ***Grace***. And in such dark times, we are all as musicians called to answer brutality with wild and inclusive beauty. When Lizz now sings, I am allowed to feel by extension that I am doing something of my part. What a gift that has been to me; what a gift she offers all.”

***Grace*** is a homecoming for Wright; a rite of passage that traces the landscape between her Blue Ridge Mountains home and the storied lands of her family in central and South Georgia and along the Georgia Sea Islands.

For her return, Wright and photographer **Jesse Kitt** set out on a seminal road trip. The two women course down rural pathways to chronicle a myriad of the kinds of places and faces that encompass the album ***Grace***. Kitt beautifully documented Wright’s reunions with family members, neighbors, mentors and encounters with strangers. In an effort to “hear the true voice of the south at this moment” for themselves, they rambled along farmlands, back porches, sandy beaches, and the bustling Atlanta streets as Wright conversed with the people. She and Kenny Banks Sr. also recorded with a choir featuring powerful singers from Atlanta’s local churches for three songs on ***Grace***(“Grace,” “What Would I Do,” “Seems I’m Never Tired Lovin’ You”).

***Grace***is a proclamation to unearth our fundamental kindness and generosity. It sets forth a real invitation to openly contemplate our humanity. In her commitment to foster a more courageous, equal and tolerant society, Wright is plugged into several programs and endeavors that call for her engagement as a song and essay writer, a board member and a storyteller. From the experience of the humble country dinner with her friends and neighbors in the mountains, Wright is reminded of the impact of simple acts of sharing each other’s presence, without agenda. She realizes the meaningful and effective work of just being a good neighbor. Within these small and common gestures is a model of effectiveness for every large endeavor and project for social change.

“In this day it’s nearly a revolutionary act to stand deep in unconditional love, to abide in fearless belonging and to embrace our inescapable tenderness,” says Lizz Wright.

Lizz Wright and her band will tour in select North American and international markets in the autumn of 2017, presenting a full multimedia production of photographs captured by Jesse Kitt as a backdrop to the live performance of ***Grace***.

**Tracklisting:**

1. Barley

2. Seems I’m Never Tired Lovin’ You

3. Singing in My Soul

4. Southern Nights

5. What Would I Do

6. Grace

7. Stars Fell on Alabama

8. Every Grain of Sand

9. Wash Me Clean

10. All the Way Here

**More Info:**

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