FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***OPIUM MOON* ON THE RISE**

**WITH EPONYMOUS DEBUT RELEASE**

**International Quartet’s First Album from Be Why Music on July 13**

***"Opium Moon’s debut album is a sublime and sensual brew of strings, percussion and bass that transports the listener to a musically soulful Shangri-La.” – Victoria Looseleaf, ArtNowLA***

Sensuous and hypnotic, elegant yet deeply emotional, the music of **Opium Moon** evokes the mysteries of ancient worlds while remaining thoroughly contemporary. The Los Angeles-based ensemble’s cinematic soundscapes draw upon the virtuosic skills and diverse ethnic backgrounds of its members: Iranian *santoor* master **Hamid Saeidi**, innovative Israeli bassist **Itai Disraeli**, sought-after American percussionist **M.B. Gordy**, and the exceptionally expressive Canadian-American violinist **Lili Haydn**, whose passion and fluid mastery of her instrument enchants in every song.

In five original, long-form compositions, the four master players craft a striking sonic *chiaroscuro*; the dramatic counterpoints of viscerally resonant percussion and driving yet subtle fretless bass underpin and carry the music forward with mesmerizing rhythms, while the shimmering delicacy of the *santoor* – a 100-stringed Persian hammered dulcimer – and the soaring voice of Haydn’s violin (and lilting vocals on two songs) deliver supple melodic contrast. With compositions that meld sacred/classical traditions of both East and West with trance-inducing, ancient grooves, the result is at times both stately and rapturous, a sultry and passionate instrumental music that seems to emanate from a profound, even carnal wellspring.

Lili Haydn says, “In this era of ‘fake news,’ I began to feel that words no longer seemed to matter.

I lost my faith in my protest songs and threw myself into creating an album without words, one which was simply an embodiment of the peace and inclusiveness I wanted to see in the world.  In these polarized and frightening times, simply making beauty – and loving across boundaries – is a revolutionary act.”

“The most sacred prayers in Islam and in Judaism -- *La ilaha illallah* and the *Shema* – are both affirmations of the oneness of God, that everything is Divine. It is in this spirit of inclusiveness that we dive into the unknown together, making peace through harmony and fluid composition.”

The band based their name *Opium Moon* – as well as their ethos as a group with members from Iran, Israel, the U.S., and Canada – on a poem by the great Sufi poet Hafiz*: “The bird’s favorite songs/You do not hear/For their most flamboyant music takes place/When their wings are stretched/Above the trees/And they are smoking the opium of pure freedom…/I once asked a bird/”How is it that you fly in this gravity/Of darkness?”/She responded,/”Love lifts Me.”*

Bassist Itai Disraeli, however, comments that the band’s music “is not about opium! It’s about mindfulness, clarity of vision, and heart. This world is so filled with hate and division; this is peace music, about connection and deep humanity. For each of us, there is some of our best work on this record – because it was born of love, humility, and respect for each other’s rich cultural legacies.”

Lili Haydn was born in Toronto, Ontario (she holds dual Canadian/U.S. citizenship) and moved with her mother, the groundbreaking comedienne Lotus Weinstock, to Los Angeles as a child. An NPR favorite *(“Heifetz meets Hendrix”),* she has five solo albums to her credit, has scored 15 feature films and documentaries, and is also known for her collaborations both in the studio and on tour. She has played with, sung with, and opened for everyone from Herbie Hancock, Sting, Roger Waters, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, and Josh Groban to the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, George Clinton’s P-Funk Allstars, Hans Zimmer, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Vienna Opera House, and the Hollywood Bowl, and her work has been featured in more than 50 films. *Rolling Stone* called her music “fiery and virtuosic” – and George Clinton dubbed her “the Jimi Hendrix of the violin.” A dedicated humanitarian and social activist with a degree in political science from Brown University, Lili has presented three TED talks and performs regularly at benefits for such organizations as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and The Feminist Majority.

Tehran native Hamid Saeidi studied santoor in the Radiff system of Persian classical music with Iran’s famous teacher Madjid Kiani, then went on to attend The Iranian Academy of the Arts, studying composition under the music masters Farhad Fakhredini and Vartan Sahakian.  Hamid has been acclaimed for his performances in Iran, Greece, Ireland, Germany, Canada, Turkey, Malaysia and the U.S. He has scored over 30 films, TV programs, dance and theatrical presentations, receiving awards at the Beirut Film Festival in 2002, the Iran TV festival in 2002, 2004 and 2007, and at Iran’s Society of Critics of Theatre in 2005.  In recognition of his work, The Farhang Foundation in Los Angeles has twice commissioned his original multimedia compositions for their annual celebratory Nowruz events.

Itai Disraeli, now based in Los Angeles, was raised in one of Israel’s oldest kibbutz communities, the Mishmar-Ha’Emeq commune in the valley of Armageddon near Nazareth. Co-founded by his grandfather in the 1920s, it was among the non-religious, utopian social experiments in 20th century Palestine that focused its youthful members on a just, peaceful life of sharing, land cultivation, and tolerance. The world of Itai’s youth had no money, no locked doors, no crime.  But he left for the U.S. with his young child when Iraqi bombs rained down, “because you can’t put a gas mask on a baby.” An acclaimed, innovative bassist and composer, he co-founded the genre-bending band Maetar, has played with Jackson Browne, Larry Coryell, and Nishat Khan, among others, and founded the music program at Los Angeles’ acclaimed Wildwood School.  His music has been licensed for TV and film, and he is active with humanitarian and peace organizations, believing that music has the power to heal and connect.

Percussionist M.B. Gordy, in whose hands ancient percussion instruments take on a seductive, almost mystical power, has played with such diverse artists as Beck, Frank Zappa, Michael Buble, Green Day, The Doobie Brothers, Josh Groban, Bill Withers, Guns and Roses, Neil Diamond, My Chemical Romance, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and The National Symphony.  With an M.A. from California Institute of the Arts and intensive study of ethnic percussion, he has worked with producers Peter Asher, Don Was, and Rob Cavallo, to name a few. His groove has been heard in over 300 top box office films, including the *Harry Potter* series, *Frozen,* and th*e X-Men* series, and he has played drums for numerous television shows -- *Mad Men*, *The Mentalist*, *The Tonight Show*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Good Morning America*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel* and many more. M.B. has also performed in theatrical productions of *The Lion King*, *The Color Purple*, *West Side Story*, *Camelot*, and *Bring It On*.

The four musicians of Opium Moon are a global intersection of powerhouse talent who work together with spontaneity and intuition, forging an exotic, richly articulated sonic journey that conjures ancestral pasts but uplifts and inspires with contemporary rhythms and rhapsodic melodies, masterfully performed. Malibu Arts Journal called it *“a sound that’s biblical yet carnal...like something born from the underlying forces of sensuality."*

Opium Moon’s eponymous debut album will be released on July 13, 2018 on the Be Why Music label, distributed through ADA/Warner. The digital single of “Caravan” is available as of June 15th, with Academy Award-nominated *Genghis Blues* director Roko Beliç directing a video of the song.

Stay tuned; **Opium Moon** is on the rise…

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**OPIUM MOON TRACKLIST:**

1. Gravity = Love
2. Drunk With The Great Starry Void
3. How Can I Pray When The Beloved Is All I See?
4. When I See You Naked I Smell The Earth
5. Caravan

Opium Moon download link mp3s: <https://we.tl/DQ3Qo9PyMd>

[www.opiummoon.com](http://www.opiummoon.com/) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBEzWI3MEUc

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