

# SJM

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# SJM

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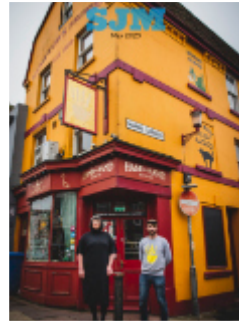
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A man with dark hair and a beard is shown in profile, playing a light-colored hollow-body electric guitar. He is wearing a dark, patterned button-down shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a large, dark green, curved structure and a body of water. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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# The Perceived Effect of Brexit on UK Musicians and the Industry

Emre Ramazanoglu

Pretty much every UK touring musician has been dreading the enacting of Brexit and the well-publicised removal of free movement and the opportunity to work in our vast neighbour's territories. Rather than just facilitate a doom-laden onslaught of detail regarding the folly of Brexit, I contacted various musicians, and experienced industry figures, about their feelings and opinions on this slowly unfolding steamrolling of our industry that is Brexit.

Martin France (professor of drums at the Royal Academy of Music and renowned Jazz drummer)

is particularly worried by the return of carnets; he remembers the huge delays and hassle they used to be. Factoring in the extra days needed to compensate for potential delays will likely make many tours unviable. He is worried that EU promoters won't book UK acts.

Ian Smith (of Frusion and Fizzion agencies and founder of [ukeartswork.info](http://ukeartswork.info)) says:

"We are at the moment in the midst of a perfect storm of Covid and Brexit related diminution of freedom of movement for the creative arts industries in all its glory. From a UK perspective, it's easier for

EU musicians to come in but still faced with extra administration and costs involving carnets/certificates of sponsorship and in the other direction of course a very varied picture for touring the EU. In my opinion this reduces opportunities for audience, opportunities for musicians both for live performance and collaboration, all in all a loss loss situation. That this could have been avoided is not now the issue, what is the issue is the rapid road to working with what we have and improving the situation as quickly as possible, which from recent press reports and the imminent debate in parliament this has caught not only the industry's eye but also the public. We can only hope this is made easier very very soon."

Dan McDougall (Producer, composer and touring drummer for Liam Gallagher) noticed an immediate effect of Brexit when trying to get his studio up and running:

"I ordered a piece of equipment essential for the work I do, through a UK representative at the beginning of January. Two weeks go by and it turns out it was being shipped from Bulgaria and has been seized. I've now been informed I need to apply for something called an EROI number giving every detail under the sun which I do not have and assume I'll be paying some kind of import tax on top, if this piece of equipment even makes it to me. How this helps anybody at all I don't know. The company may lose the sale, I may



Idris Rahman by Lisa Wormsley

lose money, I have lost work as a result of the delay.”

Idris Rahman (saxophonist and educator from Soothsayers, Ill Considered, Wildflower and many more) raises worrying issues surrounding touring and promotion:

“In order to create a demand for bands to tour in EU countries in the first place, those bands will have already had to have sold CDs/vinyl to those countries. This in itself has become extremely costly since January 1st. EU customers are reporting having to pay heavy customs duties to receive vinyl and CD packages, in some cases doubling the cost. Vinyl is already costly for the band to manufacture and customer to buy, but with these increases there is very little chance business can continue for most small to medium acts. Large distributors with warehouses in different countries can probably override some of these issues, but for the independent bands or artists, for which Europe was a significant market that kept them afloat, they are not going to be able to continue to do business in the way they have.”

Fred Bolza (former VP of Strategy & Marketing for Sony and now head of New Soil Records) says:

“It seems ironic to me that in the quest for sovereignty this country has chosen a path of isolation - a form of cultural lockdown that runs contrary to the creative power that is contained within it. Alongside the

structural challenges the pandemic has posed to the economics of music and how it creates and distributes value, we now have to overcome the self-inflicted challenge of how to export that value - a value which is so frequently heralded as being one of the UK's sources of competitive advantage. I do not ask this government to understand the value of culture as art but, at the very least, they should be capable of comprehending its economic power as well as how it drives equity in 'brand Britain' and doing everything in their power for it to travel freely far and wide. The returns will far outweigh the smaller 'gains' of being masters of their own (shrinking) domain.”

Tamar Osborn (independent saxophonist and leader of modern improv group Collocutor) highlights another common concern amongst UK session players:

“On a related note, experience has shown that in the past it has been fairly common for solo American artists to book UK bands and touring crews for European sections of international tours (instead of bringing American teams), to minimise visa complications and language barriers. I can imagine that if UK musicians and crews now need different visas or work permits, and carnets, for each European country this will no longer be the case (i.e., the artists will book teams based in mainland



UK crew and sound system (NCA) at Outlook Festival, Croatia by Lisa Wormsley

Europe instead).”

Paul James

([www.blowzabella.co.uk](http://www.blowzabella.co.uk)) offers a slightly more positive perspective:

“Having toured in Europe for 35 years Brexit is a tragedy not just for musicians but every kind of cultural interchange. History tells us that countries prosper when they make it easier to trade with their nearest neighbours and suffer when they make it harder for themselves. It's a triumph of emotion and ideology over practical common sense. The Government has had 4 years to negotiate a deal. Doing it at the last minute feels like hubris. Add to that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on everybody, and it looks like an act of wilful self-harm which was

completely unnecessary. I'm less worried about us musicians, we'll do what we always do and adapt to survive. It's a creative industry capable of imaginative solutions. And the blocks on free-er movement aren't sustainable. Things will loosen up in time because it's in everyone's interest that they do in the longer-term. The bigger picture is that Covid-19 is more of an existential threat to cultural organisations than Brexit, which history will judge as something negative but more survivable.”

Small developments are occurring such as temporary unilateral decisions by some nations to allow visa-free 90-day access for musicians as well as the possibility of

carnet-free access to the EU if travelling solo with one instrument for example. These concessions, while welcome, are still underpinned by uncertainty and instability; tours are booked, at the earliest, months in advance, and larger ventures sometimes years ahead; it's hard to see how we can function properly under these restrictions. We are, however, resilient as an industry and as people so I'm sure we'll make the best of it. Making the best of it, however, was not how Brexit was sold and the stress and onerous administrative burden (for absolutely no benefit) that we must now live with needs to be shown loudly and constantly to be the folly which the

majority of us have said it always would be.

Current information on what permits are required for musicians working in the EU are needed, per member state, can be found here:

<https://www.ism.org/advice/eu-work-permit-requirements-for-musicians>

**Emre Ramazanoglu**

Emre is a producer/mixer/performer based in London. He has worked with a wide variety of artists:

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# Jazz Essentials

**Ahmad Jamal**  
*At The Pershing Lounge 1958*  
(American Classics)

In the mid-1950s, Pittsburg-born pianist Ahmad Jamal was competing in an overcrowded field. His first trios featured guitar and bass, in the traditional style of the famous Nat King Cole trio of the 1940s with guitarist Oscar Moore, but in 1957 his style changed when drummer Vernell Fournier replaced guitarist Ray Crawford, bassist Israel Crosby remaining in post. The big time beckoned.

Jamal's break occurred in 1957 when his trio became the house band at Chicago's Pershing Hotel. It was here, on 16–17 January 1958, that his trio recorded a total of 43 tracks, of which, unfortunately, only 19 have survived. Eight appeared on *At The Pershing: But Not For Me* (Argo). The album was a jazz phenomenon, climbing to number three in the Billboard Hot 100 and staying in the charts for 107 weeks. Its successor, *Jamal At The Pershing* (Argo), which appeared in 1960 and contains the remaining 11 extant tunes, continued to raise Jamal's profile. DownBeat called it all cocktail music, but noted its influence on other musicians, notably Miles Davis, who praised Jamal's rhythmic sense and "concept of space, his lightness of touch, his understatement."

The repertoire was surprisingly mainstream, with a predictable choice of standards, although at often surprisingly different tempi than usual, a single nod to more modern tastes in Dizzy Gillespie's *Woody 'n*



*You*, a quick take of *Music! Music!* *Music!*, a pop song sung by Teresa Brewer in 1949, the soon-to-be famous *Poinciana*, Jamal's signature tune, and no Jamal originals. But it is not the compositions that matter, but what Jamal does with them. His touch is disciplined and minimal, his melodic statements calligraphic rather than effusive, his use of space a defining feature. Israel Crosby and Vernell Fournier both motor with intent, Crosby's walking bass lines a joy to hear.

Numerous compilations of this and other live Jamal sets have appeared over the years, but this digitally remastered edition, released under the aegis of American Classics, has the stamp of authority. It makes available all 19 extant recordings, as well as a condensed single version of *Poinciana* and its original drum-less studio version recorded back in 1955 in New York with Ray Crawford. As the epitome of cool jazz, this live set defined the future of the piano trio.

**Simon Adams**

# Tom Remon

Interviewed by Patricia Pascal



Emerging young guitarist, Tom Remon is releasing his debut album with Jim Mullen, legendary guitarist and an understated supporter of youth talent. The album is played in a duo format of only guitars and is called *Duality*. It will be out on March 5th on Lunaria Records.

*Duality* sounds like an intimate musical conversation between two like-minded and supportive friends.

I know there's a generation gap and a whole life of experiences separating Jim Mullen and Tom Remon, now this beautiful egoless collaboration transcends all that. In the end, what stands out above all is mutual respect and an unconditional love for the instrument they share.

Tom Remon tells us a bit more about his journey and this new album with Jim Mullen.

### **How did your musical journey start?**

I grew up as a very small child listening to my dad's CD collection of music he used to listen to in the early 90s - albums like *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* (RHCP), *Full Moon Fever* (Tom Petty), *The Black Album* (Metallica), *Rage Against The Machine's* first album, etc. So I have always been surrounded by music.

### **When did you start playing the guitar?**

By age 11, I picked up trying to play the guitar after hearing Hendrix for the first time and got lessons at high school by a guy called Carlos Olmos who later introduced me to jazz guitar when I was 15/16. It was around this time I started going to Tomorrow's Warriors. Eventually I ended up in Binker Golding's youth ensemble - which was some of the best musical education I had ever

received. Binker was an amazing example of someone to aspire to as a musician. I also made amazing friends in the Tomorrow's Warriors circle (amazing musicians and people such as Hamish Moore, Joe Elliot, Sam Jones, Zoe Pascal, Laurence Wilkins, and Patrick Boyle).

Throughout that time as well, I have received incredible and real heartfelt support from Gary, Jeanine, Steve Williamson, and Denys Baptiste from Tomorrow's Warriors. Patricia Pascal from JazzNewBlood and Gordon and Jilian Weddurburn from GW Jazz. All three organizations are pivotal to the future of jazz in the UK!

From age 19, I enrolled at Middlesex University and received amazing lessons from legends such as Gareth Williams, Dave Ohm, Nikki Iles, Rob Townsend, Chris Batchelor, Hannes Riepler and Kate Williams.

### **I know you are of Israeli origin. What role do your roots play in your music?**

That's an amazing question, I believe some people are actively and more artistically conscious of it than others - however, I also believe whether we like it or not we play like who we represent as human beings – I feel we really do play our lives through the instrument which must have something to do with our roots and upbringing!

My predominant roots are Israeli however I have never gone about learning traditional Israeli music as of yet – and I have massive respect for those that incorporate elements of their roots actively in their music. I wish I could do it. I do love 'world music', I love Hindustani music, music from Mali, music from Soweto, music from Brazil etc.

### **Who inspires you and what are you**



Photo: Patricia Pascal

### listening to at the moment?

Everyone that knows me knows I'm a massive Peter Bernstein freak, I can't get enough of his playing – his playing touches me so much – his feel, his sound, his chords, his ideas to me are perfect! I love Wes Montgomery for all the same reasons (he's the deepest) I love all the great guitar players - Grant Green, Tal Farlow, Hendrix, Albert King etc - I also love Ali Farka Toure's music especially the albums *Niafunke* and his playing on Corey Harris' *Mississippi to Mali*. Anything with Kenny Kirkland, Jeff Tain Watts, Wayne Shorter, Brazilian music, Common (the rapper), Megadeth... I could go on!

### How did you connect with Jim Mullen and how did the duo album idea come about?

I asked Jim for a couple of guitar lessons at the end of 2019/start of 2020 and I recorded some of me and Jim playing together on my phone.

During the start of the first lockdown, I showed the recordings to a mutual friend of mine and Jim's, an amazing guitarist called Bernie Holland (who is an unsung UK guitar legend – played with Mose Allison, toured with Georgie Fame, Van Morrison, Danny Thompson) and he suggested that we both do a recording together!

One day a few months later I was in a bad mood for whatever silly reason so I decided on a whim to give Jim a ring and ask him if he was interested – to my amazement he agreed, so we set up a date at my friend's home studio in August and did the recording in a day!

## Tell me about the repertoire and the process of choosing it?

We both chose collectively – we both agreed on my originals and I brought in a couple of ideas and so did Jim and we took it from there!

All the originals are mine – a lot of the standards on the album are somewhat arranged by Jim. We did his arrangement of *East of the Sun* as a samba with the Barney Kessel tag, his slight reharmon of *Like Someone in Love*, and his idea of *Whisper Not* in 5/4. We did Jim Hall's arrangement of *With A Song in My Heart* which I was terrified of doing – because it's so beautiful – its Jim Hall all over! Wasn't sure if I was at all capable of capturing or encompassing the heart and beauty he put into music!



## How was the experience of recording with a guitar legend like Jim Mullen?

It was really interesting – I was a bit cranky in the morning as my wrist was in agony and I received some news as well that annoyed me – however, Matt the engineer and Jim just put me at ease (without even realising) just through their nature as amazing human beings!



Once we were set up, we fired through each track – and did the majority of the album in one take! It was an absolutely unbelievable experience being up close to such a master and legend of the instrument and watching him nail every tune, with a beautiful big sound that really speaks out, the heaviest feel I have ever witnessed, and the most tasteful and beautiful melodies and the most killing lines that always catch you by surprise.

Jim Mullen is an unbelievable force of nature and I had to pinch myself realising I was able to witness that up close. Last but not least, his playing is so good it comforts you, and you play so much better than you do normally.

## Can we expect a live concert of the duo in the future?

I really hope so, myself and Lunaria Records are trying to put a small tour/run of gigs together – It's been so difficult because of Covid. Touch wood we can make it work somehow!

The album *Duality* by Tom Remon and Jim Mullen is released by Lunaria Records on 5<sup>th</sup> March.

# Olie Brice

Interviewed by  
Charlie Anderson



## How did the Palindromes project come together?

It was mainly through chatting to Percy Pursglove. We both have strong working relationships with Paul Dunmall and Jeff Williams, being in different bands with them. Although they overlapped we realised that Paul and Jeff had never really played together. So we thought that would be quite a special thing to bring together. They're both the same age and there's loads of people in common that they've worked with over the decades. They both come from that post-Coltrane tradition but they've not actually done anything together. We both thought it would be really lovely to do something and then it all just fell into place very easily. As soon as we discussed it I found a couple of gigs, and Percy found a couple of gigs, and it just seemed to work. Everyone was excited by it. And it ended up being an absolute pleasure, and I recorded all of the gigs, which gave us the choice of which one to release as an album.

## How do you know Percy Pursglove?

I can't remember how I initially know him. I've known him for years. We've never done loads of playing together, just some odd bits and pieces here and there. I've had good links to the Birmingham scene for quite a long time. I've never lived there or had any other connection to the city, maybe it was through Mike Fletcher. When we *have* played together we've got on really well, musically and personally, and we've talked about doing something more ongoing. I guess for both of us Paul and Jeff are people who are really great and who we've worked with in a variety of ways, and we've played together in Paul's project.

## What was it like working with Paul Dunmall and Jeff Williams?

Both Paul and Jeff are really significant figures, both in music and in my personal growth. It's really special to have the opportunity to play with them a lot over a long time. I thought it was an exciting thing to do and quite an important combination. It's something that I really cared about.

It was just as much fun as I'd hoped it would be. Both Paul and Jeff really seem to love playing together and they're both in really good form and really up for it. It's definitely something I hope to do again when we start gigging again.

## I see there's also an album you're on with drummer Eddie Prévoist, *The Secret Handshake with Danger, Vol. 1*.

That was the last thing that I did before the first lockdown last March. Henry Kaiser was over doing a variety of different recordings. I'd never actually met Henry before but we got brought together by the producer Ned Pettersen and I ended up doing a whole week with Henry in different combinations, which have been coming out on different labels. There's that one with Eddie and N.O. Moore on guitar and Binker Golding on tenor. We also did an amazing thing of three guitars and me with Ray Russell, who lives just outside Eastbourne. He's been on the jazz and improv scene since the Sixties. He's an amazing player. And then John Russell, who just passed away sadly. That was quite an amazing thing to be part of. John was already very, very ill but he was able to do it and played really beautifully.

There's also a rockier, full-on guitar quartet with Ray Russell, Henry and Will Glaser on drums.

There's a whole series of releases that came from the same week of doing things.

### **Tell us about your Radar Commission piece that you've composed.**

I got commissioned by Jazz South. They have a series of commissions called Radar, where they commission artists to write music during lockdown. I wrote a piece for Jason Yarde who is also in Hastings, and Nicholas Malcolm, a trumpet player in Bristol. As a streamed performance of a new piece, unfortunately we haven't been able to do it yet because Jason got ill and then there's been lockdown so it's meant postponing the session. As soon as we can all come together in one room we'll do a recording and filming of that. All the other people who got that commission have theirs online.



### **How did you first get into playing double bass?**

I came to it pretty late but I was really drawn to the sound of it. I knew I wanted to play double bass for years before I did. I was 22 by the time I actually started playing. I played guitar but not very seriously, just punky guitar in bands and stuff like that. I was a big fan of jazz, free jazz and freely improvised music from a young age. I dreamed of playing the double bass but hadn't done anything about it. I thought it

was probably too late by that stage because it was very expensive and I'd already got to my twenties. When I got together with my partner we were talking about 'what do you want to do with your life?' sort of conversation. So I said I wanted to be a free jazz double bass player but I've probably missed the boat on that one. But she really encouraged me to do something about it straight away. If that's what you want to do then try it. I hired one and fell in love with it immediately. Almost immediately I became really serious about it. At the time I was on the dole and living in a squat so I was basically aiming to more or less full time and throw myself in that totally. I was 22 then and I've been playing for 18 years now so it became my life almost straight away. That old joke about once you learn

where two strings are you get your first gig. That was definitely the case for me.

What's amazing is that you get the chance to play with people who are so much better than you, really early on. I had some really lucky opportunities.

### **What was it specifically that attracted you to the double bass?**

First and foremost the sound. I remember on a few records just hearing it and really loving that big warm sound. I also like the instrument's personality. Rather than being out in the front dominating proceedings, I like being involved in



structuring the music, steering the music. I think it suits me as a person. I'm not the sort of bass player who very much stays in the background and fills that historic role. I've always been quite an assertive bass player but at the same time it gives you that position steering the overall picture of things.

But the first thing, and still the biggest thing, is the sound.

### **Have you ever been interested in playing another instrument?**

I loved playing guitar as a teenager but never felt like it was really the instrument for me. My favourite instrument of all is the tenor saxophone and a bit of me has always imagined if I'd been a saxophonist. In a lot of ways I'm also glad not to have taken on all that pressure.

### **When you're performing, what sort of feeling do you get when you play?**

An interesting question, and a challenging one to put into words. I guess when it's really great you're not involved in any conscious decisions or thinking. That's the feeling of playing that I totally love, when you're totally swept up, building something together and going with it. I've had the sensation on occasion, on really good gigs where the bass stops being something physical, you get past that stage. You're doing this thing where it all just flows. The character of the instrument not quite disappears, you just stop dealing with it at that level. The best situation I guess is where

there's no conscious thought or no conscious decision making going into it. I'm lucky enough to mostly play music that I really love, and really want to play.

### **You also run your own record label?**

Well, it still feels like it's in the experimenting stage of trying out whether that's the right way to go. The first one we did I was pleased with how it went: we got a good response, decent sales, nice reviews. I guess I like things being in my control, not waiting and making decisions about scheduling and when it's going to come out, rather than have to wait for ages for other



people.

I think that world has gone anyway. Very few labels have any budget or that thing of record labels and how they've always worked, it seems that it's increasingly coming to an end. Experimenting with different ways of doing it makes sense. There's also a long history of people involved in free jazz and improvised music doing it themselves. Here and in the States a lot of that's happened all along. I believe in taking responsibility for putting stuff out there.

*The Secret Handshake with Danger Vol. One* is released on 12<sup>th</sup> March on 577 Records.

*Palindromes* is available on West Hill Records via BandCamp.

<https://oliebrice.com>

# Big Band Scene

Patrick Billingham



I was saddened to read in last month's SJM of the passing of the drummer Dave Trigwell. I first met him when he depped with the Sussex Jazz Orchestra. This was in the days before the digital archive of our charts had been completed. And as the pad was not the usual mix of commercial arrangements, his first sight of the music was when he was setting up for the gig. And after a quick look through the programme with the band's then MD, he played as though he had been with the band for years.

As well as his small ensemble work, he played regularly in big bands including The Paul Busby Big Band. And will be sadly missed.



Photo of Dave Trigwell by Patrick Billingham.

I can't help feeling that had the pandemic been better handled, we could have been looking forward to a full big band programme this year. In February last year, Brighton hosted the first UK cluster of Covid-19 cases. Local health teams successfully tracked, traced and quarantined the contacts of the first patients, and the outbreak was contained. We could all breathe deep sighs of relief, and carry on as before.

However when the virus appeared in other parts of the country, the Government decided to take control. Local teams were sidelined and responsibility was contracted out to the likes of management consultants and financial wizards, not necessarily renowned for medical expertise.

The first lockdown successfully reduced the number of cases so that in late July, early August, the official number of positive tests in each of the Sussex local authority areas was down to single figures; comparable with the Brighton outbreak in February. But with the level of testing at that time, according to the Institute of Health Evaluation and Metrics (IHME), the actual number of infections might have been around twelve times higher.

Nevertheless, it is possible that had local testing and tracing been in place as it was in that February, there might not have been a need for the second and third lockdowns. At the time of writing, there is a steady decline in the number of infections. Currently, with increased testing, the IHME estimate is that the actual number of infections is just under three times the reported number. By my estimate, at the present rate of reduction, by the middle of May the number of cases in each district

could be back in single figures. Local test and trace teams could bring that figure down to zero. Big bands could be back in business by June.

All this assumes that other factors such as a successful vaccination programme and avoiding potentially disastrous virus variants, together with an effective quarantine scheme for international travellers, maintain the improvement.

I am not trying to be wise after the event, but rather suggesting that the authorities learn from past experience.

Even then, returning to normal, we can't afford to be complacent. My Australian correspondent tells me he was booked with a band for a weekend out-of-town festival when, in his words, "...preparing for soundcheck, organisers informed us that statewide 5-day full lockdown scheduled and suggested we Melbourne folk get home before curfew or risk being stuck down there until next Thursday or even later. Mad scramble to get home, the ever-worsening traffic as we got closer to town was horrible." Be warned.

Next month: Whatever news there is, with, perhaps, another big band profile. If there is anything such as feedback on this column, that you would like me to include in April's Big Band Scene, please send it to me by Friday 12th March at [g8aac@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:g8aac@yahoo.co.uk).

# Album Reviews



**Greg Osby & Florian Arbenz**  
*Reflections Of The Eternal Line*  
(Inner Circle Music INCM 090CD)

'At first glance, a saxophone-drum duo may seem sparse' says the promotional release for this set of recordings inspired by paintings by the artist Stephen Spicher and recorded in his Basel studio. And in less creatively ambitious hands that might indeed be the case. However, there's a lot more going on here, and both men bring impressive CVs to the project. Though perhaps not widely known by UK jazz fans, Arbenz has a formidable reputation both as a jazz player (Kirk Lightsey, Bennie Maupin, Dave Liebman etc.) and as an orchestral percussionist, and here he's augmented his drumkit with a variety of textural and tuned instruments. Osby hasn't been heard on record since his 2017 collaboration with Tal Cohen but his reputation as a founder member of M-Base Collective is unassailable, and this recording shows his powerful rhythmic accuracy and harmonic imagination are as vital as ever. While there's a high percentage of improvisation in this project, there are clear written parts to tracks like

*Wooden Lines* and *Truth*, both of which feature powerhouse backbeat drumming from Arbenz that meshes with Osby's alternately flowing and fragmentary lines so closely that the overall sound feels full and complete. *Homenaje* has a kind of modified guaguanco feel combined with a keening melody to captivating effect; the extended *Groove Conductor* has a virtuosically creative performance from Arbenz across all manner of percussive textures that develops into a down-home New Orleans type swing under Osby's lines that veer thrillingly from bluesy to abstract; *Passage Of Light* floats soprano sax over chiming kalimba modulations while *Please Stand By* finishes with a typically muscular statement from Osby. Not sparse at all.

## Eddie Myer

*Greg Osby, soprano and alto saxophones; Florian Arbenz, drums and percussion.*





**Olie Brice/Binker Golding/Henry Kaiser/N.O. Moore/Eddie Prévost**  
*The Secret Handshake with Danger,*  
Vol. 1  
(577 Records)

Recorded live and mixed in the studio over a single day, one day ahead of lockdown, these two extended works document a maelstrom of spontaneous composition by these five ferocious musical intelligences. Eddie Prévost has an impressive back history in conceptual improvised music as one of the founding figures of the mighty AMM ensemble; Henry Kaiser is perhaps best known for his series of explorations of Miles' electric legacy in the company of trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, as well as acting as music producer for Herzog's *Grizzly Man* and an occasional side gig as an Antarctic research diver; Binker Golding's tough, chewy tone and muscular attack have fitted seamlessly into any number of diverse projects from his duos exploring contrasting aspects of groove and freedom with Moses Boyd and Elliott Galvin to more conventional sideman gigs with Zara McFarlane and Mr Jukes; bass virtuoso and bandleader Brice, and guitar/effects manipulator N O Moore are both regulars at Cafe OTO. The

long improvised pieces draw inspiration from aspects of Miles' 70s electronica but eschew any kind of steady pulse in favour of surging and retreating tides of density and texture - there are clear links to be drawn with the cataclysmic, thrashy recordings of Sonny Sharrock and similar noiseniks. *Door 1* is a bit more abrasive, with Golding moving between quavery tonal explorations, fragments of actual melody and sheets of noise before the guitar onslaught dominates proceedings, while *Door 2* starts off with a more restrained, textural investigation, that allows Brice's big-toned bass to be heard in duet with Golding through the gurgling electronics, before arriving in much the same place. In conclusion, we are led across a sci-fi landscape of alternately ominous and comical electro wibbles. Enormous.

**Eddie Myer**

*Binker Golding, saxophones; Henry Kaiser, Ismguitar; N.O. Moore, Guitarism; Olie Brice, double bass; Eddie Prévost, drums and percussion.*





**Elina Duni & Rob Luft**  
*Lost Ships*  
(ECM)

It seems like a long time since Elina Duni and Rob Luft delighted us with some of the earliest impromptu lockdown gigs from their London pad, way back in the first Covid lockdown. Anyone suffering from the winter lockdown blues is highly recommended to check out this outstanding collection of songs, released in November on the mighty ECM label. Luft is a wonderfully adventurous musician whose eclectic approach is always tempered by restraint and a natural good taste; his previous albums have been rooted in jazz sensibility while demonstrating a willingness to search beyond the confines of genre. Albanian-Swiss singer Duni is similarly unconstrained by genre: this set of songs mixes original compositions, jazz ballads, Albanian and Italian folk songs, French Chanson and Americana, and manages to unify them into a coherent whole thanks to the players' combined musical vision, at once understated and powerfully atmospheric. *Numb* and *Brighton* showcase their approach at its most fully realised; the former has shades of Joni Mitchell in the melody, but Luft's electronically modulated solo

takes it into a stranger territory, while the latter's gently pulsing 5/4 rhythm recalls Nick Drake. The supporting players blend seamlessly into the mix: Fred Thomas has written in depth about how Joao Gilberto manipulated the subtleties of sound and silence to magnificent effect, and demonstrates how well he has absorbed the concept into his own playing on drums and piano, while Matthieu's flugelhorn provides plaintive, full-voiced solos or evocative textures as required. The mood is consistently pensive but the overall effect is utterly liberating.

**Eddie Myer**

*Elina Duni, voice; Rob Luft, guitar; Matthieu Michel, flugelhorn; Fred Thomas, piano, drums.*



**Kendon/Ryall Sextet**  
*There Will Be Time*  
(BeeBoss Jazz)

This album sets out its stall with aplomb by kicking off with a creative interpretation by bandleader/trumpeter Kendon of the old chestnut *Night And Day* - Ryall's clear, unaffected tones dancing over Pete Hill and Nigel Thomas' punchy rhythm track that moves easily

between 3, 6 and 4 beat measures, with each of the soloists contributing brief but dazzling comments. There's a nice balance of improvisation and careful arrangement in evidence throughout. Kendon and Nicholas blend together in some superhip charts on *There Will Be Time*; Ryall breaks out some airy scat on the effortlessly swinging arrangement of Larry Golding's *Mixed Message* that allows space for succinctly creative statements from bass and drums; Carla Bley's *Lawns* has new lyrics by Ryall, with pianist Scott tempering his Bill Evans chops with some laid back Fender Rhodes for a cool Steely Dan flavour, and a melting tenor solo from Nicholas. The quality of the arrangements really allows the band's strong individual voices to shine on a well chosen programme of covers and originals by Kendon (the title track) and Nicholas (*One January Morning*), with Scott's *Insomnia* a particularly strong contribution that gives Kendon space for a gorgeously brassy, Tom Harrell-ish flugelhorn statement. There's a restraint and economy to the playing that allows Ryall's hip, crisp articulation and precise pitching to take centre stage and gives the album a direct, focussed quality that's often missing from jazz vocal albums; singer and band are evenly balanced, and the quality of playing throughout is quietly excellent. Proceedings conclude with a swinging rendition of Bobby Wellins' *C U B C* with Kendon busting out some lovely bebop and bravura solos from Nicholas and Thomas. Recommended.

### Eddie Myer

*Imogen Ryall, voice; Jack Kendon, trumpet, flugelhorn;*

*Julian Nicholas, tenor sax; Al Scott, piano, Fender Rhodes; Nigel Thomas, bass; Pete Adam Hill, drums.*



### Little North *Finding Seagulls* (April Records)

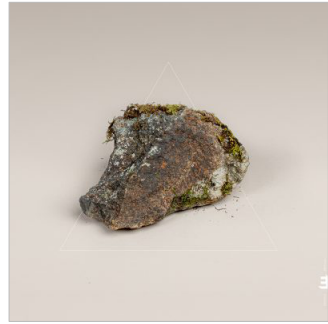
Little North is a piano led trio from Denmark with an album of ten original compositions keeping up the fine tradition of high quality Nordic contemporary jazz. Recorded at The Royal Danish Academy of Music, Studio 3 Copenhagen this is their fourth album release since 2016. The band members who met while studying at a conservatoire in Southern Denmark, are unashamedly minimalistic in approach with an air of nostalgia and reflection in their compositions, which they are able to skilfully transpose into the modern era. Already very popular in their own country, they have also released four singles and were awarded second place in a national competition to unearth young jazz talent.

There are some profound and beautiful melodies throughout this album which shows substance, class and in places becomes almost spiritual. The scene is set well by the brief solo piano opener *Two and*

*Three* that epitomises the elements of time and space that follow. The recording does not excite, it neither needs to or is intended to, because it digs very much deeper into the listening experience in a way that the music of Keith Jarrett for instance often does. One of the longer tracks *And Daughter* is a good example with its bowed bass introduction juxtaposed with the lightness and delicacy of the piano melody supported by some excellent brushwork that all together produce both an ethereal and atmospheric musical landscape. The only time that the total calmness of the proceedings are slightly interrupted is by the more percussive and upbeat piece *The Kite* that has recently been released as a single. In contrast the introduction of the cello on the pensive *Anna* adds an extra warmth and breadth to the overall sound of the band. There is without doubt great potential with these young players, who are already performing at a very high level and are perhaps signalling a path into the future with their performance on the excellent composition *Freyu* which carries not only a masterclass in the art of inventive drumming and group interplay but also flirts on the edges of free form and the avant-garde. One thing is for certain, there is a lot more to come from this excellent young trio.

### Jim Burlong

*Benjamin Norholm Jacobsen, piano;*  
*Martin Brunbjerg Rasmussen, bass;*  
*Lasse Jacobsen, drums. Guest artist:*  
*Anna Rebekka Ross, cello.*



### Fergus McCreadie *Cairns* (Edition Records)

Fergus McCreadie's debut album *Turas* made waves on the scene with its decidedly Scottish take on the European chamber-jazz tradition, taking the impressionistic Nordic approach of Esbjörn Svensson as a foundational document but mixing in a healthy dose of modal Celtic cadences to create a distinctly original sound that won over audiences as well as delivering a clutch of awards. He's back with the same trio for an assured follow-up that blends the same elements with an even greater degree of assurance. There's a relaxed confidence to the way he interpolates space into the dazzling streams of notes in his solo on the title track that indicates an artist in full control of his talents; Bowden and Henderson now sound utterly, intuitively attuned to the leader's every move and respond dynamically and creatively throughout to follow the contours. Bowden's bass solo on *North* is equally confident and creative with a real original turn of phrase and a beautiful tone; Henderson is subtle and supportive, exploring a range of textural possibilities on *Across Flatlands*, and is equally capable of



delivering the necessary fireworks when required. It's a reviewer's cliché to say that this kind of music describes a landscape, and when the artist is Scottish the temptation to evoke rolling moorland, purple heather and majestic lochs is very hard to resist, but in this case the comparison is so accurate that it's justified. *Jig* continues the conscious incorporation of Celtic elements but this is only part of the picture and McCreadie and Co's sophisticated and utterly modern rhythmic, harmonic and textural inventiveness provide the necessary context to make the fusion completely convincing - *Jig's* unexpected development into a powerhouse loping almost-swing modal workout that pulls in sources as diverse as Corea and Mehldau is a case in point. This is no sentimental pastiche. Excellent.

### Eddie Myer

*Fergus McCreadie, piano; David Bowden, bass; Stephen Henderson, drums.*



**Logan Richardson**  
*Afrofuturism*  
(Whirlwind Recordings)

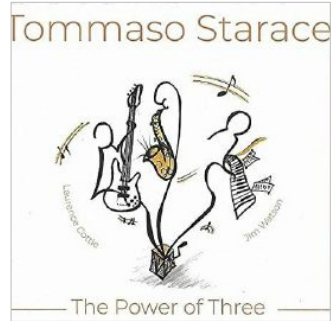
When one thinks or hears the alto

saxophone in a jazz context one may almost instantly think of the great Charlie "Bird" Parker and his mastery of both the instrument and its towering role in the revolution that was the bebop movement. Likewise some might be drawn to the remembrance of Julian "Cannonball" Adderley who took the world by storm for many years with his energetic and joyous virtuosity on the alto sax and his ability to bring that spirited approach to a number of different musical contexts. Both of these figures seem to have been embedded deep in the mind and playing of alto saxophonist and composer, Logan Richardson. So much so that on his new release, entitled *Afrofuturism*, the composer has chosen to dedicate the opening of the album in the form of a short spoken introduction as a salute to both of these legendary figures whilst also giving a quick briefing of the alto's importance in the history and the future of jazz music. After this spoken salute comes the music and it is here that we are shown the versatility of Logan Richardson as both composer, band leader. Straight after the spoken introduction the band kicks it up fullblast with simplistic but powerful melodic phrases from the saxophone with the rhythm section hammering out a driving groove and creating a solid path for the soloist to run freely over. As the album moves on a variety of moods and themes are present from soft balladesque moments to outer space electronic sounds but all brought together in a way that they never clash but strongly complement each other where the electric meets the organic in a sense of true modernism and fusion. Aside from the instrumental innovations there are also beautiful moments on the album

dedicated to the human voice whether it is through a lead vocal as is present on the track *Goodbye, Farewell* or the sweet sounds of multiple voices bringing an almost choir like sound to a few of the chosen pieces. As if this rich variety already present was not enough, track number ten entitled *Blackwall Street* features a piece written for string quartet scratching out an eerie but wonderful arrangement whose sound strongly evokes the string quartets of Bela Bartok. Whether it's for his rich variety as a composer or his broad musical scope as band leader and arranger, *Afrofuturism* is a grand testament to the evolution of jazz and modern music. Logan Richardson has chosen to honour the jazz tradition by bringing it forwards and we hope to hear more from this talented individual soon.

### George Richardson

*Logan Richardson, alto sax; Igor Osypov, guitar; Peter Schlamb, vibes and keys; Dominique Sanders, bass; Ryan J. Lee and Corey Fonville, drums.*



### Tommaso Starace *The Power of Three* (Music Centre BA 420)

Since graduating from Birmingham Conservatoire and Guildhall, Milanese saxophonist and composer Starace has established a reputation as a versatile bandleader in a range of projects that showcase his ability to maintain a high level of creative musicianship while directly engaging the listener with his melodic accessibility. It's a path that has made him a firm favourite with promoters and audiences, and this well-judged latest project should fit right in. It's a live-in-the-studio recording, with the players set up face-to-face without headphones or separation in the Chapel Arts Gallery in Cheltenham and working through a repertoire of standards, latin and funk material with excursions into the works of Ennio Morricone, Italian pop star Pino Daniele, the perennial favourite Stevie Wonder and a single original by Starace himself. The trio are admirable balanced: session legend Lawrence Cottle is solid and swinging, with a smooth full tone that enables him to take beautifully structured guitaristic solos high up the neck when required, notably on Corea's fusion staple *Got A Match*. His pop sensibility combines

perfectly with Jim Watson, another accomplished jazzier who's equally at home on a pop session as playing the 606 with Dave O Higgins (with whom Starace has co-lead a project). His solo on *This Here* is a thing of beauty, concise and artfully paced, and he quietly excels on the gentle original *Nina* written by Starace for his niece. Starace himself displays his clear warm tone on both alto and soprano and blends his mastery of bop language with a direct, romantic melodicism and touches of Sanborn-style funk when required. This is not music that is intended to challenge or push at the boundaries, but rather to comfort and delight; it should find a ready response from Starace's audience in these trying times.

### Eddie Myer

*Tommaso Starace, alto sax; Jim Watson, piano; Lawrence Cottle, bass guitar.*



### Dave Stryker

*Baker's Circle*

(Strikezone Records 8821)

The opening bars of *Tough* put us straight into Larry Young territory, a driving minor key groove with Jared Gold's organ and longtime Stryker

associate/ex-Kenny Garrett drummer McLenty Hunter setting things up for Stryker to show off his updated Kenny Burrell chops. Walter Smith III delivers the Joe Henderson role with his customary poise: his solo on the latin groover *El Camino* is pitched between cerebral and earthy with his customary clear, limpid tone and crisp delivery. *Dreamsong* is a bluesy lope, *Everything I Love* a cool strut through the changes with everyone keeping things at an even temperature while displaying some impressive chops, *Rush Hour* has a twisty theme that would have fit into a late sixties Blue Note session, though with some neat metric modulation to keep things up to date, Smith and Gold really fly on this one. *Inner City Blues* is a tough take on the oft-covered classic that evokes Medeski Martin and Wood with some cool extra breakdowns added. Stryker's tone is fat, his attack is clean and his language on this project shows his lineage to the genre's greats; his laid back octaves on *Love Dance* hark back to Wes, but he's still his own man and this is a very satisfying addition to the genre, delivered with heart and soul and a large measure of understated intelligence. *Trouble #2* is a direct quote from Turrentine which gives Smith a chance to show how down-home he can get within the context of contemporary post-Potter modern tenor playing. Recommended.

### Eddie Myer

*Dave Stryker, guitar; Walter Smith III, tenor sax; Jared Gold, organ; McLenty Hunter, drums; Mayra Casales, percussion.*



**Various Artists**  
**Spiritual Jazz 13 Now! Part One**  
(JazzMan Records)

The term 'spiritual jazz' has been much bandied about of late, in a manner that has not been universally welcomed: a certain amount of suspicion has arisen in some quarters that the concept itself is an intrinsically meretricious piece of marketing-speak and that true spirituality has no need to declare itself. Such an attitude, however justified, will surely be mollified when encountering the contents of this double LP set, as the music itself is generally so unaffectedly sincere as to allay criticism. In general the genre title refers back to the loose, anything-goes attitudes of the late 60s and early 70s when the stern standards of modern jazz had been thoroughly infiltrated by hippie consciousness and sincerity and a kind of blissed-out experimentalism took precedence over rigorous theoretical explorations. Before long of course the experimentalism congealed into its own set of clichés, and the entire scene was rather looked down upon by the establishment until its relatively recent excavation. The classics of the genre can be received as either unjustly neglected fountains of

inspiration or faintly embarrassing relics of an indulgent era, depending on the listeners' tolerance for side-long mellow minor-key jams spiced with tambura, groovy hand percussion and raggedly enthusiastic chanting. There's something in the open-ended directness of the style that appeals today, and this release follows on no less than 12 volumes of historic material from the 50s to the 80s already reissued by Jazzman to include only material recorded over the past 15 years. It's a fascinating overview of how the music has adapted and evolved reflexively: tracks by original operatives like Idris Ackamoor and Steve Reid sound like they've travelled directly from 1973, preserving a certain artless quality, while others like Chip Wickham's *Shamal Wind* and Jamie Saft's *Vessels* wear their influences on their sleeves but sound tidied up for a new generation. There are punchy, focussed efforts like Makaya McCraven's gimbri-driven *Gnawa* or Jimi Tenor's *Suite Meets* alongside deliciously woozy eccentricities like Akeebu's *Slow Sweet Burn*, bigger names like Shabaka Hutchings and Nat Birchall, and generally enough variation on the theme to keep things interesting throughout. And by the end the 'spiritual' tag does genuinely seem justified, as everyone seems like they really mean it - whatever 'it' may be.

**Eddie Myer**

*Various artists including Shabaka and the Ancestors, Angel Bat Dawid, Idris Ackamoor, Nat Birchall, Jimi Tenor & KabuKabu, Chip Wickham, Steve Reid, Makaya McCraven Jamie Saft Quartet and others.*



Ashley Henry at Patterns in 2018 by Lisa Wormsley

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Details are assumed to be correct at the time of publication.

# Pete Recommends...

## Milt Jackson meets...



When I was thinking about my recommendation for this month, I received an email from my friend John Speight. He asked me why I had never recommended one of his very favourite albums, *Bags meets Wes*. After my Gerry Mulligan collection last month this sparked an idea. Milt recorded a number of albums with the greatest musicians of his time. Most of these are well worth a recommendation. So here goes....

### 1. *The Milt Jackson Quartet* (1955)

This selection may not appear to have a special guest, but I have chosen it for two reasons: first, I think it records Milt playing at near his very best; second, Horace Silver is on piano. This line-up [with Kenny

Clarke in place of Connie Kay] might have gone on to be a very successful group featuring Horace's music, but John Lewis replaced him. The rest is history. The single track I would recommend is *I Wonder Why*. There is also a lovely swinging version of Artie Shaw's Tune *Moonray*.

### 2. *Bags & Trane* (1959)

This is wonderful album. I think it is the best of Milt's collaborations. And it is enhanced by the contribution of Hank Jones on piano. John Coltrane had reached the full command of the style of his middle years and solos fluently, whether on the excellent version of *Three Little Words* or Matt Dennis's ballad *The Night We Called it a Day*. Milt and

Hank Jones are not outclassed.

### 3. *Bags and Wes* (1961)

John Speight's recommendation must come next. It certainly matches the standard of the session with Coltrane. Again there is some fine piano. This time it is the beautiful touch and lucid phrasing of Wynton Kelly. There is another fine reading of *Stairway to the Stars*, but I have always enjoyed the minor chords of *Delilah*, where Wes, after a lovely chorded solo, returns after Wynton's two excellent choruses to match him for eloquent simplicity.

### 4. *Bean Bags* (1958)

This is something rather different. Milt got together with two of the finest accompanists around, Tommy Flanagan on piano and Kenny Burrell on guitar, to record a very relaxed session with Coleman Hawkins. The result is very satisfying. The Hawk sounds very much at ease and his contributions seem almost effortless. Listen for example to his support for Milt on the opening chorus of *Close Your Eyes*. This is a fine track, with Flanagan and Burrell soloing simply and effectively. With

Burrell present there were certain to be some blues and the Hawk is both at ease and inventive.

### 5. *Things Are Getting Better – with Cannonball Adderley* (1957)

This album was obviously designed to cater for the taste for

bluesy, soul type music which was emerging in the late 50s. There is fine strong playing by both Milt and Cannonball, for example on the title track. The quality is maintained and enhanced by the presence of Wynton Kelly again. His solos throughout are

examples of his best work - strong, lucid, swinging. My favourite track is the slow swinging version of *The Sidewalks of New York*.

This is just a small sample of Milt Jackson's work with other great musicians. YouTube and the streaming services are full of examples, some of them wonderful videos which capture him in full flight.

Good searching.

**Peter Batten**



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