

The New York Second feat. Teus Nobel – “Music At Night (and Other Stories)”

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Harald Walkate: (p, comp), Vincent Veneman (tb), Jesse Schilderink (ts), Teus Nobel (tp), Mark Alban Lotz (a flt), Thomas Pol (b), Max Sergeant (d).

1. These Are the Chosen Words (6:49); 2. Him, a Bull? Ha! A Bird (5:34); 3. The Bostanian (6:05); 4. The Drowned World (7:00); 5. Music at Night (9:28); 6. No More Epilogues (5:56); 7. The Keys Ain't the Keys No More (6:22); 8. The Rest Is Silence (3:50); 9. The Ayes Have It (7:25); 10. The Drowned World - Reprise (0:38)

The New York Second septet is Holland's latest gift to the modern jazz world. The septet's brain, Amsterdam pianist and composer Harald Walkate, is known in the European jazz scene with his The New York Second quartet and Hadrian's Wall piano-guitar duo. He produced three earlier albums with both of these formations. Walkate has two other hats apart from music. A businessman who helps the financial community to think about world problems and a member of the Board of the Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw.

The album “Music At Night”, named after Aldous Huxley's book of essays, is The New York Second's third album after “Bay of Poets” (2017) and “Emergo” (2020). He continues his poetic music with “Music At Night”, but now in a septet format. Walkate brought together Dutch master musicians with years of experience, and a homogeneous, in-sync, small-orchestra has emerged.

I have known 58-year-old Mark Alban Lotz since the 1990s for his unforgettable interpretations of bass and alto flute. I had the chance to see him live in Istanbul. He was raised in Uganda and Thailand. Thus, we can hear the far-eastern vibes in his music.

Known as a refined trombonist, Vincent Veneman is a performer who has shared the stage with Kurt Elling, Herbie Hancock, Snarky Puppy, Al Jarreau, Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove, The New York Voices, Benny Golson, as well as his own ensemble. He also played with the Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw and the Metropole Orkest.

40 year old Teus Nobel has mastered jazz and classical music on trumpet and flügelhorn. He also won the Edison Award for his sixth album “Saudade”, released in 2020 with Roeland Jacobs.

Rotterdam-based bassist Thomas Pol, tenor saxophonist Jesse Schilderink and Amsterdam-based drummer Max Sergeant have also become shining stars of the Netherlands in recent years.

In his "Music At Night" essays Huxley says, "after silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music." And on the album, the songs of Harald Walkate, in the mood of a soundtrack and with modern chords, drag us into Huxley's dream world...

"These Are The Chosen Words" flows in a "groove" atmosphere with the attacks of drummer Sergeant and the solos of trumpeter Nobel. The hazy sound of the trombone, tenor saxophone and alto flute in the background support this "groove" flow.

"Him, A Bull? Ha! A Bird" is presented with pessimistic tones of wind instruments. The sound reminded me of the orchestration approach of Herbie Hancock's "The Prisoner". Like Hancock, pianist Harald Walkate takes the first solo on this marvelous ballad. Then we hear Schilderink's simple yet soulful solo on the tenor saxophone. Walkate returns to complete the sentence.

"The Bostonian" begins with drummer Sergeant setting the beats and tempo. While pianist Walkate presents the theme, Lotz in alto flute stands out from the accompaniment of wind instruments that I like very much and that provides the impression that an entire orchestra is playing. We are not at all surprised by the beauty of his solo. Drummer Sergeant raises the down tempo with his attacks again. The piece begins as the phrase ends.

With its staccato intro, "The Drowned World" hints at our entry into a haunted world. A first-class Walkate composition that speaks to our day. On the down-tempo we hear Schilderink and Nobel riot. Pianist Walkate makes the final point.

In "No More Epilogues", trumpeter Teus Nobel, pianist Harald Walkate, and Mark Alban Lotz on alto flute reflect the contemporary projection of post-bop with and without accompaniment.

"The Keys Ain't The Keys No More" begins with an enthusiastic lyricism with minimal touches reflecting Walkate's typical style. Despite the fluid tempo driven by the septet, Walkate maintains his lyricism. On trombone, Vincent Veneman develops the piece with his solo. Then we witness Walkate's first-class arrangement with the fanfare of the wind instruments. Again, the last strike belongs to Walkate.

"The Rest Is Silence" begins with trumpet, alto flute, tenor saxophone and trombone in canon. With the addition of the piano, the harmony is completed. This is a short piece without bass and drums.

"The Ayes Have It" is the only classical swing track of the album... In solos we hear Thomas Pol on bass, Harald Walkate on piano, Vincent Veneman on trombone – who all deliver what is expected.

"Music At Night", which gives the album its name, is a modern work by Walkate. Accompanied by Walkate on the piano and Max Sergeant on the drums, the song, in which bassist Thomas Pol

presents the theme at a slow tempo, evolves into a latin tempo with Walkate's ostinatos. Solos: Vincent Veneman on trombone, Jesse Schilderink on tenor saxophone, Mark Alban Lotz on alto flute and Teus Nobel on trumpet.

When the album "Music At Night" comes to an end, we are left with wonderful modern harmonies, masterful solos and a happy smile on our faces.

Endless thanks to dear Arlette Hovinga, who introduced me to The New York Second and the album "Music At Night"...