

LA HABITACION DEL JAZZ

THE NEW YORK SECOND CD: Music at Night (and Other Stories)

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Tracks: 1. These Are The Chosen Words 2. Him, A bull? Ha! A Bird 3. The Bostonian 4. The Drowned World 5. Music At Night 6. No More Epilogues 7. The Keys Ain't The Keys No More 8. The Rest Is Silence 9. The Ayes Have It 10. The Drowned World- Reprise. Recorded in July 2021 at Wedgeview Studios

This group does not originate in the United States as the name might suggest. The New York Second is a musical ensemble based in the Netherlands, which began its journey in 2015. It features the compositions of band leader and pianist Harald Walkate and has released three albums, "Bay of Poets" (2017), "Emergo" (2020) and "Music at Night (And Other Stories)" (2022). The group has performed as a quartet, as a quintet and, on their most recent album, as a septet.

Walkate's accompanying members are Mark Alban Lotz, flute and alto flute. He grew up in Uganda and Thailand, so we can hear sounds of the Far East in his music. Trombonist Vincent Veneman is a performer who has shared the stage with Kurt Elling, Herbie Hancock, Snarky Puppy, Al Jarreau, Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove, Benny Golson amongst others. Teus Nobel, a reference to the trumpet and flugelhorn in classical music. Rotterdam bassist Thomas Pol, tenor saxophonist Jesse Schilderink and Amsterdam drummer Max Sergeant have also become shining stars in the Netherlands in recent years.

The music of The New York Second can be categorized as contemporary jazz with different influences such as soul, classical and Latin music. The book "Music At Night" by Aldous Huxley was the source of inspiration for this Dutch septet led by pianist Harald Walkate.

The disc begins with "These Are The Chosen Words", starting with some piano bars that mark the style of this composition. Dialogues between the instruments with the piano acting as judge and jury. The sound resembles a big band. Good solo by Pol on double bass and Nobel on trumpet. Groove atmosphere, interesting theme.

The second cut of the album, "Him, A Bull? Ha! A Bird" is based on an anecdote. Spanish painter Picasso and American writer Hemingway were friends and often met when they lived in Paris in the 1920s and then again during World War II. One day, Hemingway visited Picasso in his studio. He came across an image, or sculpture, of an unidentifiable animal and, perhaps because of his fascination with bullfighting, said, "I love this bull, Pablo!" Picasso, whose English was far from fluent, burst out in anger and shouted, "Him, a bull? Ha!". And then he clarified, "A bird!". This theme begins with some Walkate touches on the piano and the later incorporation of the wind instruments, accentuating the crepuscular character that envelops the composition. Schilderink plays an extraordinary tenor saxophone solo and is gradually joined by the rest of the band. Walkate resumes his theme on the piano completing what has been started. A fantastic atmosphere.

Walkate composed "The Bostonian" based on a local from Boston, a city he visited regularly while working for a company with offices there. One night after having dinner with him, he accompanied him back to the hotel, pointing out to all the mansions that lined Boston Common where illustrious

characters lived, sharing tasty anecdotes of their lives and the history of the city. When he returned to Amsterdam he wrote this song to capture the ambiance of Boston and this literary character, with his fabulous stories: the Bostonian. The song begins with drummer Sergeant setting the tempo, while Walkate elegantly introduces the track. Lotz has a brilliant intervention on flute.

"The Drowned World" bears the title of a work discovered by Walkate (in box of Penguin book cover postcards) by author J.G. Ballard in 1962. The novel describes a post-apocalyptic future (the year is 2145) in which global warming has caused most of the Earth to become uninhabitable. Lovely solo by Schilderink on a lovely theme.

"Music At Night", which gives the album its name, is based on Walkate's experience living in an apartment in Paris. He composed it on an electric piano he brought from Amsterdam (five floors, no elevator). The song evolves into a Latin feel. The solos are by Veneman on trombone, Schilderink on tenor sax, Lotz on flute and Nobel on trumpet. It is worth reading in the liner notes about the process that led Walkate to title the track and what it represents.

In "No More Epilogues," trumpeter Nobel, pianist Walkate and Lotz on alto flute take us into a post bop world. Another beautiful and elegant track. "The Keys Ain't The Keys No More" begins with a piano theme by Walkate – soft and lyrical – where the winds, particularly Veneman on trombone, take over and continue to drive the theme that does not for a moment lose the lyricism. Walkate composed this track based on a trip he took to Key Biscayne, one of the small islands, the 'Keys', off the coast of Miami, Florida and an article he read during the flight regarding the disappearance of areas of the Florida Keys due to rising sea levels. An African-American driver who picked him up at the airport, when asked what he thought of the prediction in the New York Times article, after a long pause replied, "Man, The Keys Ain't The Keys No More."

On "The Rest Is Silence" there is no double bass or drums. The track begins with trumpet, alto flute, tenor sax and trombone, in a kind of canon, who are then joined by piano. The title is based on one of the essays in Aldous Huxley's book "Music At Night". In it, he says, quite simply, that the things that are most meaningful to humans cannot be expressed or described. They can only be experienced. And that the rest is... silence. And he adds: After silence what comes closest to expressing the inexpressible is music. He goes on to say: We thank the artist, especially the musician, for 'saying clearly what we have always felt, but have never been able to express'. Beautiful composition for some beautiful words by Huxley.

"The Ayes Have It" is perhaps the jazziest track on the album or, we could say, the most orthodox jazz. The solos are by Pol on double bass, Walkate on piano and Veneman on trombone. Theme very close to the 'seventh art'. The album ends with an exquisite reprise of only 38 seconds of the theme entitled "The Drowned World". The ten compositions on the disc are beautifully arranged and could only be described as elegant.

Teus Nobel - trumpet, flugelhorn
Mark Alban Lotz - alto flute
Jesse Schilderink - tenor saxophone
Vincent Veneman - trombone
Max Sergeant - drums
Thomas Pol - double bass
Harald Walkate - piano