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THE NEW YORK SECOND - AFTER THE HOURS, THE MINUTES

<https://jazzport.cz/2023/06/23/jsou-klavirni-tria-chloubou-evropskeho-jazzu/>

The New York Second is a Dutch music ensemble founded in 2015 by composer and pianist Harald Walkate. After the albums "Bay of Poets" (2017), "Emergo" (2020) and "Music at Night" (2022), which the group recorded as a quartet, quintet and septet respectively, a new fourth recording will be released soon (official release date is July 10), but this time in trio - "After the Hours, the Minutes". That is in the line-up of Harald Walkate - piano / Lorenzo Buffa - bass / Max Sergeant - drums.

Under the name of the ensemble, The New York Second, there is a funny term for the supposedly shortest measurable period of time in the multiverse; namely, the fraction of time between the green light and the honking of the nervous taxi driver in the car behind you...

Over sixty-six minutes of footage hides a dozen Walkate tracks. There's a laid-back vibe, the album is pleasant to listen to, but I'll freely admit that I expected more. I was simply expecting something surprising, something new. But the mixture of melodic jazz lyricism and influences of classical, mostly romantic music will not offend anyone, and many jazzophiles will even get excited. No doubt.

Are piano trios the pride of European jazz? Are piano trios the pride of European jazz?

I personally consider more than half of the pieces to be above average anyway. "Song About Nothing" is one of the denser ones, where the theme is more of a prominent riff and where all three players contribute to the gradation in the solos. "The Great Wait" is more melodically developed, but still maintains a dense dynamic and juiciness.

Conversely, "There But For the Grace of God" carries a poignant, lyrical expression that combines a celebration of melodic richness with urgency; however, the rhythm section also flows and the drummer even cuts a decent solo.

"Your Cat Got My Rabbit" is similarly constructed, with the double bass helping to build up the groove along with the drums. The latter can also be heard in the following "What the Bagelman Saw".

I would even dare to say that the double bassist makes the trio's expression a level more pronounced; the pianist plays well, but somewhat predictably. After all, this trio, like the previous one, is again not a classic example of where the piano rules.

Thanks to the final couple of tracks, the album finally culminates where I expected it to. "Allez les Bleus" mixes the blues with a chanson melody; the pianist plays really well here! And there's no shortage of double bass parade.

The final "Let's Go Where the Mountain People Go" draws on the spiritual, and gains transcendent power...

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3,5 stars out of 5