



MELLS BELLS SAM CROCKATT QUARTET

1. CANON GB-4DA-16-00008
2. THE MASTERPLAN GB-4DA-16-00009
3. I FOUND YOU IN THE JAM GB-4DA-16-00010
4. MELLS BELLS GB-4DA-16-00011
5. BREATH GB-4DA-16-00012
6. A STROLL ON THE KNOLL GB-4DA-16-00013
7. TINY STEPS, TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN GB-4DA-16-00014
8. THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT GB-4DA-16-00015

PERSONNEL | ALBUM CREDITS

Sam Crockatt - tenor saxophone
Kit Downes - piano
Oli Hayhurst - double bass
James Maddren - drums

Recorded at Eastcote Studios, London,
by Philip Bagenal June 2014
Mixed by Alex Bonney, London October 2014
Mastered by Tyler McDiarmid, NYC September 2015
Produced by Sam Crockatt
Executive Producer - Michael Janisch

British tenorist Sam Crockatt brings the energy and immediacy of his quartet to Whirlwind on *Mells Bells*, an album of peppy live-feel studio performances which illuminate and elaborate on the leader's eight original compositions. Crockatt (a member of London-based Loop Collective) collaborates with many of today's increasingly successful contemporary jazz and improvisational artists, particularly revelling in the focus of this empathetic working quartet with colleagues Kit Downes (piano), Oli Hayhurst (double bass) and James Maddren (drums). Recorded over a single day off the back of a couple of successful concerts, newly-birthing concepts merge with older themes-in-waiting to create a distinct and exciting spontaneity.

Title track *Mells Bells* offers a glimpse into the saxophonist's creative process. The initially cacophonous and then swirling beauty of church bell peals, witnessed from a vantage point above his Somerset home village, provided the inspiration for an outing which highlights this ensemble's creative vibrancy and free spirit; clanging and chiming with both celebratory and audacious ebullience, it loudly proclaims the heartiness of the current British jazz scene.

Sam Crockatt's robust and characterful tenor voice - stemming from an appreciation of the sound worlds of (amongst others) Dexter Gordon, Joe Henderson and Lee Konitz - is authoritative yet synergetic, his writing frequently inviting the freedom for musical diversions to flourish. Brightly swinging opener *Canon* illustrates well the openness of the improvisational landscape, with Crockatt readily passing the baton to pianist Downes who mesmerises with a chameleonic, broad-sweeping presence across the keyboard; yet the whole is upheld by the saxophonist's solid, memorable melodic hook and the rhythmic assuredness of Hayhurst and Maddren.



That same confidence pervades the entire album - as in *I Found You in the Jam*, where bassist and drummer converse intimately before opening the discussion to all, engineering the most fabulously bold yet romantic of interactions; and James Maddren's

constant percussive diversity is a delight. Crockatt's elongated, Shorter-like phrases in *Breath*, supported by the Debussyian wonder of Downes' piano, reveal shimmering watercolor hues; and purposeful *A Stroll on the Knoll* combines the buoyant accessibility of a classic compositional Herbie Hancock riff with the scintillating, gruff tenor abandon of Sonny Rollins.

With this recording project, the satisfaction for Sam Crockatt has been the ability of his personnel to build on initial (sometimes sparse) compositional threads to weave together an album which coruscates with improvisational clarity and which melds so incisively: "I like to think as texturally as I can - hearing various melodies over and over in my head - to achieve as many combinations of sound as I can. And I know these guys will take my ideas off into new areas." It's clearly that musical trust, and the collective ingenuity, which ignites the magic of this quartet.

Whirlwind Recordings
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