

*“...a hot contender among European releases for 2008” *****

John Fordham, Guardian May 2008

Phil Robson 'Six Strings & the Beat'



“punches well above its weight...one of the highlights of British jazz in 2008, and a direction that very much deserves further exploration.” Allaboutjazz.com June 08

... what happens when you imagine a string quartet with a guitar trio... the sizzling sonorities of all those strings interweaving with influences from Ornette to Oumou Sangare, Bartok and Americana to Afro, deliver a lyrical, spacious and powerful groove.

Originally born of a commission for Derby Jazz Week 2007 by Derby Jazz, this exciting collaboration, *Six Strings & the Beat*, have released their eponymous debut CD, featuring the compositions of guitarist Phil Robson for this exceptional & diverse group of musicians.

Phil Robson's project for string quartet and guitar trio - newly released on Babel - demonstrates the thrilling developments he has made as an innovative composer and arranger as well as an award-winning guitarist. *Six Strings and the Beat* is a multi-faceted revelation with Robson meticulously researching his sources and inspirations from a wide spectrum that includes Malian singer Oumou Sangare, Bartok, Ornette Coleman and the music of Americana along with Robson's unique facility and sensitive grasp of the US jazz tradition from Wes Montgomery, Pat Martino through to Jimi Hendrix.

The critics have been wowed by the live performances:

- John Fordham, the Guardian - live review of the Derby Jazz Festival ***“... the sensation was guitarist Phil Robson's Six Strings and the Beat project ...This inspired crossover is a real achievement for Robson and should go down among the year's jazz landmarks.”***
- Jack Massarik, the Evening Standard - live review ***“Robson is a top-class soloist but an unknown force as a composer. It was thus a revelation to find him capable of remarkably sophisticated writing for string quartet, voice and rhythm section.”***
- Chris Parker, Vortex gig reviews ***“a triumph for Robson, who wholly engrossed a packed club ... with the variety, ambition and sheer virtuosity of his music”.***

The studio recording, made soon afterwards has received high praise:

- ***“his best album to date.”*** Stuart Nicholson, Jazzwise Magazine May 08
- ***“richly inventive writing..with rare freshness and imaginative purpose.”*** Irish Times June 08
- ***“beguiling”*** Metro London July 08
- ***“Innovative music performed with crisp precision and rhythmic elan...a substantial achievement by a fine player ...not hitherto been particularly noted for his writing.”*** Evening Standard July 08
- ***“Robson has hit artistic pay dirt...”*** The Herald, August 08
- ***“As a composer and player he has really hit a sweet spot here.” ******* Redorbit.com August 08
- ***“Robson's prowess as a guitarist has long been recognised...his latest project features an explosion of compositional riches.” ******* Mojo September 08 CD of the month

Highlights from the 12 tracks include:

'**Songbird**' - inspired by the music of Mali in West Africa, especially that of the vocalist Omou Sangare and on the opening, Kate Shortt manages to extract from her cello the effect of a kora.

'**Louisiana**' - a dramatic, poignant piece written in remembrance of Hurricane Katrina with echoes of guitarist Bill Frisell's writing and a coda that calls to mind Radiohead. Robson says he wanted to evoke "a soundscape relating to images of small town America. Rather than go for a jazz or second line influence in the music I lent towards a general feeling of Americana in that piece".

'**The Mook**' - a distinctive, sizzling tribute to Ornette Coleman with improvisation from the strings as well as Robson.

'**Quick Silver**' calls on the work of Bartok with its abstract, weaving textures and Peter Herbert's compelling double bass solo an added highlight.

Six Strings & the Beat features:

Phil Robson - Guitar

Renowned throughout Europe & beyond, UK based guitarist Phil is also leader of Phil Robson trio (with Billy Hart & James Genus), co-leader of Partisans (nominated Best Ensemble in 2008 All Party Parliamentary Jazz Awards) & member of the BBC Big Band. He also often appears as a sideman with Christine Tobin (Best Vocalist BBC Jazz Awards 2008), Kenny Wheeler, Mark Turner, recently touring with US saxophonist Dave Liebman, and is fast becoming known equally as a writer. www.myspace.com/philrobson

Peter Herbert - Double Bass

Austrian born, Paris based, bass virtuoso & composer, Peter also lived in NYC for 15 years where he played with a who's who of the downtown scene including John Abercrombie/Marc Copland Quartet, Bobby Previte's "The Horse", John Clark Octet, Art Farmer and Woody Shaw. He has over the last 10 years been a regular performer on the European and UK scene appearing with Huw Warren, Christine Tobin as well as internationally with Marcel Khalife and Bass Instinct. Awarded the prestigious Hans Koller prize Musician of the Year 2001 www.azizamusic.com

Gene Calderazzo - Drums

Dynamo NY-born drummer, Gene grew up surrounded by the cutting edge of the 80's jazz lions. He has played with many greats such as Branford Marsalis, Freddie Hubbard and more recently with Zoe Rahman, Bheki Meseleku, Hans Koller and the firebrands of the UK jazz scene over the last 10 years, Partisans. www.genecalderazzo.com

Mandy Drummond - Violin

Mandy is section leader, a fabulous player and improviser. She has recently returned from a year long tour with Brian Ferry and has worked with, among others, Michael Brecker, Paul Weller, Courtney Pine, Nitin Sawhney, Seb Rochford, Orphy Robinson, The Nubian Vibes Ensemble, Julia Biel, Tunde Jegede and Joanna MacGregor. <http://www.myspace.com/amandadawndrummond>

Jenny May Logan - Violin

Jenny May is a wonderfully rich-toned player who is also a member of Mercury-nominated Basquiat Strings (nominated for Innovation BBC Jazz Awards 2008) & Elysian Quartet www.elysianquartet.com/elysian.html

Naomi Fairhurst - Viola

A much recorded artist, Naomi is prominent on many crossover scenes & member of Strawberry Strings. <http://music.msn.com/artist/?artist=16396202&menu=credits>

Kate Shortt - Cello

An amazing improvising cellist as well as a comedian & singer, Kate was voted performer of the year at the London Palladium recently. She is also a member of Crass Agenda. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Shortt_\(musician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Shortt_(musician))

"Phil Robson is a disturbingly good guitarist!" Wayne Krantz
"World-class" The Guardian

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