



Press Release

Jim Tomlinson The Lyric

Release date August 1st (mid-price re-issue)

“Recalls the sublime beauty of Billie Holiday’s recordings with Lester Young. **Timeless, artful and utterly gorgeous.** *TIME OUT*

“immaculately played, sung and produced... meltingly lyrical ...the arrangements suit the songs to perfection. **'A delicious set all round.** *OBSERVER*

Now re-issued on Blue Note, THE LYRIC was awarded a BBC Jazz Album of the Year (2006) and features 10 tracks with Grammy-nominated vocalist STACEY KENT

Stan Getz-style, tenor saxophonist & Kent’s husband **JIM TOMLINSON** is the producer behind the EMI best-sellers BREAKFAST ON THE MORNING TRAM (2007) – 315,000+ copies sold worldwide, Grammy nominee Best Jazz Vocal Album 2009 RACONTE-MOI (2010) 125,000+ copies sold worldwide.

THE LYRIC is a collection of well chosen standards performed in an intimate and engaging way, a vibrant homage to the Great American and Brazilian songbooks (Porter, Berlin, Jobim...) ,that also features Kent’s first hint at the language of romance with the French classic *Jardin d’Hiver*

The liner notes

In revisiting this album for its Blue Note reissue, I am struck by the consistency of my feelings about it. Stacey and the band sound great!

But this album always felt more like a departure rather than an arrival. It was the first album recorded by either myself or Stacey that did not feature what had increasingly become a signature sound for us on our Candid albums, that of tightly arranged guitar and piano. In our live shows too, we had been playing with a band that had guitar in place of drums. So this album, without guitar, immediately has a very different feel to those that preceded it as well to our live shows to date.

Although our subsequent Blue Note/EMI albums, Breakfast On the Morning Tram and Raconte-Moi, have gone back to a line up that includes guitar, this album prefigured the more open and spontaneous sound of our recent recordings and live work.

We have always chosen players rather than instruments, so when Colin Oxley decided to leave the band, instead of looking for another guitarist, we asked Matt Skelton, a drummer to replace him. To go from a tight format with two chordal instruments and no percussion to one with only one chordal instrument and drums instantly created a more open and flexible environment in which for us make music. The precedent that immediately springs to mind is Gene Gammage's and then Ed Thigpen's joining the Oscar Peterson trio in place of Herb Ellis.

But the change is more marked than simply adding a drummer and taking away a guitarist. Matt arrived in the band as a highly evolved and individual percussionist. He brought his experience of working in a wide variety of musical contexts to the drum chair. On this album and the subsequent ones too, he creates not just a rhythmic feel but a highly colouristic and emotional concept. A great example of his ability to create contour and drama in support of a song is to be heard on I Got Lost In His Arms. Like Jeff Hamilton, he brings both stillness and movement to a ballad that defies analysis. It is pure music.

Our long time musical associate, David Newton, plays piano on this album. It was to be his last recording with Stacey and myself having recorded six previous albums for Candid with us. Although he receives less solo space on this album than on Stacey's own albums, (I did after all want to give myself some space on my own record!), he plays with all of the flair and delicacy for which he is justly praised and contributes beautifully to the harmonic and textural feeling of the album. Listen for example to the way he sets up the mood for What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life?

The idea behind this album was to choose a repertoire that was strong enough lyrically to drive the musical arrangements. Both Stacey and I place the lyric of a song at the centre of our musical concepts. When arranging, we begin with the lyric. What mood does it evoke? Are there different layers of meaning that we want to bring to prominence? The task then becomes one of clothing the lyric in a musical setting that enhances its meaning. This philosophy informs the soloing also. The instrumentalist is enlisted in telling the story of the song without words.

After years of working with Stacey in the field of words and music, (indeed I began my musical career in this field as a chorister) I became interested in the idea of applying those skills to a lyric which had no pre-existing melody, that is to say, song writing. In 2006, I suggested to Kazuo Ishiguro that we collaborate in writing songs for Stacey. With his ability to create character and atmosphere through words, together with his understanding of Stacey, I had an intuition that he, better than anyone, would be able to put words in her mouth. It was my deep feeling for lyrics that made me imagine that I could expand my horizons beyond arranging to composing as well. That collaboration, which continues today, came to fruition with the release of Stacey's Blue Note debut, Breakfast On The Morning Tram, which features four of our songs written especially for Stacey. Her follow up Blue Note album, Raconte-Moi, features another of my songs written with Camille D'Avril.

So I would say that it was The Lyric that gave me the confidence fully to imagine Stacey's special voice at the centre of my creative endeavours and to begin writing songs.

I should not neglect to say a word or two about Stacey. Lyrics are at the heart of the songs here and Stacey gets to the heart of those lyrics. Her phrasing, diction and delivery are so subtly powerful that listeners are left with the impression of witnessing the private confessions of a broken heart. I have witnessed countless magical moments on stage and in the studio where time and place disappear and all that is left is Stacey's voice and pure emotion. I can't really describe what happens let alone explain it, which is why I'll settle for the word alchemy.

Now that over five years have passed since the recording of The Lyric, I am proud to be presenting it afresh at a time when I feel better able to understand its importance in the Jim Tomlinson - Stacey Kent catalogue.

Jim Tomlinson February 2011

More info: **Kerstan Mackness – 07775 655 573 / kerstan@riotsquadpublicity.com**

