



Geoff Warren

The Quartet Album

FMR CD375-0714

For a “horn” player (using the jazzers’ generic rem for a player of any wind instrument), the quartet with piano, bass and drums is the standard, perhaps even definitive vehicle. My first band, on the London scene back in the last century, was a quartet, although usually with guitar rather than piano. Since then I’ve worked in trios (without piano) and then quite a lot in duo’s with guitarists, leading up(or down, if you like) to my solo flute album “Flute Fables”.

Over the years, a lot of material I have written for quartet has been set aside or maybe recycled in workshops. My style has evolved over the decades, taking in World Musics, more straight ahead jazz and chamber music , yet has never lost that underlying “Canterbury Scene” influence of my home county ,Kent. So the chances of finding a quartet able to take in all of this were getting slimmer as the years passed and my influences widened.

It happened in 2013, the right quartet came together, and I knew it was finally time to do my “quartet Album”. I decided to record in Verona, using producer Clemente Bonati, who had worked on my second record with Badal Roy, Frammenti d’Anima, at his M.A.T studio in Verona. Yamaha helped out by providing the piano, and the basic tracks were laid down over two days in January 2014

Up and Around, a minor blues in jazz waltz time opens the album. It, along with Oh, Roland, dedicated to the great Mr Roland Kirk, is part of our more straight-ahead swinging repertoire.

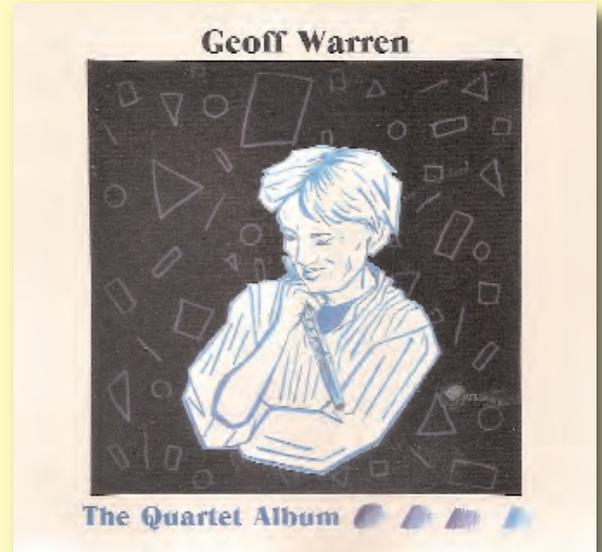
“Deich” is a lovely Scottish word, used for the weather when it’s wet, cold and gloomy. The first notes of Dreich Night in Glasgow were written on such a night, and I sketched in the harmony, in my Glasgow hotel room the next morning. I was aiming for a “noir” film theme with some Scottish inflections.

The other tune, with north of the border influences is Lydian Lowlands. My friend, the great pianist Richard Michael, whilst we were on a workshop tour for Yamaha, had introduced me to the idea of matching the flavours of single malt whiskies to the musical modes. The light, fragrant whiskies of the Scottish lowlands suggested the Lydian mode.

The oldest tune on the album is Nobody Phoned, written in a bed-set in East London back in 1983 when I had just got my hands on my first alto flute: a pretty frightening, cheap Chinese model that could just about produce a scale of C. I loved the sound and set about writing a slow melody using the notes that sounded best. On this occasion to enhance the simplicity of the tune I decided to record it in the more classical setting of just flute and piano. The slightly livelier B section which comes before and after the improvised solo was added twenty years after the original composition, and probably wouldn’t have been playable on the original instrument.

Mr G.C is a sort of ballad. Its not actually as slow as your usual jazz ballad but its too slow to be considered a “medium”. Its dedicated to Graham Collier who passed away in 2011, and although the harmonies are nothing like his, I was thinking Mingus and Ellington, who were two great influences on Graham. On this record there are three pieces from the “Kentish suite ” wrote 2008. Hall Place is the stately home with ornamental gardens to which I dedicate this playful, angular tune. The other two ‘kentish pieces are Seven oaks, named after my father’s birth place, and an opportunity for a soft machine influenced composer to write something in seven/four, and Contredanse, a kind of jig with some folk rock, and afro rhythmns too.

the album closes with Blues for Peter, here my idea was a rondo form where the central theme in one key was interwoven with solo on a minor blues in another key. Originally featured as a flute solo on “Flute Fables” , and dedicated to Peter Wiessmueller, the producer of that record. I have recorded it here in a duo of alto flute and bass



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