

THE JONES O'CONNOR GROUP - A crow for every crow (Loc)

I'm a child of the 60s, therefore every artistic expression related to that decade or the subsequent one is welcome by this heart with an increase in the number of beats. Then again, South Wales is showing unexpected fangs: in the last three years or so, there hasn't been a release from that territory that wasn't cherished here, especially when I think of someone like Gareth Roberts and his great "Attack of the Killer Penguins". Here lies a link with the Jones O'Connor Group - a quartet co-led by pianist Paul Jones and guitarist Richard Jones aided by Mark O'Connor on drums and Chris O'Connor on double bass - as PJ and the rhythm section are also part of the Gareth Roberts Quintet "and loads of other bands", as I'm told. This particular ensemble arrives at the second chapter after their debut "Alpha"; five tracks were penned by Paul and the remaining four by Richard. There's such a wealth of recalls and influences in this music that is indeed difficult to believe that this is a 2007 album. But the young age of the members, their enthusiastic application to the matter and the desire to individuate new solutions within old formulas makes sure that the listeners receive fresh material, not some faded replica of a past that won't return. Richard Jones' phrasing might at times be reminiscent of Phil Miller's cultivated fretwork in many and one Canterbury recording, and the fruitful interplay between the O'Connors encloses abundant doses of elegance and refinement. Paul Jones lacquers the action with discreet thematic choices and chordal progressions that could appeal to fans of Dave Stewart and Eumir Deodato alike (listen to "Pumpkin", which indeed seems to incarnate both worlds). A very nice effort whichever way we look at it, confirmation of the current richness of young talents in British "progressive jazz".

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