

'Come To Me' – The Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet

Posted on November 25, 2014 by Adrian Pallant • Posted in Jazz • Tagged A Hymn, Asaf, Asaf Sirkis, bass, Bettison, Bialas, chromatic harmonica, Come To Me, Dreams Dreams, drums, electric bass, Frank, Frank Harrison, harmonica, Harrison, Ismael, jazz, keyboards, Magnolia, Mandragora, Orbs, Orgon, overtone singing, Patrick, Patrick Bettison, piano, quartet, SBPQ004, Sirkis, Sirkis/Bialas, Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet, Sylwia, Sylwia Bialas, The One, The Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet, vocals, voice, Vortex • [Leave a comment](#)



THE INVITATION to share in the rarefied, positive atmospheres contained within this debut release from the Sirkis Bialas International Quartet is tangible from an ensemble who evidently love what they create together.

Acclaimed drummer and percussionist Asaf Sirkis' 2013 album *Shepherd's Stories* included amongst its jazz/rock solidity an enchanting, wordless cameo appearance by Polish vocalist Sylwia Bialas whose new-age tones were so intriguing as to suggest the development of a future musical collaboration. This conceptual spark has now ignited a synergetic new quartet with pianist Frank Harrison and bassist Patrick Bettison, featuring the broad scope of Bialas' vocal dexterity.

Dividing equally the ten compositions of *Come To Me*, Sirkis and Bialas create expansive landscapes (jazz, folk, world, prog) which are, in turns, contemplative, brooding and joyfully animated. Sylwia Bialas uses her voice either to shape her self-penned native lyrics or to explore more and more inventive instrumental avenues, frequently taking it through seemingly unreachable pitches and athletic rhythmic patterns. And the distinction here is the constant interaction with her fellow players; this is no 'singer plus band' set-up, but rather a fully integrated quartet whose conception feels unique.

Patrick Bettison's conversational electric bass style bears something of a resemblance to that of supremo Jeff Berlin, his fretless-like timbre a good match for Bialas' various intonations; Frank Harrison displays all the sparky virtuosity and tender lyricism of his own trio albums and catalogue of recordings with Gilad Atzmon's Orient House Ensemble; and former Orient House colleague Asaf Sirkis is as commanding as ever in providing the quartet's complex rhythmic backbone plus typically infinite elaborations (his accomplished Konnakol skills need to be heard and seen to be believed!).

Title track *Come To Me* offers a first glimpse of the band's telepathy, its sparse, unison vocal and piano motif opening into Gustavsenesque transcendence, and Bialas' lyrics evolving as liltingly sung improvisation. The empyreal lucidity of *Dreams Dreams* is haunting, with a measured pace maintained by Sirkis' intricate cymbal patterns; and *Vortex* spins propulsively to Bettison's mobile bass (entertaining to watch, live, the concentration required to hold his ostinato position against Sirkis' audacious cross-rhythms) as Bialas stretches out broadly and magnificently.

The otherwise quiet introversion of Sylwia Bialas' *Ismael* is pierced by an emotional Middle Eastern vocal style, Harrison displaying his customary high-searching piano finesse, and Bettison's harmonica extemporisations adding a sophisticated sense of mystery. Recognisably Sirkis' writing, *A Hymn* possesses a certain 'prog ominousness', showcasing the effectiveness of Bialas' voice as an instrument, whilst *Mandragora* builds into a bristling, cosmopolitan melting

AP REVIEWS



Search ...

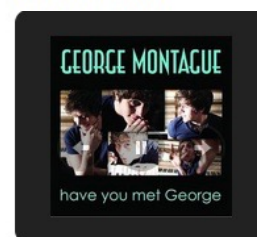
CONTACT

» [Contact / T&Cs](#)

POPULAR VIEWS NOW



ALBUMS REVIEWED



RECENTLY REVIEWED

» [TOP ALBUMS OF 2015](#)

» ['The Day I Had Everything' – Malija](#)

» ['Live at ReVoice!' – Georgia Mancio](#)

» ['Hommage à Eberhard Weber'](#)

» ['Double Trouble Live' – Peter Ehwald](#)

» ['Good is Good' – Vula Viel](#)

» ['A Journey' – Maciek Pysz](#)

» ['Skarkali' – Skarkali Trio](#)

» ['Never Ending January' – Espen Eriksen Trio](#)

» ['Drama' – Colin Towns Mask Orchestra](#)

» ['The Feel Good Place' – Tim Thornton](#)

» ['The Science of Snow' – Beresford Hammond](#)

Follow

pot of so many ideas and influences – a great performance.

Bialas' lucent Polish lyricism in *The One* shines out, echoed by lofty instrumental delicacy; and the energy of *Magnolia* is infectious, Sirkis revelling in its percussive possibilities. Inspired by the subject of paranormal light trails in imagery, the band again summon their combined aptitude for conveying fragility in *Orbs* – spatial and otherworldly, it holds the attention so beautifully. And Sirkis' rock-driven closer, *Orgon*, ripples to the eloquence of Bettison's bass and Harrison's electric piano, concluding with mischievous, disquieting electronic vocal effects from Bialas.

Choose your moment with this album – but late evening (*"In the silence of the night, in the depth of nothingness"*) is when its magic is especially revealed, with the space reflecting every nuance that has been placed and captured so crystal-clearly. Launched at the EFG London Jazz Festival on 21 November 2014, claim that wonder for yourself at [Bandcamp](#) or [JazzCDs](#).

Asaf Sirkis drums, compositions

Sylwia Bialas vocals, overtone singing, compositions

Frank Harrison piano, keyboards

Patrick Bettison electric bass, chromatic harmonica

asafsirkis.co.uk

sylwiabialas.com

Stonedbird Productions – SBPQ004 (2014)

ARCHIVES

» [December 2015](#)

» [November 2015](#)

» [October 2015](#)

» [September 2015](#)

» [August 2015](#)

» [July 2015](#)

» [June 2015](#)

» [May 2015](#)

» [April 2015](#)

» [March 2015](#)

» [February 2015](#)

» [January 2015](#)

» [December 2014](#)

» [November 2014](#)

» [October 2014](#)

» [September 2014](#)