

[HOME](#) > [CD REVIEW](#) > CD REVIEW: ASAF SIRKIS TRIO

## CD review: Asaf Sirkis Trio

BY [PETER BACON](#) on [14 SEPTEMBER 2010](#) · ([0](#))

### *Letting Go*

(Stonebird Productions SBPT002)

The Israeli-born, London-resident drummer is a hugely adaptable and wide-ranging player, working with everyone from Gilad Atzmon to Tim Garland.



This trio feels like his true home, though, giving him the scope to really groove in a way he knows better than most. With him are Yaron Stavi on electric bass and Tassos Spiliotopoulos on guitars, and special guest on a couple of tracks is harmonica player Patrick Bettison.

The area of activity is jazz-rock with perhaps more emphasis on the rock, or at least a prog form of it. Like the prog rockers the band like to make a big and spacious sound, and aren't averse to a bit of bombast. Unlike the prog rockers they manage to do it all with a certain amount of good taste.

Take the title track, for example. Spiliotopoulis uses a warm and round "Gibson"

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sound while Sirkis rumbles on the toms for a slow and stately introduction. Then it kicks into a medium tempo road song, with bass and drums keeping a pushing pace while the guitar gets edgier and more lyrical as the pieces progresses. It builds till Stavi is pumping hard, Sirkis is in Billy Cobham territory and Spiliotopoulos blends lightning McLaughlin runs with a more echoey country sound.

*Other Stars And Planets* takes that spacious sound even further, with some expert telepathic time shifts that all the players follow tightly. Spiliotopoulos does nice things with sustain and volume manipulation. Both *Chennai Dream* and *Lady Of The Lake* show Stavi as counter-melodist, playing high and clear on this electric bass.

Sirkis is just a joy throughout, whether surging at speed or adding delicate cymbal accents amid the brush strokes. Like all the best drummers and especially those who lead bands, he manages to enhance the playing of his band members while always determining the overall sound and character of the music through his distinctive rhythmic feel and strong musical character.

The rock fans really should get to hear this album – it delivers all the sounds and excitement they like but with a lot more jazz savvy and sophistication. And the jazz fans should hear it as a prime example of music that can be intelligent and enjoyable at the same time.

The official release date is 23 September, but *Letting Go* is already available via Asaf's website. You can also listen to some clips there. Just go to:

[www.asafsirkis.co.uk](http://www.asafsirkis.co.uk)

	<a href="#">1</a>	<a href="#">2</a>	<a href="#">3</a>	<a href="#">4</a>	<a href="#">5</a>	
<a href="#">6</a>	<a href="#">7</a>	<a href="#">8</a>	<a href="#">9</a>	<a href="#">10</a>	11	12
<a href="#">13</a>	<a href="#">14</a>	15	<a href="#">16</a>	17	18	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">20</a>	<a href="#">21</a>	<a href="#">22</a>	<a href="#">23</a>	<a href="#">24</a>	25	26
<a href="#">27</a>	<a href="#">28</a>	<a href="#">29</a>	<a href="#">30</a>			
<a href="#">« Aug</a>			<a href="#">Oct »</a>			

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