



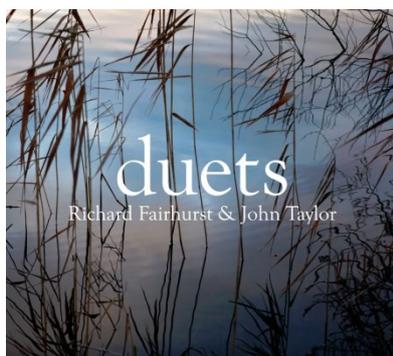
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHARD FAIRHURST & JOHN TAYLOR

DUETS

Richard Fairhurst (piano) and John Taylor (piano)

A remarkable first outcome to a fascinating project, as acclaimed pianists Richard Fairhurst and John Taylor perform duets for two pianos, delivering an intuitive and empathetic meeting of minds.



1. Epitaph to Sabbo (Fairhurst/Taylor) 5:59
2. 3 P's Piece – Part I (Saberton) 3:55
3. 3 P's Piece – Part II (Saberton) 2:11
4. Open Book (Fairhurst) 4:16
5. Epitaph To Kenny (Fairhurst/Taylor) 2:19
6. Sly Eyes (Wheeler) 4:47
7. Evans Above (Taylor) 7:27
8. Very Early (Evans) 3:35
9. Turn Out The Stars (Evans) 6:31
10. Re: Person I Knew (Evans) 6:03
11. Growth In An Old Garden (Fairhurst) 5:11

Recorded at Curtis Schwartz studios in September 2013

Label: Basho Records | Release Date: 07 August 2015 | Cat no: SRCD 49-2 | Barcode: 0832929004926

“Duets” is the first outcome of a fascinating project – an album of piano music played on two pianos. It is a collaboration between Richard Fairhurst and one of his great influences and mentors, John Taylor, who sadly died shortly before the album was to be released. It is Taylor's only recording on two pianos. The experience of this scenario for the musicians was special – given the rare opportunity of interacting with another piano. The result is stunning in terms of sound and arrangement.

The collaboration began at the Steinway Festival in 2010, where the two musicians first played together. When asked which piano player he would most like to work with, Richard Fairhurst immediately suggested John Taylor as a musician with ‘a touch and sound that really spoke to me’. Fairhurst and Taylor began by exploring the music of Bill Evans, keen that the project should avoid standards, explore harmony and understatement but also feel more contemporary. Approaching the Evans pieces from an original angle, both players felt an immediate musical connection, using the music as a springboard for their own individual approaches and perspectives.

Fairhurst and Taylor played the Steinway festival three times and also again joined forces at a 70th birthday concert for Taylor with the BBC in 2012. Fairhurst says: ‘We experimented with rhythmic ideas, texture and space. Each performance involved extensive rehearsal, and as the approach to the music developed, it began to feel as if this should become a less sporadic and more enduring project’.



The repertoire for this project includes original material and a Bill Evans suite that looks back to the beginnings of the project. It also draws from the work of two crucial and now sadly missed figures of the British jazz scene – Pete Saberton and Kenny Wheeler, both friends and great inspirations to Fairhurst and Taylor. Although Duets was recorded before Wheeler's death, the album has inevitably assumed a feeling of warm tribute to these great musicians. Wheeler's Sly Eyes contains many of his characteristic twists and turns, whilst also containing an element of humour. Pete Saberton's tunes, legendarily tricky and unpredictable, are particularly difficult to deliver in this more considered, spacious style.

Both musicians felt very aware of the dangers of overcrowding the music – with two pianos, the potential for a cascade of notes is very real. Yet the music on Duets has a reflective quality, and a real feeling of space. Fairhurst and Taylor have been careful not to make their improvising too dense, in order to achieve what Fairhurst describes as a 'considered elegance'. The overall aim was to create a blend, with the effect of one instrument playing rather than two – sometimes Fairhurst and Taylor play together, but sometimes they play separately within an arrangement.

Live Dates:

9th September - DEDICATION TO JOHN TAYLOR – Purcell Room, Southbank, London
Also with Gwilym Simcock & Michael Wollny and special guest Trish Clowes

BIOGRAPHIES

Richard Fairhurst has been a Steinway International Artist since 1998. Mentored and encouraged by saxophonist Iain Ballamy, he released his first album with his ensemble The Hungry Ants at the age of just 19 on the Babel label. He has since worked in a duo with flugelhorn player Tom Arthurs and a trio with Danish bassist Jasper Hoiby and drummer Chris Vatalaro, amongst other projects. This album is his first project for Basho records.

John Taylor 1943-2015 first came to the attention of the jazz audience in 1969 when he partnered saxophonists Alan Skidmore and John Surman. He was later reunited with Surman in the short-lived group Morning Glory and in the 1980s with Miroslav Vitous's quartet. In the early 1970s he was accompanist to the singer Cleo Laine and started to compose for his own sextet. John also worked with many visiting artists at Ronnie Scott's club and later became a member of Ronnie's quintet.

In 1977 John formed the trio Azimuth, with Norma Winstone and Kenny Wheeler. The trio made several recordings for ECM Records and performed in Europe, the USA and Canada. Taylor has also worked with artists including Gil Evans, Jan Garbarek, Enrico Rava and Lee Konitz. He was professor of Jazz Piano at the Cologne College of Music since 1993 and became a Lecturer in jazz at York University in 2005. He died on 18th July 2015.

Album distributed in the UK by

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