



Johnny Hunter Quartet – Appropriations – Efpi Records is released on 16th December 2013

Graham South (trumpet), **Ben Watte** (tenor saxophone), **Stewart Wilson** (bass), **Johnny Hunter** (drums)

The **Johnny Hunter Quartet** was brought together in 2012 by drummer and composer **Johnny Hunter** to further explore his experiments with the freedoms and challenges presented by the absence of a harmony instrument. Johnny's compositions for the group draw on his long-standing interest in the piano-less groups of Sonny Rollins and Joe Henderson, through to the more recent ensembles of Dave Douglas, John Zorn and Jim Black – also a massive influence on Johnny's drumming. The quartet have quickly established themselves as a live draw across the North of England, regularly appearing at Matt & Phred's in Manchester in particular, with this constant schedule of live gigs culminating in the summer of 2013 with the recording of the group's debut EP **Appropriations** – released on **Efpi Records** on 16th December 2013.

The members of the quartet were hand picked by Johnny for their individual musical voices, which he ingeniously combines to create an intensely tight group dynamic without ever compromising the freedom of each voice. As Johnny explains: "*Graham approaches the group more like Ornette Coleman or Don Cherry might whereas Ben is a lot more melodic, although they often switch roles. Stewart's playing has such drive and in my opinion is a large part of the group's energy. His bass also possesses an extension so has the ability to play C1, which shivers my timbers...*" All four of the quartet are highly active in the thriving Manchester jazz scene, with Graham and Ben key members of Efpi stablemates **Beats & Pieces Big Band**, and Johnny and Stewart key fixtures of a number of bands – Johnny in particular regularly performing far and wide with bands such as his brother Anton's Trio, Blind Monk Trio, Marley Chingus, Engine Room Favourites or his own reggae/ska band **Skamel**.

Appropriations begins with **FIVE STORIES HIGH**, so titled because the composition explores the augmented triad and the harmonic possibilities of shifting the triad over a static bass note. There then follows the first of two short interludes, in this case a short improvised drum solo. **MALLARD BALLARD** is perhaps the most reflective ensemble piece on the EP, with extensive use of Stewart's bass' low C extension and stunning solos from both Graham and Ben. **RIVERS OF APPROPRIATION** is a contrafact of a tune by Sam Rivers – this is a compositional technique where an existing harmonic structure is 'appropriated' and used as the basis for a new work, and was very common in the bebop era where musicians would write new melodies over common chord progressions in order to claim the performance royalties... After a second interlude, this time a bass solo from Stewart, the EP closes with **CONSTANTLY**. The full original title of this composition is *Constantly John Phipps*, a reference to Constantine John Phipps who was the first European to observe and document a polar bear in the 1770s – this in turn is a nod to the fact that this tune ('unintentionally' as Johnny insists!) brings to mind the sound of the UK group Polar Bear.

Already championed and broadcast by Jez Nelson and the BBC Jazz on 3 team, **Appropriations** marks the arrival of a real compositional talent in Johnny Hunter, and is the first step of a quartet sure to make a huge impact on the UK jazz scene in the future.

For further information, interviews and images please contact Ben Cottrell: ben@efpirecords.com

JOHNNY HUNTER QUARTET Tour Dates

Sunday 23rd February
Tuesday 25th February
Wednesday 26th February
Sunday 2nd March

Number 39 Hopstar Brewery Tap, Darwen, Lancashire
ParrJazz, Liverpool
Lescar, Sheffield
Splinter, Newcastle

Notes For Editors

Based in Manchester, **Efpi** is both an independent record label and an umbrella organisation working to promote the activities of an emerging generation of musicians working across all areas of contemporary jazz, improvised and experimental music. Formed in 2009 by **Sam Andreae**, **Ben Cottrell** and **Anton Hunter** to bring together their various projects under a single banner, Efpi quickly expanded from its Manchester roots and now works closely with an ever growing number of musicians hailing from all over Europe and based across the UK and Scandinavia. Efpi artists include **Beats & Pieces Big Band**, **Let Spin**, **Trio Riot**, **Silence Blossoms** and the **Anton Hunter Trio**. www.efpirecords.com

Johnny Hunter

After completing studies in physics in Sheffield, Johnny now lives in Manchester and is busy across the UK as a drummer and composer. He works in a variety of different areas, from his more avant-garde and free projects such as Engine Room Favourites and with musicians such as Mick Beck and Corey Mwamba, to more mainstream work with bands like Marley Chingus or those led by Nat Birchall and Jamil Sheriff, to projects in the reggae and dub scenes such as the Dub Jazz Soundsystem or his own group, Skamel.

Graham South

Originally from Harrogate, North Yorkshire, Graham now lives in Manchester where he studied at the University of Manchester and now works across multiple genres as a trumpeter and composer. Alongside his activities within the worlds of jazz and improvised music, he is also an in demand orchestral trumpeter, regularly working with orchestras such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic and Manchester Camerata.

Ben Watte

Born and raised in Retford, Nottinghamshire, Ben moved to Manchester aged 14 to study at Chetham's School of Music and then went on to gain a degree from the Royal Northern College of Music. He has performed and taught all over Europe alongside Jiggs Whigham, Ack Van Rooyen, Bob Mintzer and others, and is also an avid electronic musician and producer, spanning a variety of musical genres.

Stewart Wilson

From Prestwick in Scotland, Stewart Wilson works across the UK and Europe, performing with orchestras such as the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic and the Czech National Symphony Orchestra as well as playing upright and electric bass with a number of jazz and pop projects. He studied classical and jazz bass at the Royal Northern College of Music, receiving lessons from Loose Tubes bassist Steve Berry amongst others, and during his time there performed with Kenny Wheeler, Colin Towns and Guy Barker.