



www.champshillrecords.co.uk

SIPSMITH®
independent spirits



CHAMPS HILL
RECORDS

DOWN IN THE DEEP DEEP BLUE



The Man
Overboard
Quintet 



I FOREWORD

Welcome to our second album for Champs Hill Records... That sentence feels surreal to me, but the evidence is here; we really have been this lucky. The jazz repertoire is inexhaustible, and even after years of listening, the thrill of hearing a great tune for the first time, or simply playing a good old standard for the hundredth time, never goes away. I do hope listeners get that thrill listening to this album.

For this recording we selected songs that are perhaps unfamiliar to some people, but that we feel offer depth, variety, and some surprises. It's always a joy for me to get this band together and have a "what shall we play?" sort of session, because I know I'm in for a double treat: collectively discovering, or re-discovering real gems, and hearing what the band will come up with in the performance.

Ever since we got together as a band I have been amazed at the loyalty shown to us by so many people, who regularly come to our gigs. I have also been amazed at the wide age range of our audiences. Of course it is nothing out of the ordinary to see adults enjoying a bit of hot swing, but to see young kids getting into our music is always a great pleasure. As a tribute to all of them we have included in this booklet drawings by Michael (aged 9) and Gabriel (11) Franks. The drawings were inspired by our band name and the title of this album.

We decided to take the same approach for this recording as we did for our first. Straight takes and no overdubbing – holding fast to our conviction that a good 'live' feel far outweighs any small imperfections in the performance. *Les artistes travaillent sans filet!*

The material here ranges from the early 1920s (*New Orleans Wiggle*) to the mid-1950s (*Sister Sadie*). Hot swing, torch songs, raw blues, a little ragtime... they're all pearls, and all can be found Down in the Deep, Deep Blue.

Dive in!

This album is dedicated to Diana Parkinson.

Jean-Marie Fagon

TRACK LISTING

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1 | PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME WHEN I'M GONE <i>Sam H Stept / Sidney Clare</i> | 03'51 |
| 2 | SISTER SADIE <i>Horace Silver</i> | 03'27 |
| 3 | TRAV'LIN ALL ALONE <i>JC Johnson</i> | 04'17 |
| 4 | NEW ORLEANS WIGGLE <i>AJ Piron</i> | 03'30 |
| 5 | IMAGINATION <i>Fud Livingston</i> | 04'42 |
| 6 | I HATE MYSELF FOR BEING SO MEAN TO YOU <i>Isham Jones</i> | 03'48 |
| 7 | ME & MY GIN <i>JC Johnson</i> | 05'52 |
| 8 | I WONDER WHERE MY BABY IS TONIGHT <i>Walter Donaldson / Gus Kahn</i> | 03'43 |
| 9 | CARELESSLY <i>Charles Kenny / Nick Kenny / Norman Ellis</i> | 04'13 |
| 10 | JUBILEE STOMP <i>Duke Ellington</i> | 03'29 |
| 11 | GOOD MORNING HEARTACHE <i>Irene Higginbotham / Ervin Drake / Dan Fisher</i> | 04'26 |
| 12 | LIMEHOUSE BLUES <i>Philip Braham / Douglas Furber</i> | 03'56 |
| 13 | DIRTY TB BLUES <i>Victoria Spivey</i> | 05'06 |
| 14 | I WISH THAT I WERE TWINS <i>Joseph Mayer / Frank Loesser / Edgar DeLange</i> | 03'30 |
| 15 | IF MY HEART COULD ONLY TALK <i>Walter Samuels / Leonard Whitcup / Teddy Powell</i> | 04'11 |
| 16 | WHAT A LITTLE MOONLIGHT CAN DO <i>Harry M. Woods</i> | 04'43 |

Total playing time: 66'46

Thomas Gould *violin & backing vocals*

Ewan Bleach *clarinet & vocals*

Louisa Jones *vocals*

Jean-Marie Fagon *guitar & vocals*

Dave O'Brien *double bass & backing vocals*

Produced and Engineered by Richard Sutcliffe

Mixed and Mastered by Richard Sutcliffe

Recorded on 26th-28th February, 2014 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

The Man Overboard Quintet photographed at the Sipsmith Distillery, London, by S L Chai,

with grateful thanks to Sipsmith for their support

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen

Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson



“Away with the music of Broadway. Be off with your Irving Berlin.[...] Give no quarter to Kern or Cole Porter....” In making this new selection from the American Songbook for their second album, the members of The Man Overboard Quintet followed Ira Gershwin's instruction, quite literally, as contained in his lyrics for the song *By Strauss*.

Not only have they stayed away from Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter, the Gershwin brothers, and the elegant world of Broadway theatre in general – they have also steered clear of other better-known song composers. That said, the quintet was never exactly going to run out of material, because the canon of the American Songbook is so vast. It has been estimated that some 300,000 popular songs were deposited for copyright in the US between 1900 and 1950, the period during which all but one of the sixteen songs here were written.

Shunning the well-known, this collection presents a fascinating exploration into the many different ways in which songs from the huge canon can – and do – stick around and become popular. Some just have a catchy hook, like the ‘Ooh, ooh, ooh’ of the upbeat swinger from 1937, *What a Little Moonlight Can Do* by Charles M. Woods. There are other numbers here which draw the listener back vividly and powerfully to a particular time or event in history: prohibition, in the case of J. C. Johnson's *Me and My Gin* from 1928, or a tuberculosis epidemic (Victoria Spivey's *Dirty TB Blues* from 1929).

There are also several songs that became popular and timeless because they fitted the character of a single performer whose communicative power always seems to leave an indelible mark on the listener. Frank Sinatra was able to do that. On this album, the singer who keeps coming back with her troubled temperament and her immediacy of expression is Billie Holiday. *Trav'lin All Alone* by J. C. Johnson is from 1929. *If My Heart Could Only Talk* and *Carelessly* are both from 1937. We also have the later, and prophetic *Good Morning Heartache*. This song, which Holiday recorded at the height of her fame in 1946 was prophetic: it was the year before new disasters struck, as Holiday was sent to prison for drug possession and lost her New York cabaret card, which severely restricted her work as a singer.

On the same theme of persuasive performers, but in much lighter vein, the 1934 song *I Wish That I Were Twins* was an ideal vehicle for the wickedly suggestive humour of Fats Waller. On this recording, incidentally, the song achieves something very rare indeed, which is to bring the quintet's guitarist Jean-Marie Fagon forward into the limelight for a solo.

There are also songs by lesser-known composers who had both the skill and the knack of successful song-writing. Walter Donaldson penned a total of 600 songs. In the words of Alec Wilder, “some of them were run-of-the mill, some were fair, some were superior, but all of them were competent”. The song of his on this album is *I Wonder Where My Baby is Tonight* from 1925. He also wrote songs such as *Making Whoopee* and *Love Me or Leave Me*, and even the original version of *My Baby Just Cares for Me*, later to be transformed by Nina Simone. Perhaps all Donaldson needs as an epitaph is that he was a shrewd businessman: having founded his own publishing company, he was able to retire from song-writing at the age of 50.

Another composer of tunes that have really stuck was Charles M. Woods, the composer of *What a Little Moonlight Can Do*. Woods was a surprising character. As a man, he was more or less the polar opposite of the character of his songs. Whereas what he wrote was often cheery (*When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along*) or romantic (*Try a Little Tenderness*), Woods himself was an irascible war veteran, with a violent, alcohol-fuelled temper.

Joseph Anthony (Fud) Livingston was another song composer famous for having composed just a handful of songs. He had a parallel career as saxophonist, playing at different times in the orchestras of Paul Whiteman and Benny Goodman. Livingston's hit was *I'm Through With Love* from 1931, immortalized in films such as *Some Like it Hot* and Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You*. The song in this collection is *Imagination* from 1927.

Isham Jones, who led his own band, and who wrote songs like *It Had to Be you*, the hit song from the 1989 film *When Harry Met Sally* and *There Is No Greater Love*, is represented here by *I Hate Myself for Being So Mean to You*.

The earliest song in the collection here is an exception in that it is the only one not to have originated in America at all. The music for *Limehouse Blues* from 1922 was written by the English composer Philip Braham for a revue starring Gertrude Lawrence. Something of the wide-eyed innocence of the Twenties also comes across in *New Orleans Wiggle* by A. J. Piron from 1923.

With Duke Ellington, we meet perhaps the most celebrated composer here, and he is represented with a real foot-tapper – the instrumental *Jubilee Stomp*. This was originally recorded in early 1928, just a couple of months after Ellington's Cotton Club contract, and the weekly radio broadcast that went with it, had started.

The chronological outlier in this collection, the only song to fall outside the 1900-1950 period is Horace Silver's *Sister Sadie* from the 1959 album *Blowin' the Blues Away*. Silver was recently described in a Guardian obituary – he died in 2014 – as having written “accessible and exuberant” music, a description that fits the call-and-response gospel-tinged melody of *Sister Sadie* like a glove.

And then there's the matter of where the title of the album, *Down in the Deep Deep Blue* comes from. It is a line tucked away in Isham Jones' song *I Hate Myself for Being So Mean to You*, describing the place where the protagonist intends to 'drown' (or in some versions to 'hide') himself.

Hiding away? That may now be impossible for the Man Overboard Quintet. As the band avoids the obvious and shuns the predictable, and makes sweetly ironic gestures – such as starting off this album with Stept and Clare's *Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone* from 1930 – the group is acquiring an increasing fan base. The Man Overboard Quintet won't be gone, and will certainly be talked about.

Sebastian Scotney



Drawing : Gabriel Franks



THE MAN OVERBOARD QUINTET

Thomas Gould *violin & backing vocals*

Ewan Bleach *clarinet & vocals*

Louisa Jones *vocals*

Jean-Marie Fagon *guitar & vocals*

Dave O'Brien *double bass & backing vocals*

The Man Overboard Quintet brings together five like-minded musicians who play and listen to all sorts of music, but who share a love of hot swing. Thomas Gould is a classical violinist described as “staggeringly virtuosic” by *The Guardian*. He also is a dab hand at jazz, and his playing meets its match in the lyrical clarinet-playing of Ewan Bleach, who has been making his mark on the music scenes of London and New Orleans. Thomas and Ewan work the tunes beautifully together, sometimes harmonising, sometimes challenging each other. At other times, they simply provide the setting for Louisa Jones’ distinctively husky but sweet voice. Underpinning the sound are Dave O’Brien (one of the brightest young musicians on the London swing scene) on the double bass and Jean-Marie Fagon, a good old-fashioned, no-nonsense rhythm guitarist from France.

The five musicians first started playing together in January 2011 and were quickly performing in some of London’s favourite jazz venues. The Man Overboard Quintet has recorded music for television, being featured in BBC3’s *Being Human* series, and they cut their first album – a collection of old jazz numbers played in The Man Overboard’s infectious, melodic style – for Champs Hill Records [*All Hands On Deck*, CHRCD062].

The Man
Overboard
Quintet 