

The new wave of Jazz comes crashing through and Flipping the Jazz script with four new releases from Finn Peters, Julia Biel, Robert Mitchell and Alex Wilson. From vocal folk jazz to future fusion, via Latin piano and broken berimbau, these four mavericks are sayin' it loud with their independent releases.

MO' F-IRIE

BANSURI MIGHTY FINN

Interview: **Max Cole**
Photography: **Peter Williams**

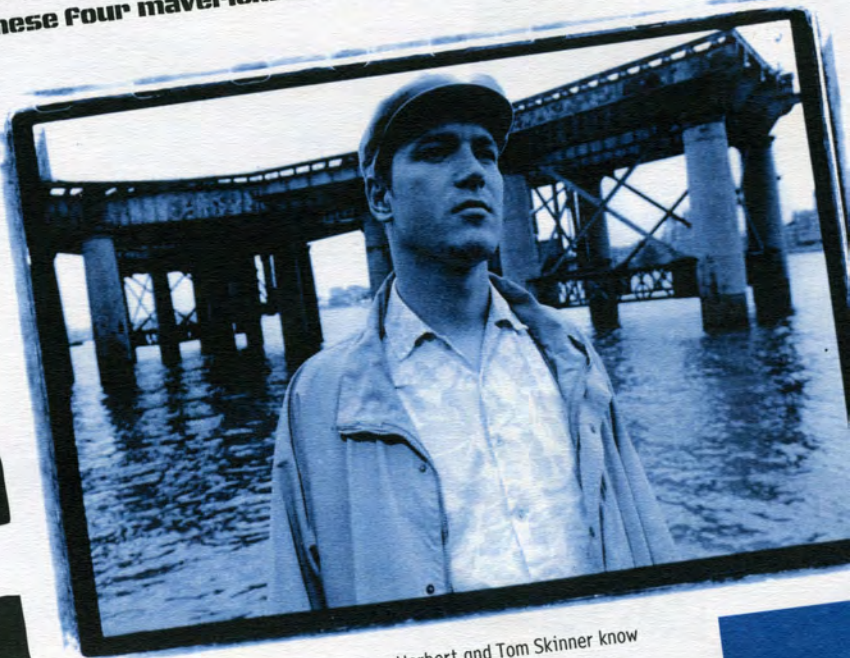


The mastermind behind *Bansuri* and more side cuts than your local butcher, Finn Peters is a sax man with an open mind we can all get inside. Bringing flavours from Bahia, Java, Morocco and Uganda to his jazz stew, Finn treads in the footsteps of players like Yusef Lateef, Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Don Cherry - Chaser checked the menu.

"MESSIAEN SAID THAT BIRDS WERE GOD'S MUSICIANS," explains Finn, as we chat about the opener on the *Bansuri* EP. "Messiaen transcribed birdsong big time, and so did Hermeto Pascoal. Dolphy was really into it too. When I go back home and sit in the woods and play my flute, the birds will come over and sing, and I'll try and copy them and let it sink in - although rhythmically it's very complicated and repeats in weird rhythms, like morse code or something. We had a laugh recording all these Brazilian bird whistles for 'The Birds' though!"

Not many sax players can bounce between the studio with Sa-Ra and the stage with Sam Rivers, or flip from Joyce's 'Aldeia de Ogum' to the Byron Wallen Octet. But Finn Peters is equally at home with spiritual jazz and cosmic hip hop, bruk bounce or samba - all clearly in evidence on his latest *Bansuri* project. The whole approach is much less sample-based than the usual club fodder, and in contrast to the school of the loop, it comes with all the vitality and energy of a live gig.

"I've been thinking about this for years", Finn says. "When does a loop stop being a loop and start being live? Is a 32 bar loop too long? When we play the songs, they really come to life, much better than I could ever have imagined." Anyone who witnessed their performance at a rammed Cargo will testify -



the core unit of Nick Ramm, Dave Okumu, Tom Herbert and Tom Skinner know how to combine the swing of an SP with the dynamic ebb and flow of live musicianship.

But there's more to *Bansuri* than just man meets machine. "I listen to a lot of music from around the world, and I think that probably comes through on the record. I studied in Africa with the court musicians in Uganda, and in Morocco I got really into Gnawa. I had to get a berimbau on the record, too! I just get very excited about hearing new music - not just from London or New York or Japan, but from, say... Mali."

Fusing sounds and styles from different cultures is a long standing tradition in jazz. "Well, taking things from different places - that's a classic musicians thing, isn't it? It's how you learn an instrument and it's the same way you learn how to talk, too. I guess it's the same way you live your life, and that's reflected in music. You might think, "Oh I really like that", so you learn it and copy it and then you assimilate it and it just becomes part of your language. That's how I learnt to play jazz, and when I'm giving lessons and people ask 'How do you improvise?' I just tell them I started with a bunch of Trane solos - it's not a particularly unusual approach, but it's a great way of learning to play."

So in the great conversation of jazz, who has Finn picked up linguistic chops from? "Oh god - everyone. Eric Dolphy especially, but also more underground guys like Clifford Jordan and Booker Ervin, or Tina Brooks - players who weren't such big names, but were still doing great stuff. Yusef Lateef obviously, Sonny Fortune and Rahsaan - all massive influences. A lot of those guys looked to the east - Yusef, Roland, Trane. McCoy Tyner looked to Africa - I think that's been a massive part of jazz in the past, and still goes on today. The world seems to have become a lot smaller and if I think I really want to check out some music from Indonesia, I could get on the Barbican there." Maybe Easy Jet should sponsor a series of concerts at the Barbican.

Although there's plenty of projects that Finn's involved in, the jazz vein runs deeply through all of them. Keep your ears open for follow ups to the Club Brasil collections, more *Bansuri* tracks to come, and an acoustic jazz project called Finntet. But despite being busy, there's always a hunger that drives artists and can produce some interesting music. "If you don't have that hunger", Finn concludes, "the urgency goes away from your sound." Let's hope that Finn's appetite won't be satisfied for a long time yet.

Finn Peters' *'Bansuri'* is out on *Traficante*.