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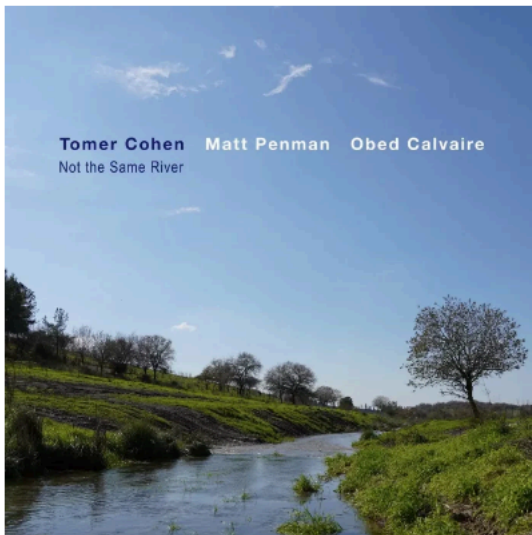
Audio Reviews

Tomer Cohen: Not The Same River

Although his tone and folkish melodies hint at 1980s ECM-style Metheny and Towner, guitarist Cohen doesn't step in quite the same river twice

By **Mick Wright** - 28 February 2023

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Tomer Cohen's specialism on electric guitar is hybrid fingerstyle, striking the strings with a complex combination of pick and fingers. This playing technique facilitates an unusual harmony-focused approach to tunes and improvised solos, put to good use on *Not Yhe Same River*, his debut album. His rich harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary results in a broad range of enjoyable original compositions.

While much of this music is complex and, at times, quite abstract, Cohen's playing remains easy-on-the-ear, with an abundance of flowing folk-like melodies: the creative mix of his Israeli and American musical roots produces refreshingly different grooves and a particularly effortless style of playing, even at faster tempos.

Although there are some hints of ECM's 1980s style (notably Metheny and Towner) Cohen's guitar sound also has a harder, more contemporary edge. The tone is consistently good, well-suited to his mellow playing, with subtle shifts in mood from brooding and contemplative to energetic, and the compositions are arranged spaciously for guitar, bass and drums.

Pastures, and the cinematic Sunrise, are fascinating pieces, using sequences of intricate guitar patterns juxtaposed with more open-sounding linear sections where the interaction between guitar, drums and bass is particularly effective.

Throughout this promising debut, the musicality of the trio successfully prevents the brilliant playing from becoming a mere display of technical brilliance. Empty has the greatest amount of technical chops on display, but even here the playing is tastefully restrained and dynamics are carefully controlled, without compromising the excitement of the playing.

Discography

Not The Same River; Connecting Dots; Hithadshut (Regeneration); Empty; Pastures; Sunrise; Probably More Than Two; First Laps
(48.22)

Cohen (g); Matt Penman (b) Obed Calvaire (d). Brooklyn, NYC,
December 2021.

Hypnote Records HR028