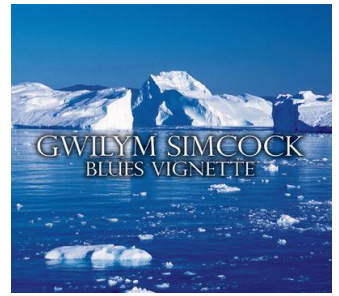


## GWILYM SIMCOCK "BLUES VIGNETTE"

(BASHO RECORDS SRCD 32-2) REVIEWS



**IRISHTIMES.com** 22/01/2010 Ray Comiskey, The Irish Times 5 stars\*\*\*\*\*

"The interaction is consistently stunning, while Simcock's own playing borders on the sublime at times. Rhythmically flexible, assured whether inside or out, the trio set down a marker that few others are likely to equal".

## GuardianUnlimited

**20/11/2009 John Fordham, The Guardian 4 Stars\*\*\*\***

Every step UK pianist Gwilym Simcock takes is an ambitious one: this double-album documents his jazz trio work with the Russian double-bassist Yuri Goloubev and the gifted young British drummer James Maddren, as well as solo performance on his own compositions and improvised pieces, and classics from On Broadway and Black Coffee to Grieg's Piano Concerto, plus a suite for piano and the classical cellist Cara Berridge. The Ellington contention that there are only two kinds of music - good and bad - has been devalued by kneejerk, postmodern genre-bending, but Simcock's imagination really does seem to flow freely across classical and jazz without noticing the joins. Simcock, Goloubev and James Maddren celebrate the trio tradition of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett on some vivid originals here - and the young leader sounds as if he's wearing his immense knowledge more lightly, yet using it more incisively, than ever before.

from the **Evening Standard**

**13/11/2009 Jack Massarik, Evening Standard CD of the Week 4 Stars \*\*\*\***

Britain's rapidly maturing jazz maestro refuses to be categorised. Greig's piano concerto sits comfortably between fluent originals on this ambitious double album, his most impressive work yet. Heard solo, with strings and in a trio with drummer James Maddren and Russian bassist Yuri Goloubev, his playing pulses with life and covers a wide emotional range. Some listeners liken him to fellow Brit John Taylor but his combination of lyricism and surging vitality more strongly suggests Chick Corea and the late Michel Petrucciani. And in his spare time, this world-class improviser also plays some nimble French horn.

**13/11/09 Mike Hobart, Financial Times 4 stars\*\*\*\***

Prize-winning UK pianist Gwilym Simcock's double CD seamlessly blends classical roots and jazz references with both depth and stature



## TIMESONLINE

**28/11/2009 John Bungey, The Times 4 stars**

Further evidence of the young pianist's abundant talents is revealed on two CDs that range from interpretations of standards and Grieg through to his own suite for cello and piano plus jazz compositions. Solo and with his trio, he can dazzle, blurring distinctions between jazz and classical. You can hear a debt to Keith Jarrett, particularly on a bravura version of On Broadway, and perhaps Brad Mehldau, too. Nevertheless, a powerful individual voice is emerging.



**09/11/2009 John Kelman, Allaboutjazz.com**

*Blues Vignette* aims for even more ambitious territory; a double-disc set featuring the continually-evolving pianist solo, in trio with bassist Yuri Goloubev and drummer James Maddren, and in duet with cellist Cara Berridge, a member of the six-piece Sacconi Strings heard with Simcock, Garland, and bassist Malcolm Creese on Acoustic Triangle's *3 Dimensions* (Audio-B, 2008). The result is an eclectic set that more vividly demonstrates the true breadth of Simcock's range, with largely original music ranging from the overt classicism of his two-part "Suite for Cello

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and Piano" and a decidedly swinging albeit knottily arranged look at George Gershwin's "Nice Work If You Can Get It," to a propulsive and free-wheeling solo version of the Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil classic, "On Broadway," and three improvised miniatures that position Simcock as a young Keith Jarrett in-the-making.

It may be bold to compare Simcock with Jarrett, but it's apt. He plays nothing like the iconic pianist, but draws from equally broad sources when he improvises, creating music that's neither jazz nor classical by conventional definition, but liberally blends aesthetic choices from both. Simcock may, over the course of the 50-minute solo performance that opens the first CD, still be searching for his voice, but it's clearly emerging on tracks like "Exploration on Mvt II of Grieg Piano Concerto," where the pianist's avoidance of "look at me" gymnastics and allegiance to the power of nuance makes for a compelling example of slow, subtle, and gradual majesty.

Simcock's growth as a composer has been running in parallel with his rapid trajectory as a player, with "Suite for Cello and Piano"—a through-composed, 21-minute work of colorful impressionism and direct lyricism—again emphasizing substance over style, despite impressive performances by both Simcock and Berridge.

Every segment of *Blues Vignette* shines individually, but the trio music on the second disc demonstrates, perhaps, the most palpable growth over *Perception* if only because, instrumentally-speaking, it's the most directly comparable. On the simmering intensity of Simcock's "Tundra," Simcock, Goloubev, and Maddren demonstrate the same empathic, unfettered interaction that can be heard in contemporary trios by pianists John Taylor, Bobo Stenson, Brad Mehldau, and, of course, Jarrett. Simcock's sponge-like ability to assimilate new ideas into a cogent voice makes him an easy partner with every one of these significant pianists. A major statement that spotlights his multifaceted interests with pristine clarity, on *Blues Vignette*, Gwilym Simcock has arrived.

<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=34728>

### 09/11/2009 Chris Parker, Vortex Website

As well as possessing an exquisite touch and an extraordinarily fecund musical imagination, so that robust yet delicate embellishments flow from his fingers in breathtaking profusion, he is also a great listener, allowing the sensitivity and power of both Maddren and Goloubev (whose arco technique in particular is matchless) to shine alongside his own, so that on both solo/duo and trio discs, Simcock demonstrates just why he has established himself so quickly as a world-class talent. Warmly recommended.



01/11/09 Clayton Hirst, WalesHome.org

Blues Vignette will cement Gwilym Simcock's reputation at the vanguard of the contemporary British jazz scene.

<http://waleshome.org/2009/11/the-accidental-jazz-pianist/>



### 01/11/09 Selwyn Harris, Jazzwise 4 stars\*\*\*\*

Stunning..... Gwilym Simcock has moved up to an entirely new level.

### 01/09/09 Helen Mayhew, JazzFM



"Just when you thought the piano could go no further in jazz one emerges to raise the bar of invention and virtuosity still higher. On this recording Gwilym Simcock seems to have breached a dam of inhibition and let loose a flood of music that is truly exhilarating".

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## **Peter Quinn, The Arts Desk 22/11/09**

Melodically rich, harmonically daring, rhythmically subtle, pianist Gwilym Simcock's quartet piece, "Longing To Be", which kicked off last night's Queen Elizabeth Hall gig was one of the most jaw-dropping performances I've heard at this year's London Jazz Festival. Opening with an expansive, über-romantic solo from the pianist in free time, the piece unfolded quite beautifully with the layered introduction of Yuri Goloubev's bowed bass, James Maddren's understated percussion and Klaus Gesing's haunting soprano sax. Both bassist and drummer are members of Simcock's trio that features on his new double album, *Blues Vignette*. Goloubev, a former bassist with the Bolshoi Opera and Yuri Bashmet's elite Moscow Soloists, produced a tone of special magnificence while Maddren, currently studying jazz percussion at the Royal Academy of Music, was the epitome of restraint, favouring the delicate timbres of brushes and soft sticks.

[http://www.theartsdesk.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=563:gwilym-simcock-queen-elizabeth-hall&Itemid=27](http://www.theartsdesk.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=563:gwilym-simcock-queen-elizabeth-hall&Itemid=27)

## **24/11/09 Seb Scotney, London Jazz**

"hearing Simcock again also brings a recapping, a re-familiarizing of the ears to what it is that makes the jaw drop so often when he's playing. This was an intense musical experience."

<http://londonjazz.blogspot.com/2009/11/review-gwilym-simcock-trio.html>

## **30/11/09 Peter Bacon, The Jazz Breakfast**

And so to the beginning of something really big – or, at least I hope it grows into that: a major piano trio on the world stage, up there with Mehldau, the Standards Trio, with Charlap's and Barron's and the Stefano Bollani Trio – because Simcock, Goloubev and Maddren do sound they have found a magical place already. A great album and hard to believe it's still only in recording terms a sophomore outing. Long may this trio last.

<http://thejazzbreakfast.wordpress.com/2009/11/30/disc-of-the-day-30-11-09/>

## **LINKS**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00p1gyr/Jazz\\_Club\\_22\\_11\\_2009/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00p1gyr/Jazz_Club_22_11_2009/)

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