

Double-bassist, **BARRY GUY** shows no sign of slowing down, his passion and imagination for free-wheeling improvisation and adventurous orchestral composition utterly undiminished as he nears the occasion of his 70th birthday. **Philip Clark** spoke to the ever-engaging musician responsible for the diffuse sounds on this month's exclusive Intakt-curated *Jazzwise* covermount CD, ahead of a celebratory performance at the Vortex this April



COVERMOUNT CD: BARRY GUY ON INTAKT

BARRY GUY ON INTAKT RECORDS

CELEBRATION AT
VORTEX JAZZ CLUB LONDON
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www.intaktrec.ch/london2017

This month *Jazzwise* is proud to present an exclusive retrospective of music from the restlessly creative bassist **Barry Guy**. We let the man himself explain the origins of each of the selected pieces and introduce the choices in his own words: "The tracks on this sampler CD were selected from an extensive discography of music on the Intakt label, recorded over many years. Without doubt, the music offered is the result not only of my own fortunate adventures and liaisons, but importantly the support from the team at Intakt Records – Patrik Landolt and Rosmarie A. Meier who recognised the potential for an ongoing creative partnership, which survives to this day. Maya Homburger – baroque violinist and organiser extraordinaire of my affairs, represents the other part of this team that has become fundamental to the success of the projects. Together with the musicians that have devoted their time, energy and creativity to perform and record these pieces we can show an exciting soundworld with ever changing colours and structures, a music which is constantly evolving and transforming players and audiences alike. My thanks go to all involved."

1 'Harmos' – with London Jazz Composers Orchestra

(From the album *Harmos*, Intakt CD 013)
With this piece I aimed for a celebratory feeling where melody would drive the musical discourse. In this track, after a fiery introduction, Trevor Watts defines the direction with an impassioned improvisation rising out of the melody. When composing this music, I had Trevor's sound in my head.

2 'The Blue Shroud: Song 3' – Barry Guy Blue Shroud Band

(From the album *The Blue Shroud*, Intakt CD 266)
The Blue Shroud as a composition visits many musical areas and, in most, the voice of Savina Yannatou has a huge presence. During this extract, we hear her beautifully sensitive singing of the words by the Irish poet Kerry Hardie, describing a most poignant moment observed in a detail from Picasso's masterpiece 'Guernica'.

3 'Alar' – Evan Parker/Barry Guy

(From the album *Studio/Live: Birds and Blades*, Intakt CD 080)
Birds and Blades alludes to the cut and thrust of close-knit encounters where creativity, history and technique come together to invent a most intriguing exchange of musical details. This double-album featured improvisations from a studio session and a live concert. 'Alar' is a studio piece.

4 'Double Trouble' – with London Jazz Composers Orchestra

(From the album *Double Trouble*, Intakt CD 019)
This sequence from *Double Trouble* features my now deceased friend Paul Rutherford. He and Trevor Watts set me off on what I thought was a difficult undefined direction in music. However, the support and energy offered by all in the Spontaneous Music Ensemble gave me confidence to research new regions of musical communication. During the so-called 'Spanish march' section (the title coined because of the percussive march articulations), Paul plays so beautifully over the orchestra, a reminder of his wonderful ability to deliver thoroughly original improvisation.

5 'Promise' – Maya Homburger/Barry Guy Duo

(From the album *Tales of Enchantment*, Intakt CD 202)
Perhaps this music would never have been written except for a moment where, in discussion with Evan Parker and Paul Lytton, they suggested that I should do the 'decent thing' and marry my then girlfriend, Maya Homburger, who incidentally first heard the LJCO when we were rehearsing 'Harmos' in Switzerland. She liked what she heard! Well, I did the 'decent thing' much later in 1998, but well before the Homburger/Guy duo was formed to present baroque masterpieces and new music composed for our duo. The three pieces here are selected from a suite of seven movements reflecting the work of US artist Elana Gutmann.

6 'Shadow' – Maya Homburger/Barry Guy Duo

(From the album *Tales of Enchantment*, Intakt CD 202)

7 'Whistling' – Maya Homburger/Barry Guy Duo

(From the album *Tales of Enchantment*, Intakt CD 202)

8 'Inscape Tableaux Part VII' – Barry Guy New Orchestra

(From the album *Inscape – Tableaux*, Intakt CD 066)
The Barry Guy New Orchestra was realised following a discussion with Patrik Landolt. He suggested a more 'lean' ensemble contrasting with the LJCO that would be easier to assemble. Subsequently, after ruminating over the orchestral possibilities of a smaller group, I brought together musicians that had all, at some time, played together. This coalesced into an ensemble of strong personalities all

happy to work with each other. The BGNO is a fiery group capable of wonderful sophistication.

9 'Light Bearer – The Blue Shroud' – Barry Guy Blue Shroud Band

(From the album *The Blue Shroud*, Intakt CD 266)
Here we are, back with the Blue Shroud Band. The ensemble was specifically formed to realise my composition *The Blue Shroud*. The music is through-composed but, of course, utilises the creative improvisations of the musicians. An important aspect of the work is the baroque music element which demanded special skills to perform the fragments of music from H.I.F. Biber and J.S. Bach, as well as improvisations appropriate to my material. In this 'Light Bearer' section we hear the wonderful alto-playing of Michael Niesemann, who also happens to be the oboe player on 'Song 3', also on this compilation. He is also a professor of oboe in Essen and principal oboe in John Eliot Gardiner's English Baroque Soloists. I should mention that Maya Homburger, also in the Blue Shroud Band, has led Gardiner's orchestra many times, and Fanny Paccoud our viola player currently works with the same ensemble.

10 'Blue Horizon'

– Guy/Crispell/Lytton
(From the album *Deep Memory*, Intakt CD 273)
This is a trio that gets together for specific projects given the geographic separation of its members (US, Belgium, Switzerland). Intakt has encouraged our meetings to play and record some of my musical strategies written for the classic piano, bass and drums format. An exhibition of paintings by the Irish artist Hughie O' Donoghue gave the inspiration (and titles) for this album. I've always found it exciting to write for this trio, and this CD represents our fourth project.

11 'Return Of Ulysses'

– Trio BEYOND with Jürg Wickihalder/Barry Guy/Lucas Niggli
(From the album *Beyond*, Intakt CD 277)
A recent manifestation, BEYOND is a trio from heaven! The chemistry is so special and we have a ball performing Jürg's compositions. However, here's one track taken from our recent tour that happens to be from my pen, where we find the trio in top athletic form. It's the appropriate track to end this sampler.

Barry Guy appears on 16 April at the Intakt Festival at the Vortex Jazz Club, London – for full information and tickets please visit www.intaktrec.ch/london2017



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