

Finn Peters

Su Ling

Babel | ★★★★★

Peters (ts, fl), Nick Ramm (ky), Tom Herbert (b) and Tom Skinner (d). Rec. 2006

It's taken the best part of a decade for Peters to "come home" to jazz, owing to extensive work in areas as disparate as contemporary classical and electronica but it's been worth the wait. *Su Ling* is a work of poise and maturity that sees the 31-year-old multi-reed man deliver big time at the head of a quintet of familiar F-ire faces with whom he has a longstanding chemistry. This decisively defines the music here. Skinner and Herbert form an impressively subtle but solid rhythm section while Ram and Okumu strike just the right balance between their roles as accompanists and soloists, adding deft, subtle harmonic nuances



Finn Peters Finntet On tour

Finn Peters, the British saxophonist and flautist, has always sounded like a player who didn't need much acquaintance with an unfamiliar context to be able to make a difference to it. But house music, contemporary classical music (with the group Nosferatu) and production have occupied much of his time – he has played with artists as different as classical pianist Frederick Rzewski, drummer Giovanni Hidalgo, DJ Spinna, and American saxist Sam Rivers. Last year's widely-acclaimed *Su-Ling* album was thus a belated jazzier venture, with that formidable F-ire Collective partnership of guitarist Dave Okumu, pianist Nick Ramm, bassist Tom Herbert and drummer Tom Skinner. The title track of *Su-Ling* (the name of an Indonesian flute) featured this versatile musician's private side, breathing wisps of sound over delicately-stepping treble piano and deep bowed bass. The group was this year's winner of Radio 3's Jazz Line-Up Best Band prize at the BBC Jazz Awards. **JF** *Big City Jazz Festival, Millennium Square, Leeds, Mon 27; Vortex Jazz Club, N16, Fri 31*

Pat Metheny & Brad Mehldau

★★★★★

Metheny Mehldau

NONESUCH

METHENY
MEHLDAU

This meeting of monsters is a mesmerising listen. On mostly duets of new material, the players encircle and entwine each other with refinement and intimacy. This first meeting shows a palpable mutual understanding (and careful studying of the other's recordings), their music warm, intricate, entirely absorbing.

Joe Lovano Ensemble

★★★★★

Streams Of Expression

BLUE NOTE

Another major, widescreen effort by tenor Lovano, a player whose every musical utterance seems to embody jazz's history, spirit and possibilities. This ambitious, sonorous recording centres on two substantial compositions, including the hypnotic *Birth Of The Cool Suite* written and conducted by Third Stream pioneer Gunther Schuller.

Finn Peters

★★★★★

Su-Ling

BABEL

A rich and expansive acoustic jazz debut from the flautist and tenor more commonly heard in a range of contemporary classical and club contexts. Coltrane and Dolphy inspire his blowing style, but it's the enterprising ensemble arrangements and wide-ranging, imaginative compositions that mark out Finn Peters as a major figure in the making.

Triosk

★★★★★

The Headlight Serenade

LEAF



An Australian piano trio specialising in evolving minimalist vignettes shot through with electronic textures. Here, the electronica is integrated into the organic whole (rather than the pre-recorded loops of previous releases) and the result is an intriguing, beautiful organism of an album, which calms and unnerves in equal measure. **CI**

Finn Peters

SU-LING

Babel BDV2664

He is a renowned alto player and also proves to be a fine flautist.

The title of this enjoyable and accessible album refers to a flute used in Javanese music, which is very appropriate as in addition to being one of the UK's finest alto sax players Finn is also an excellent flautist. The band features the superb guitarist Dave Okumu and a premier division rhythm section, Nick Ramm (piano), Tom Herbert (bass) and Tom Skinner (drums).

The compositions for *SU-LING* are originals by Finn alone or in collaboration with other members of the quintet, and point to his keen interest in ethnomusicology, specifically centred on Latin and African music which permeates this CD.

Its an album of rich rhythms, dynamic sounds and complex playing that has a lightness of touch and strong melodic. Luminous African-nuanced textures jostle with Afro Caribbean and Brazilian music, whilst the production manages a seamless adaptation of contemporary groove music and electronics to an organic, acoustic environment, but don't worry about all that just put it in the player, and gasp.



Finn Peters

Su-Ling

★★★★★

(Babel) £12.99

Finn Peters, the 31-year-old British saxophonist and flautist, has always sounded like a player who didn't need much acquaintance with an unfamiliar context to be able to make a difference to it. But house music, contemporary classical music (with the group Nosferatu) and production have occupied much of his time – so this is a belated jazz album from him, with the formidable F-ire Collective partnership of guitarist Dave Okumu, pianist Nick Ramm, bassist Tom Herbert and drummer Tom Skinner. Peters adopts a Wayne Shorter-like mix of muttered, insinuating lines and hollow, dolorous long notes in the opening Latin section of *Al Dar Gazelli* before it opens out into free swing. The handclapping/bass-riffing *Red Fish* is catchy but gets muscular as its squirming melody develops. And the title track (the name of an Indonesian flute) has Peters breathing wisps of sound over delicately stepping treble piano and deep bowed bass. Nelson's *Blood* mixes a contemporary-classical intro with devious flute improv and accordion sounds from Ramm's synths, and *Machine Gun* has the kind of playfully wayward melodies, collective tussles, electronics-broadsides and rhythmic unpredictability that could have muscled in on some of the slighter Latin groovers more. But it's a welcome return to full-on jazz for a gifted exponent. **JF**

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Finn Peters



Finn Peters

Su Ling [Babel]

This highly anticipated solo debut confirms what many have suspected all along: saxophonist/flautist Peters – a F-IRE collective member who has also worked with innovative electronic funk producer IG Culture – is a force to be reckoned with. The improvising, particularly on flute, is punchy and aggressive but also full of poise and a sensible use of space. His writing, for a very cohesive quintet that features pianist Nick Ramm and guitarist David Okumu among others, is articulate and experimental. Peters swings through post-bop, Asian modes and avant-garde abstraction with all the confidence of a man whose time has come.

Finn Peters



FINN PETERS SU-LING (BABEL)

For some, the new acoustic ensemble piece from this 31-year-old multi-reedist could be perceived as Finn Peters coming home, or going back to his roots. After all, he's dabbled in anything from house to broken and latin fusion in recent years. However you like, it's a stunning piece of contemporary music, with the F-IRE all-stars in full effect. Whether working with Javanese modes ('Su-Ling'), wistful ballad ('Ballad Boy') or latin 6/8 ('Gato' for the man Barbeiri perhaps?) the Finntet of Peters, drummer Tom Skinner (who Finn first played with at 13), bassist Tom Herbert, guitar man Dave Okumu, and keyboardist Nick Ramm, demonstrate their almost telepathic chemistry nurtured at countless gigs like the Tomorrow's Warriors Jam sessions, complementing each other throughout while striking the perfect balance between accompaniment and solo time. As for the leader, his sax tones are as rich as ever and he flies with grace on flute – even on the stark protest piece 'Machine Gun'. Dolphy, Rahsaan, Trane, even Hermeto, they're all in the mix but, make no mistake, this is an open-ended, pluralistic vision from true British sound scientist. (AP)