

Tom Ward biog 2022-07

THE SHORT-ISH VERSION

Tom Ward is a musician, composer and computer programmer from Yorkshire, currently based in London. His primary instrument is the saxophone, but in recent years he has also increasingly explored the bass clarinet and flute. Tom leads a number of groups playing his own compositions (including Madwort Saxophone Quartet and Madwort's Menagerie), as well as collaborating on a number of freely improvised and collective groups including Cotovelo (PortaJazz), Spinningwork, Ma/ti/om, and an ever-shifting variety of duos and trios. He co-runs the regular BRÅK night, an improvised music gig in a South London homebrew shop where he has played with such improvisers as John Edwards, Corey Mwamba, Charlotte Keeffe and more. As a side-person, he has toured/performed with Dee Byrne's Outlines, Beats & Pieces Big Band, Overground Collective, Favourite Animals, Porpoise Corpus and many more. In 2020, he was heavily involved in Noise Orchestra's Autonomous Noise Unit (ANU) project, building an easy-to-use standalone JackTrip device for realtime online musical collaboration, as well as facilitating live internet broadcasts from multiple locations using JackTrip for London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO) and Sloth Racket.

REVIEW QUOTES

"cutting-edge contemporary music, but it's unexpectedly engaging emotionally, and deeply rooted in imaginative composition." - Madwort Saxophone Quartet @ The Guardian (John Fordham)

"...a curious beauty, where melodies have the ephemeral quality of dreams and harmonies like their lingering aftereffect upon waking, slowly and greeted by soft daylight, and the motion of the music is fitful and anxious, as if children unable to sit still in church pews during a morning service." - Madwort's Menagerie @ Bird is the Worm

"astonishingly nimble bass clarinet", "Ward's alto excursion combined fluency with incisiveness," - John Pope Quintet @ The Jazz Mann

"On Imaginary Junction, this quartet has managed to express itself in a way that stimulates both the conscious and subconscious minds. The result is an unusual and intriguing recording" - Imaginary Junction @ Avant Music News

"a collection of split tones, slurs and cries from Ward's reeds keep the narratives barbed as well as brimming with ideas" Vestiges @ JazzWord

"the players embrace the openness of the lineup's sound, with the inherent airiness buoyed by syncopated rhythms, counter melodies, and daring improvisation" - Madwort's Menagerie @ FreeJazzBlog

"a stimulating and engaging album" - Ma/ti/om Live in London @ Opduvel

THE LONG VERSION

Tom Ward is a musician, composer and computer programmer from Yorkshire, currently based in London. His primary instrument is the saxophone, and in recent years he has also been involved in a variety of projects playing bass clarinet and flute. Tom leads the Madwort Saxophone Quartet, formed to play his compositions with three other exciting saxophonists: Chris Williams (Led Bib, Let Spin); Cath Roberts (Sloth Racket, LUME) and Andrew Woolf (Alvorada, Button Band). Their debut album "Live at Hundred Years Gallery" on Efpi Records received a four-star review from John Fordham in the Guardian. Tom also explores his compositions with other ensembles, including Madwort's Menagerie - a sextet comprising flute, bass clarinet, trumpet, trombone, cello and double-bass.

Tom has a strong interest in freely improvised music. At the free improv night BRÅK, which he co-runs in a South London homebrew shop, he has played improvised duos with such improvisers as John Edwards, Corey Mwamba, Alex Bonney, Olie Brice, Charlotte Keeffe, John Pope, Sarah Gail Brand and more. He has a working duo partnership with Manchester-based keyboard player Adam Fairhall, which has released two recordings on Tom's own Madwort imprint and has a third in the works. He was also part of the improvising group Ma/ti/om featuring Swedish percussionist Matilda Rolfsson and double bassist Tim Fairhall, which released two albums on Raw Tonk Records and toured the UK and Scandinavia.

In November 2017, Tom was invited to be part of a collaborative project jointly organised by PortaJazz Collective and the prestigious Guimarães Jazz Festival in Portugal. The project resulted in an album - Cotovelo - and a tour of Portugal. This link has continued to develop as Tom has worked in further collaborations with Porto-based musicians, including the improvising trio Vestiges (Nuno Trocado/Serio Tavares/Tom Ward).

During 2020, Tom began using JackTrip to facilitate musicians making music whilst locked down at home. This led to being heavily involved in the Noise Orchestra's Autonomous Noise Unit (ANU) project, creating & supporting an easy-to-use integrated device in an attempt to widen access. He facilitated live internet radio broadcasts for Sloth Racket and the London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO), as well as numerous other ad hoc private sessions. Along with collaborators, he used this technology to record an album of free improvisation with Imaginary Junction (Cath Roberts/Dirk Serries/Martina Verhoeven/Tom Ward), which was released on New Wave of Jazz. He also facilitated rehearsals of a new collaborative quartet project Spinningwork (Cath Roberts/Tom Ward/Olie Brice/Johnny Hunter), which has progressed to record a forthcoming album in-person for New Jazz and Improvised Music Recordings.

As a side-person, Tom has been a regular member of many groups including Dee Byrne's Outlines, anarchic London big band Overground Collective, Favourite Animals, Beats & Pieces Big Band (including touring EU/US/Canada), Peter Whittingham award-winning ensemble Porpoise Corpus, Seth Bennett's elegies, Combustible Alarms Big Band and Quadraceratops. He has also been an occasional member of many other groups including Anton Hunter's Article XI, the London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO), the London Jazz Orchestra (LJO), Moss Freed's Union Division, The John Pope Quintet, Ensemble Entropy, Yazz Ahmed's Family Hafla and more.

Tom has performed at around the UK including at LUME Festival, BRÅKFest, Raw Tonk Festival, London Jazz Festival, Manchester Jazz Festival, Lancaster Jazz Festival, Newcastle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music, Jazz North East, Cafe Oto, The Vortex, Hundred Years Gallery, Ronnie Scott's Club and many more), across Europe (Nonfigurativ Musikk in Norway, Bimhuis in Amsterdam, Guimarães Jazz Festival in Portugal, Bray Jazz Festival, Jazz Ring Festival in Poznan, Germany, and more) as well as in the USA (Rochester International Jazz Festival) and Canada (Toronto Jazz Festival and more).