



## TURACO MUSIC PRESS RELEASE

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# TOM HARRISON GROUP ft. CLEVELAND WATKISS



*"...a band to watch out for, all musicians showing authority and sophistication in their playing and a great selection of material. Duke for modern times."*

**Jazzwise, Feb 2016**

Tom Harrison's Ellington Project aims to explore the music of the genius jazz legend Duke Ellington and his long-time collaborator Billy Strayhorn. Following a year of intensive study of Ellington's music, Harrison embarked upon a UK tour in February 2016 to perform, develop and record the project. Harrison was interviewed by **Jazzwise** ahead of the tour, which can be read [here](#).

The tour was generously sponsored by **Arts Council England**, with all 8 dates selling out thanks to national and regional exposure in the press, including extended coverage on BBC television and Time Out London. Five gigs of the tour, including the project launch at Pizza Express Jazz Club, Dean St were recorded live, with a view to producing and releasing an album of the performances later in 2016. Jazzwise was among the



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publications to review the project, which can be found at the following link;

[Jazzwise Review: Live @ Kenilworth Jazz Society 1st February 2016](#)

[UK Vibe Review: Live @ Pizza Express Jazz Club 3rd February 2016](#)

[Bristol Jazz Log Review: Live @ Hen & Chicken Theatre 31st January 2016](#)

[Cheltenham Jazz Review: Live @ The Everyman Theatre 8th February 2016](#)

The group features an all star cast of British jazz musicians each defined by their unique voices as performers, who work together to not only interpret the music of Ellington, but transmit the joyful spirit of the dancehall music and Duke Ellington's legendary stage presence.

**Tom Harrison:** For alto saxophonist/composer Tom Harrison, the art of jazz is far more than mastery of the instrument, fluency in the repertoire and respect for the tradition. For Tom, the real undertaking is to connect with that which inspired the immortals of jazz, and to cultivate it within his own work. Since graduating from the renowned Trinity College of Music in 2012, Tom Harrison has performed or recorded with a host of internationally recognised jazz musicians in 12 countries, including Terrell Stafford, Joe Lovano, Jason Rebello, Michael Buckley and Jean Toussaint, as well as commercial artists such as Heather Small, M-People, Talib Kweli and The Fall. His debut album was well received by the media, described as “impressive” by Jazzwise and “a strong calling card” by All About Jazz. The album was launched with a 22-date UK tour, featuring a series of guest tenor saxophonists including Jean Toussaint and Paul Booth.



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**Cleveland Watkiss:** Featuring prominently in the group is internationally renowned vocalist Cleveland Watkiss. Described by The Evening Standard as “The best male vocalist in Britain,” Cleveland Watkiss won the London Jazz Award for Best Vocalist in 2010, and was voted Wire/Guardian Jazz Awards best vocalist for three consecutive years. Watkiss was born in Hackney, East London, to Jamaican parents. Watkiss was one of the co-founders of the vastly influential Jazz Warriors big band. His vocals can be heard on their debut album, *Out of Many People*. Watkiss has performed with a diverse range of artists from around the world, including: the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Wynton Marsalis & JALO, Bob Dylan, Art Blakey, Abdullah Ibrahim, Stevie Wonder and many more.

**Robert Mitchell:** In the early 90s, Robert Mitchell began to emerge as an important member of the London scene with two groups *Quite Sane* and *Tomorrow's Warriors*. Poles apart in their music and purpose, the diversity foretold Robert's wide-angle view of Jazz expression. This quickly led to further involvement internationally with Steve Coleman, Greg Osby, Courtney Pine and Steve Williamson. Over his nearly 20 years entrenched in the art of music, Robert has recorded eight albums of his own projects, participated in over 100 projects as a sideman and has performed in more than 40 countries.

**David Lyttle:** David Lyttle began performing professionally at the age of four in his folk group the Lyttle Family, playing bongos, bodhran and mini lambeg drum. At eight years old he added drum kit and by ten years old he was also studying cello and uilleann pipes. At eighteen he began focusing on the drum kit after taking an interest in jazz. David first



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reached a national audience with jazz guitar legend Louis Stewart in 2006. Over the next five years would feature a long list of international jazz icons in his touring bands, including Greg Osby, Soweto Kinch, Terell Stafford, Jason Rebello and Jean Toussaint. Since then, David has performed in over 20 countries. His MOBO nominated album 'Faces' featured collaborations with internationally recognised music stars, including Joe Lovano and rapper Talib Kweli. Rolling Stone magazine described Faces as *"sophisticated and sharp...one of the best, robust listening experiences you're likely to have all year."*

**Tom Harrison: Alto Saxophone**

**Cleveland Watkiss: Vocals**

**Robert Mitchell: Piano**

**Daniel Casimir: Bass**

**David Lyttle: Drums**

For more information visit [www.tomharrisonsax.com](http://www.tomharrisonsax.com)

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