

Orlando le Fleming

WANDERING TALK



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Bassist, bandleader and composer **Orlando le Fleming** continues to make music that crosses genres as readily as he crosses the Atlantic. After 20 years in New York City, he's back in his native UK, forging new pathways and renewing old partnerships. His love for the acoustic tradition continues unabated alongside his deep affection for the robust, muscular electric fusion that emerged in the 1980s.



The **Romantic Funk** project was born in New York's legendary 55 Bar to explore that legacy: now the new album **Wandering Talk** builds on the acclaim generated by 2020's **The Unfamiliar**, building on the framework with a set of collaborators that brings together London and New York, past and present, acoustic and electric, and merges it all into a spectacular whole. Following the same principles that served the project in NYC, le Fleming booked four Friday nights at London's renowned Vortex Club to workshop the music that would become the album, with a rotating cast of players which he honed down into the final line-up. Old London friends **Tom Cawley** (piano/keys) and **James Maddren** (drums) completed the rhythm section: new acquaintance **Nathaniel Facey** was picked from the ranks of the UK's brightest young saxophone players: NYC stalwart **Philip Dizack** flew in from the US to play trumpet: and reaching back to Orlando's school days and forward to his own family, onetime classmate **Chris Martin** (now of stadium rockers Coldplay) and his own daughter Nadia combined to provide vocals on a special setting of Rumi's poetry.

As before, the music combines fusion's flash and fire with a contemporary sensibility: this time, Orlando's questing spirit sends his superb band forward to investigate fresh areas of creativity in dynamic and texture. "Don't Dwell on It" makes a bravura opening statement, with Tom Cawley's keyboards sketching out stacked fourths to evoke the spirit of Mile's melodically spacious 80s fusion, as Facey and Dizack trade furious improvisations over the metric modulation – "I told them to go in at 90% and go up." "Tragic Magic" has a rubato melody inspired by Keith Jarrett over a powerhouse groove – "Sense of the Sacred" introduces Orlando's rich-toned acoustic bass to the mix, starting from a hushed ambience before building up into a colossal dramatic climax, à la Weather Report. By contrast, the acoustic 'Garden Shearing Blues' was inspired by the block chords of another UK musician who built a career stateside, George Shearing – "It's a blues... James sounds great swinging, and it's hard to find a drummer who can do pocket and swing as well."

'Repose' is an open Headhunters-type groove tune - an 8-bar sequence with plenty of space for improvisation, with Tom's Rhodes setting the tone – "Tom and I go back a long way - we think alike musically and personally." Nathaniel Facey makes his mark with a powerfully individual solo "Nathaniel has such great rhythmic imagination and has that roughness and adventurousness - he really brought the band alive - I love the contrast between him and Philip." Wayne Shorter wrote 'Plaza Real' and performed it with Weather Report and with his own live bands – "Wayne is my hero. His live version just builds and builds and builds, and so that's how we do it." A single take was all that was needed for 'Spots of Time' with Dizack delivering the stately melody over a rolling 12/8 groove. "Philip is such a mellow and musical trumpet player - but he can really create drama. He's essential to the project - we think alike."

Finally a surprise - Orlando's old schoolfriend Chris Martin contributes a starkly sincere vocal performance, singing words from a poem by Persian poet Rumi, in unison with Orlando's daughter Nadia. It's a complete contrast that somehow provides a perfect coda, a closing scene for the musical drama that unfolds across the album. This latest incarnation of Romantic Funk dazzles with its unashamed virtuosity but there's a new depth of dynamic and meaning that pulls the listener into Orlando le Fleming's continuously evolving sound world and the Wandering Talk that inspires it.

Personnel

Philip Dizack
trumpet

Nathaniel Facey (1,3,5,7) -
alto sax

Tom Cawley
piano, Rhodes MK8,
Prophet 12, Orberheim OB-6

James Maddren
drums

Orlando le Fleming
double bass

Chris Martin (8)
vocals

Nadia le Fleming (8)
vocals

Album Credits

Recorded at
Livingstone Studios, Woodgreen,
London UK

December 18 & 19 2023

Engineered by **Marcus Locock**
(vocals by **Bill Rahko** and
Orlando le Fleming)

Mixed by **Matt Marantz**

Mastered by **Nate Wood** at **Kerseboom**
Mastering

Producer **Orlando le Fleming**

Executive Producer - **Michael Janisch**

Photography by **Dennis Madden**

Album Artwork by **Alastair Graham**

Graphic Design by **Hugo Piper**