

# ECHOES OF SWING

Colin T. Dawson - trumpet & vocals  
Chris Hopkins - alto sax  
Bernd Lhotzky - piano  
Oliver Mewes - drums

Free from any museum nostalgia, the four musicians take their inspiration from the gigantic treasury of swinging jazz, from Bix to Bop, from Getz to Gershwin, while constantly searching for the hidden, the unexpected, the exquisite. The Great American Song book and the immeasurable recordings of great Jazz pioneers form the humus for the creativity of the combo, with astonishing arrangements, virtuoso solos and expressive compositions of their own.

Two horns, drums and piano. This unique, compact formation permits the greatest in harmony and flexibility and allows freedom for an agile, exact ensemble. The group thrives on a mixture of clever arrangements and interaction of improvised dialogue, performing for, and with one another.

The contemporary interpretation of an enormously varied repertoire and not last the humorous moderation and spontaneous stage presence, has helped gain ECHOES OF SWING great popularity and made the ensemble a much renowned and celebrated attraction on the international jazz scene.

More than 20 years of touring have led the ECHOES all across Europe and the USA, to Japan, New Zealand and even the Fiji Islands. The exceedingly diverse musical development of the band is in the meantime impressively documented on ten CDs. The ECHOES OF SWING album 'Message from Mars' received the 'Prix de l'Académie du Jazz' in Paris, and in Germany was awarded the 'German Record Critics' Award'.

In 2013 ECHOES OF SWING signed a contract with the renowned label 'ACT Music & Vision', which subsequently has produced their internationally acclaimed CDs BLUE PEPPER, DANCING and A TRIBUTE TO BIX BEIDERBECKE. The new and eagerly anticipated ECHOES OF SWING album TRAVELIN' has recently been released and is now being presented during concert tours all over Europe and abroad (for detailed information about the program download the 'product info' at [www.EchoesOfSwing.com](http://www.EchoesOfSwing.com)).

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## Recent awards

- \* German Record Critics' Award \*
- \* Prix de l'Académie du Jazz, Paris \*
- \* Swinging Hamburg Jazz-Award \*
- \* Downbeat (USA): 4 stars \*
- \* Rondo Magazine: 'masterpiece' \*
- \* Piano-News: CD of the month \*
- \* Grand Prix du Disque de Jazz (du Hot Club de France) \*

## Echo from the press:

'The Echoes continue to amaze and delight with their polymathic range and consistent originality. They don't echo, but renew.'

**DAN MORGENSTERN**

Director of the INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES at Rutgers State University,  
former chief editor of 'DOWNBEAT' magazine and multiple Grammy winner.

'A wonderful collection, each track is a gem! 'Echoes of Swing' collectively presents an approach like no other quartet, while individually each player is a master.'

**DICK HYMAN**

'There are no lack of bands that play vintage jazz. But Echoes Of Swing bring a couple of things to the party, that are unique: a spare lineup of alto saxophone, trumpet, piano and drums that leans heavily on the left hand of phenomenal stride pianist Bernd Lhotzky; and their enthusiasm for not just creating vintage sounds but using them as raw materials for ambitiously modern arrangements, played immaculately.'

**DOWNBEAT**

'Among the TOP 15 JAZZ CDs OF THE Year'

**SCOTT YANOW**

'One of Europe's truly great small jazz ensembles'

**CD HOTLIST**

'Breath taking - these cats are the soul of professionals with heart. A killer jazz outing that you just have to hear to believe, this is a winner throughout!'

**MIDWEST RECORD**

'If there is one group from Europe that deserves to do a stateside tour, it is ECHOES OF SWING - majestic music'

**JERSEY JAZZ**

'A supercharged John Kirby group with Dizzy and Bird sitting in while at intervals the Lion shoves Al Haig off the piano stool. I've always liked the band and their swinging intricacies, but now they seem even more adventurous - the 'Echoes\*' are dedicated to something more expansive than recreating already established music'

**JAZZ LIVES**

'Authentic, relaxed, joyful and highly musical - if this music doesn't brighten your day, well, you may need a prescription of sorts'

**JAZZSCENE**

'Vintage music without a hint of Brylcreem, punctilious arrangements with an effervescent sense of swing.'

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

'There's evidence all the way through this album of clever thought. The foursome's collective swing expertise is a joy to hear.'

**JAZZWISE**

'How would swing have evolved if bebop had never come along? Echoes Of Swing, a superb quartet gives a few possible clues on Blue Pepper. The music of Echoes Of Swing is never predictable and always thought-provoking.'

**LOS ANGELES JAZZSCENE**

'Seldom have I heard such perfection. I'm totally thrilled! A conscious of tradition, contemporary musical performance of the highest order.'

**JOE KIENEMANN**

Jazz producer of Bavarian Radio from 1971 – 2003

'I've been listening to these guys for a few years now and they are always full of surprises. This CD is their best yet. They all have a deep understanding of the literature and they play from inside. How they do it all with four instruments is beyond me.'

**SCOTT HAMILTON**

'It's hard to believe at first that there are only four instruments here. The arrangements are so ingenious, and the playing so nimble, that it could be at least twice that number. But listen closely and you will discover just a quartet of trumpet, alto saxophone, piano and drums – with absolutely no electronic tricks. The style is sophisticated small-band swing, the material a judicious mixture of originals and swing-era numbers and there is not a hint of whiskery nostalgia in any of it. It's about time this idiom received some fresh attention and here's the perfect curtain-raiser.'

\*\*\*\* 4 star review \*\*\*\*

**THE GUARDIAN/THE OBSERVER**

'The playing on this album is of a very high standard and the 15 tracks cover a lot of ground. So you'll find Bechet, Ellington, and Fats Waller songs here and picks for me include Paolo Conte's perky 'Azzurro', and an inventive arrangement and performance of 'Blue Moon' and a lovely take on 'Blue River' with the line Dawson sings softly against honky-tonk piano, Catlett-like drums and Benny Carter-like sax 'Do you hold the memory of a vanished dream?' the burning question you imagine all four players want to ask throughout the album.'

**MARLBANK**

'This record has recently won the top awards a jazz record can win in France and Germany and tell you what, it's so cool I almost can't handle it. Anyone who ever dug Raymond Scott will get this set immediately. It sounds like some old timey recording until you start to pay real attention and hear that it has a today hipness that just didn't exist 70 years ago. Then comes the gotcha. Even the originals sound like they could have leapt off Scott's scratch pad. By defying all convention, these jazzbos present the crème that rises to the top. You don't have to be hipster Eurotrash to dig this, you just have to get off on killer players pushing the envelope in unexpected ways. An absolutely welcome tonic from start to finish.'

**MIDWEST RECORD (USA)**

'...the group plays with absolutely impeccable time and a sense of swing that is simultaneously dead serious and lightly, elegantly fun. On 'Message from Mars' they adapt classical melodies by the likes of Chopin and Shostakovich(!), and take on respected standards like 'Don't Explain' and 'Spring Is Here' with new arrangements that are as respectful as they are innovative. There are even a few originals slyly thrown in, among them a very fine blues composition by saxophonist Chris Hopkins playfully titled 'Twilightnin' Hopkins'. This album is a delight from beginning to end.'

**MUSIC MEDIA MONTHLY (USA)**

'There was a joke (I hope that's what it was) about a young tenor player who, when asked if he listened to the past masters of the instrument, replied, 'Sure, man, I go all the way back to Coltrane'. Regrettably, such historical innocence is not rare, so it is gratifying to listen to the fifth recording by the German-based quartet Echoes of Swing, who are quite familiar with the music's history and do it honour in recreating some of its styles...It should be emphasized that the playing on this CD is far

from dry, sterile museum fare. It is full of vitality, actually transporting the listener's imagination back to the Swing Era. But lest one think these folks live exclusively in pre-Modern times, Dawson's two vocals sound a lot like 1950s Chet Baker and at one point Hopkins quotes from Charlie Parker's Bebop anthem 'Ornithology'.

**CADENCE MAGAZINE (USA)**

'If this is the kind of music that's played on Mars, then book me on the next rocket launch to the red planet. Put simply, the Echoes of Swing get it on big time, with a distinct nod to the sound produced by the John Kirby Sextet even though there are two fewer musicians. However, it would be unfair to label the foursome a Kirby Quartet Clone. Not when the quartet echoes an Ellington small group sound in essaying 'Twilightnin' Hopkins' and turns to the classics for a boogiebeat version of Shostakovich's 'Gavotte'... The band's program is a hoot, beginning with the old Dixie dandy, 'Shake It And Break It,' given a sleek treatment by Hopkins, and ending with the previously mentioned 'Gavotte'. Between the salad and dessert, the musical smorgasbord offers one delectable delight after another... '

**THE AMERICAN RAG (USA)**

'No, the aliens haven't landed. And this isn't a detour into NASA's territory or a nostalgic trip back to the Mickey Mouse Club (although I haven't been able to get one ancient 'The Martians come to New York' joke out of my head\*). MESSAGE FROM MARS is the name of a splendid new disc by Echoes of Swing, a world-class band that lives up to its name and more. While retaining its essential identity - flexible and convincing - this quartet can sound like a much larger unit, and the disc is characterized by a delightful variety in mood, tempo, and approach. The players are superb chameleons who remain true to themselves... The music produced here is both profound and hilariously flighty, skittering from surprise to surprise... MESSAGE FROM MARS offers a deliciously subtle and witty tasting menu of music - a disc you could listen to all the way through without the slightest hint of monotony, at the same time, you could savor each of the sixteen miniatures for its own surprises without ever getting tired. '

**JAZZ LIVES (USA)**

'How refreshing and new, not at all as rusty as some traditional jazz can sound today. These four masters of swing play with such ease that one can only admire...'

**HIFI STATEMENT**

'A mixture of virtuosity and humour...thrilling!'

**STERN MAGAZINE**

'...a heavenly, beautiful album. Mercurial and full of wonderful timeless ideas.'

**RONDO: Highest rating 5 \*\*\*\*\* ('Masterpiece')**

'On the same niveau as the old masters...'

**SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG**

'The human race has not yet settled on Mars, and still the red planet sends us a swinging message back to us on earth. Transmitting the signal are trumpeter Colin T. Dawson, the altosaxophonist Chris Hopkins, piano player Bernd Lhotzky and drummer Oliver Mewes, every one an experienced top musician. They combine Armstrong's searing power with Ellington's blaze of colours.'

**AUDIO**

'Swing is not dead, infact it never left us. This is a real treat for intent music listeners. In the music of Avant-Garde jazzers such as Lester Bowie or Dave Douglas, one is facinated not only by their modernness, but also by their parallel respect & affection for the history of jazz. With the German-English-American quartet 'Echoes of Swing' there appears here to be a musical situation going in the opposite direction. As the band name gives away, Swing is the basis of their music. From there, the four of them travel along a winding path of musical mysteries, some of which Swing helped to form. And where the acoustic footprints have left their mark in such a productive way as here, it would be

absurd to talk about music that belongs in a museum or locked up in some collection. ...hard to believe but this music, with ingenious arrangements, performed 'en passant', elegant, inspired, has all the qualities to keep the jazz fans of not only yesterday content, but also of the jazz fans of tomorrow.

**HAMBURGER ABENDBLATT**

'You don't have to be a dedicated jazz fan to allow yourself to be carried away by the pure lust of music making - that this quartet does here, with every tune they present. Just listening to the CD (and when you're actually hearing the band live)... Now we know – jazz can be fun again'

**TASTENWELT**

'...Hopkins, Dawson, Lhotzky and Mewes take 'Swing' as an art form very seriously but also interpret it with great relish. This makes it simply a pleasure from start to finish. The next Jazz Prize is surely on its way!'

**WESTFÄLISCHER ANZEIGER**

'Jazzy Chopin is Hot'

**TROUW daily newspaper, Holland**

'...here 'Swing' of the highest niveau is literally, in the meaning of the word, 'celebrated'. Music that swings from the first to the last note. Simply unparalleled! The exceptional line-up of the band perhaps leads you to anticipate exceptional music. Everything is immensely harmonious, rich in variety and enthralling in every scene...As far as I am aware there is no other band that possess this kind of laid back feel that - as it stands in their name - they show here in abundance. Respect! It's a delight.'

**SWINGING HAMBURG**

'...that this quartet has been for years a 'one of a kind' on the German jazz scene, with CD productions and a well booked calendar, they have justifiably received great recognition. With this prize-worthy CD we can imagine from the critics an imaginary 5 stars, with an extra one on top, confirms it once again.'

**JAZZ PODIUM**

'...the recordings are through a highest possible degree of mutual 'listening to one another', interaction, and spontaneity...on elegant virtuosity. The four belong to the most prolific musicians of this genres and their marvelous relaxed arrangements take you by surprise with stylistic diversity, but also burn with such an energy that we expect of 'Swing'. This is a musical packet that swoops from Bach to Bebop. When this group play swing then it is never going to be a trip down memory lane.

What comes out the speakers is young and packed full of suspense.'

**MÜNCHNER MERKUR**

**W. Royal Stokes' Best and Notable Releases of the past year (a.o.):**

Bob Brookmeyer and the New Art Orchestra, Standards (ArtistShare)  
Chick Corea/Stefano Bollani, Orvieto: Recorded Live at Umbria Jazz Winter 2010 (ECM)  
Eddie Daniels/Roger Kellaway, Live at the Library of Congress (IPO)

**ECHOES OF SWING: Message from Mars (EOSP)**

Sir Roland Hanna, Colors from a Giant's Kit (IPO)

Julia Hülsmann Trio, Imprint (ECM)

Brad Mehldau, Live in Marciac (Nonesuch)

Pat Metheny, What's It All About (Nonesuch)

Phil Woods & Bill Mays, Phil & Bill (Palmetto)