Henry Spencer - The Defector

AMP Records, 29 September 2023



Rising star trumpeter, composer and bandleader Henry Spencer presents his sophomore album The Defector on September 29. After his debut was lauded internationally, with Jazzwise naming it an “impressively bold opening statement from a trumpet newcomer who stands out from the crowd,” Spencer returns with an album of originals dedicated to those who defect, literally or figuratively, striving for a better life for themselves and those around them.

“I’m unable to fully relate to, or describe, these defectors’ suffering and bravery in the face of extreme danger, but I’m inspired by, and have a deep admiration for their moral courage, strength and determination to improve their situation and help others around them,” Spencer explains. “As much as I fail, I think it’s worthwhile and honourable to emulate, even slightly, these qualities in our own ordinary lives.”

Spencer’s music touches jazz, rock, minimalism, and at times is cinematic, combining intense, raw energy and evocative outlets, with moments of intimate, heart-felt, emotionally-led, lyrical melodies - almost as if there were words being sung. That is no coincidence; Spencer uses lyrics as part of his writing process. “I find this helps to keep the connection between the music and the original intent behind the composition and also gives the music its melodic nature, helping to draw the listener into the narrative. Without words the listener and performer are freer to interpret the music in their own personal way.” The Defector is no different, presenting nine pieces of soaring trumpet, melodic piano and overall, sincere emotional intent rooted in genuine experience.

Whether it’s a soldier deserting from an army committing war crimes, the partner that leaves their abusive relationship, or the politician facing adversity for challenging his peers, The Defector is a melodic, sensitive, and compassionate ode to their courage, and an effort to embrace that strength in us all.

Henry Spencer trumpet, flugel, composition | **Ant Law** guitar | **Matt Robinson** piano, Fender Rhodes | **Andrew Robb** bass | **David Ingamells** drums | **John Garner** violin | **Marie Schreer** violin | **Lydia Abell** viola | **Colin Alexander** cello

WAVs here - Private listening link here - Artwork here

More info, CD requests or other inquiries? I’d love to hear from you - arlette@thatjazzgirl.me

Tracklist

1. The Defector
2. Perfect Hindrance
3. Undone
4. Moment Gained
5. Not My Country
6. Introduction to Without a Voice
7. Without a Voice
8. Overlap
9. Here (for Chicca)

All compositions/strings arrangements by Henry Spencer
except 'Overlap' and 'Introduction to Without a Voice' composed by George Stevenson.

Cover photo by Carl Ulrich Russ-Mohl

About the artist

Henry Spencer grew up on a working farm in Wiltshire (UK), then moved to London where he studied at conservatoire (The Guildhall School of Music) whilst establishing himself as a trumpeter, composer and bandleader on the London jazz scene. Upon moving to the city, he immediately began performing, recording and touring, independently of the conservatoire, in jazz groups, pop/rock bands and recording sessions. His group's debut performance resulted in him winning the Best Newcomer Award at Marlborough Jazz Festival and later he won the UK's Emerging Excellence Award.

About the band

Ant Law is an internationally established guitarist, bandleader and sideman with Henry Spencer, Tim Garland, Jason Rebello, Jasper Høiby, Eric Harland and Dame Evelyn Glennie. Edwin Samuel Dove Prize Winner and Yamaha Jazz Scholar Matt Robinson performs with leading musicians on the UK scene such as Snowpoet, Flying Machines and Emilia Mårtensson. Bassist Andrew Robb performs internationally, having lived in London, Edinburgh and Bergen with artists such as Salena Jones, Norwegian jazz legends Dag Arnesen, Knut Kristainsen, Art Blakey alumnus Valery Ponomarev, Tim Garland, Julian Joseph, Kit Downes, Cleveland Watkis and Georgia Cécile. David Ingamells is an in-demand drummer on the London scene performing with artists such as Kate Williams' Four Plus Three, Helena Kay, Brandon Allen, the London City Big Band and the London Jazz Orchestra.