

## *In Two Minds, Jerry Lu Trio*

JUAN CARLOS TELLECHEA

Jazz of fine lineage sounds on this CD *In Two Minds*, featuring the brilliant [Jerry Lu Trio](#). On his first recording of his own, [Jerry Lu](#) (1992) more than succeeds in creating the intimate atmosphere of the famous and inspiring hot club jam sessions, in any era and in any part of the world. Swing, groove, energy and a lot of charts are the virtues of this ensemble. The album, which will be released this coming March, also arrives on time for the commemoration of the 125th anniversary of Duke Ellington's birth and the 50th anniversary of his death.

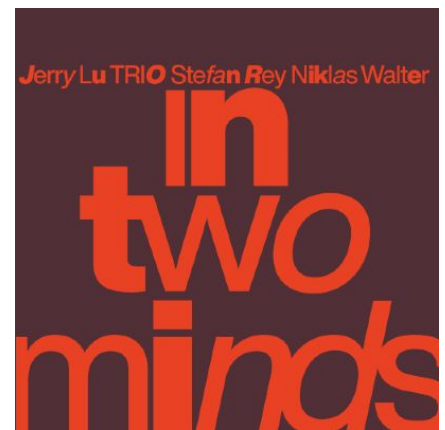
Jerry Lu is one of Germany's greatest jazz talents, both as a pianist and as a composer and arranger. He plays in a wide variety of musical settings, but is especially fond of straight-ahead swing jazz and the Great American Songbook. Ergo, no archaic or stultified jazz here, but full of vitality and joie de vivre.

For more than a decade, Jerry Lu has been able to count on double bassist [Stefan Rey](#) (1989) and drummer [Niklas Walter](#) (1990) to make excellent music. The three professionals were trained at the conservatories in Cologne and Essen, but the work on stage has enriched them greatly. The sound of the Jerry Lu Trio moves stylistically between swing and modern mainstream, maintaining the fire of the jazz tradition with fresh influences of today.

### Program

The program of this jam-session consists of Jerry Lu's own compositions, with well-known jazz classics, in an attractive mixture that casts a permanent spell on the listener. The trio is often joined by one or more soloists as special guests; in this case the outstanding [Denis Gäbel](#) (tenor saxophone) has joined the group.

Really, words go without saying when one hears and feels this swing. There is nothing but



*In Two Minds*. Jerry Lu Trio. Jerry Lu (piano), Stefan Rey (double bass), Niklas Walter (drums). Guest: Denis Gäbel (tenor sax) on the third groove. 1. In walked Bill (comp. Jerry Lu). 2. In Two Minds (comp. Jerry Lu). 3. Running Late (comp. Jerry Lu, Tenor Sax Denis Gäbel). 4. When you Wish Upon (comp. Leigh Harline, arr. Jerry Lu). 5. We'll be Together Again (comp. Carl T. Fischer, arr. Jerry Lu). 6. Samba for Thomas (comp. Jerry Lu). 7. In a Sentimental Mood (comp. Duke Ellington, arr. Jerry Lu). 8. Like Someone in Love (comp. Jimmy van Heusen, arr. Jerry Lu). 9. You Stepped Out of a Dream (comp. Nacio Herb Brown, arr. Jerry Lu). 10. Moving Forward (comp. Jerry Lu). 11. Star Crossed Lovers (comp. Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn). Recorded and mixed by Nico Raschke at Hansaha Studios, Bonn (tracks 1-10, August 2, 2023); and by Reinhard Kobialka at Topaz Studios, Cologne (track 11, June 30, 2022). Produced by Jerry Lu and Jens Bosch. P+C 2024 JazzJazz Records.

praise. The music speaks for itself, it is stimulating, captivating, virtuosic and, of course, a lot of fun. The trio shows the essence of perfection in full harmony. Rey and Walter totally own the music without ever losing sight of the fact that Lu is the leader of the group. Rey's performance is exquisite, wonderful and Walter's is supportive, driving, enhancing and shining throughout.

These artists are very close not only because of their friendship since student days, but also because of their dedication to straight-ahead jazz. In the tradition of Duke Ellington, Leigh Harline, Carl T. Fischer, Jimmy van Heusen and Nacio Herb Brown, but also Count Basie or Hank Jones, the trio tackles the exciting history of 20th century jazz head on, with new ideas and their own compositions.

### **Neither old-fashioned nor moth-eaten**

With the addition of Denis Gäbel (1979) on the third groove (“Running Late”) they have gained one of the most experienced saxophonists in the genre. Together they prove that there is no stale or moth-eaten jazz, but styles full of universal vitality and freshness.

Jerry Lu's creativity is infinite: “In Walked Bill” (groove 1.), he felt “inspired by the American pianist [Bill Charlap](#)“, he says exclusively to **Mundoclasico.com**; “In Two Minds” (2.), is “a ballad that tries to explain the situation when you are in a dilemma and you can't make up your mind”; “Running Late” (3. ) “is intended to describe the moment when you have to go to an appointment, you're just in time and you know you're going to be late”; “Samba for Thomas” (6., is dedicated to his patron, the banker and philanthropist Dr [Thomas Lange](#), who “has supported the trio for many years”); “Like Someone in Love” (8. ), dedicated to his wife, jazz singer [Charlotte Illinger](#), “for being so supportive during the creation of this gem”; “Moving Forward” (10.), “was created during the pandemic. Despite the difficult circumstances of the time, things had to move forward somehow. The piece was intended to describe the hope and determination” to do so.

### **Nostalgia**

From film composer [Leigh Harline](#), the Jerry Lu Trio brings the melody (arr. Jerry Lu) of the 1940 Oscar-winning song “When You Wish Upon a Star” (sung by [Jiminy Cricket/Cliff Edwards](#) in the Walt Disney Studios film “Pinocchio”). The piece has appeared in Disney's opening logo since 1985 and is the official theme song of the Walt Disney Company.

“We'll Be Together Again” by [Carl T. Fischer](#) ([Frankie Laine's](#) pianist and composer) is another epoch-making song that was incorporated by Jerry Lu, with his arrangements, to this album. The same happens with “[Like Someone in Love](#)“ by [Jimmy van Heusen](#) written in 1944 together with “Sleigh Ride in July” for the movie “[Belle of the Yukon](#)“, a musical-western comedy by [William A. Seiter](#). And “[You Stepped Out Of A Dream](#)“ by [Nacio Herb Brown](#) (the same of Gene Kelly's iconic “[Singin' In The Rain](#)“) centerpiece of the musical film “[Ziegfeld Girl](#)“ (1941) by [Robert Z. Leonard](#), with [James Stewart](#) and [Judy Garland](#).

### **Tribute to Duke Ellington**

Jerry Lu's refreshingly modern arrangements also reach out to Duke Ellington's wildly popular “In a Sentimental Mood” (1935). According to an account by Ellington, the ballad was composed in haste during a party at a tobacco warehouse in Durham, North Carolina, to calm the exacerbated tempers after a fight over two girls. Ellington and his orchestra recorded it that same year for the first time.

The Jerry Lu Trio's CD *In Two Minds* concludes this tribute with Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's instrumental “Star Crossed Lovers” which was released in this same form in 1957 and became a jazz standard. Strayhorn wrote it for an Ellington concert at the [Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario](#), Canada.

At Ellington's suggestion, he drew on his own title “[Pretty Girl](#),” which he adapted, for the composition, which was intended to allude to Romeo and Juliet. The piece is written in the AABA song form. Strayhorn was very surprised when he realized that the adapted composition had been published under both names.

## Communication

On the original December 6, 1956 recording of the album “[Such Sweet Thunder](#)“, [Johnny Hodges](#) plays the role of Juliet on alto saxophone and [Paul Gonsalves](#) plays the role of Romeo on tenor saxophone. About 140 versions of the composition have been recorded so far, including this excellent performance by the Jerry Lu Trio.

Each of the three, Jerry Lu, Stefan Rey and Niklas Walter guesses, intuits, suspects, sniffs out the other two and what they are going to do, and, through their playing, guides them, invites them towards what he is playing. It's an immediate communication that comes from performing for a long time together; they inspire each other. It is true jazz that inhabits the trio; intelligent, sensitive and extraordinarily dynamic jazz. The clarity of the recordings by sound engineers [Nico Raschke](#) at [Hansahaus Studios](#) in Bonn and [Reinhard Kobialka](#) at [Topaz Studios](#), Cologne, highlights the different levels, the careful balance between the three instruments and their successful distribution.