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# THE IMPOSSIBLE GENTLEMEN

## “THE IMPOSSIBLE GENTLEMEN”

*“the Anglo-US quartet, fulfilled all its promise – and then some. Walker's contribution to this ensemble was nothing short of sensational, through plenty of quiet but compellingly lyrical music, as well as some post-bop gallops and a spectacular roaring blues. Simcock set the improv bar early on with a surging, McCoy Tyner-like solo on his own convoluted-bop theme, and Walker's fast Laugh Lines revealed his rare balance of meticulousness, spontaneity, storytelling and tonal bite as a soloist.”* **The Guardian**

*“Gwilym Simcock dazzles with Anglo-American supergroup.”* **Jazzwise Magazine**

*“This should be the start of something big.”* **London Jazz**



1. Laughlines 5:13
2. Clockmaker 9:15
3. When You Hold Her 11.03
4. You Won't Be Around To See It 7:35
5. Wallenda's Last Stand 7:30
6. Gwil's Song 8:42
7. Play The Game 7:37
8. Sure Would Baby 6:30

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The Anglo-American jazz 'supergroup', **The Impossible Gentleman** features internationally acclaimed British piano sensation **Gwilym Simcock**, Salford guitarist and UK treasure **Mike Walker** and American bass and drums superstars **Steve Swallow** and **Adam Nussbaum**. The result is nothing less than remarkable with four unique talents, all superb players in their own right, coming together to create something new and powerful. The band was born when Walker, having played in a project "Ropes" with Adam Nussbaum at the Manchester Jazz Festival in 2009 came up with the idea of putting this band together. The longstanding partnership of Nussbaum and Swallow goes back nearly 30 years and with a rhythm section this robust and intuitive the only unknown for Walker was Simcock. Despite both hailing from Manchester, Simcock had moved to London to pursue his studies and subsequent career without the musical opportunity to work with Walker. Given their musical interests it was inevitable that they would get together at some point and the opportunity Walker presented was too tempting for Simcock to pass up.

Critics and audiences alike raved about the band's mini-tour last spring. Here then is the result of that inspired meeting, a debut recording and a further twelve date UK tour in June.

For Walker, the strength of The Impossible Gentlemen is in the individuality of the players. Each musician's distinctive voice is paired with an openness that allows them to put the music first and encourages the improvisers to express themselves. In Walker's memorable phrase ***'They have deep pockets. They improvise. They put the music first'***, while Simcock notes that ***"the other three guys have such strong identities as musicians as well as people.... they stamp their 'sound' on the music, and I feel that that comes across every second of the music they make!"***

**The Impossible Gentleman** opens with three Mike Walker compositions including the challenging, fast-moving **Laugh Lines**, a piece that perfectly captures Walker's penchant for free-flowing music full of odd time signatures and unusual forms but which nonetheless offer the perfect launch pad for some superlative playing from all the quartet. Indeed the interplay throughout the album is of the highest order, passionate and unforced, but always riveting, as in the luminous Walker tune **Clockmaker** and the graceful **Wallenda's Last Stand** (dedicated to the great German-American tightrope walker). Elsewhere the band explore three Gwilym Simcock compositions including **You Won't Be Around To See It**, a tongue in cheek reworking of *Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise*, which Nussbaum drags to unexpected places with his drive and intelligence. The gentle, beautiful **Gwil's Song** features fine solos from Swallow and Walker and **Play The Game** is driven by Nussbaum's powerful drumming and features a burning solo from Walker. Here, as elsewhere, the mutual trust between the musicians is omnipresent. This trust allows the whole band and the individuals to shine, resulting in some of the most profound, luminous, listening jazz to be cut on either side of the Atlantic this year. Indeed, to give the last word to Walker: **"The guys don't do things by halves. They go for it."**

[www.bashorecords.com](http://www.bashorecords.com) | [www.bashomusic.co.uk](http://www.bashomusic.co.uk) | [www.impossiblegentlemen.com](http://www.impossiblegentlemen.com)

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### GWILYM SIMCOCK – Piano

Welsh born pianist Gwilym Simcock, 28 year old BBC Radio 3 Jazz Award winner and first ever BBC Radio 3 New Generations Jazz Artist, has been described as a 'jazzier' John Taylor, his style reminiscent of Keith Jarrett, his piano playing 'exceptional', 'brilliant', 'dazzling'. His 'harmonic sophistication and subtle dovetailing of musical traditions' make him stand out as one of the most gifted performers and imaginative composers working on the British scene. Able to move effortlessly through jazz and classical he can at times inhabit both worlds. His music is engaging, exciting, often unexpected, melodically enthralling, complex and wonderfully optimistic.

Gwilym has worked extensively throughout Europe with the cream of British and international jazz artists including Dave Holland, Kenny Wheeler, Lee Konitz, Bill Bruford's Earthworks, Bob Mintzer and Bobby McFerrin.

Gwilym's skills as a composer were very much in evidence at the 2008 BBC Proms where the magnificent premiere of his work "Progressions for Piano and Orchestra" enthralled the Proms audience and many thousands more who saw it live on BBC2 TV.

Recent commissions include a concerto for piano and big band for the NDR Big Band in Hamburg, a choral work for Norfolk and Norwich Festival, a symphonic piece for Chetham's 40th anniversary and a new orchestral piece for The Britten Sinfonia in 2010.

Gwilym keeps up a gruelling schedule touring throughout Europe with his own trio with Yuri Golubev (bass) and James Maddren (drums). A new double album for release in November 2009 will feature new compositions for trio and for solo piano. He also tours with Tim Garland's Lighthouse Trio visiting the U.S. and the Far East this year.

Gwilym's debut album "Perception" has been critically acclaimed at home and abroad. He was voted **"Jazz Musician of the Year" at the 2007 Parliamentary Jazz Awards**. His impressive formal education includes Trinity College of Music (London), Chetham's School of Music (Manchester) – where he studied classical piano, French horn and composition and the Royal Academy of Music (London) where he graduated from the jazz course with first class honours and the coveted 'Principal's Prize' for outstanding achievement. He has just been honoured as an "Associate" of the Academy.

[www.gwilymsimcock.com](http://www.gwilymsimcock.com)

### MIKE WALKER – Guitar

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Tel +44 (0) 20 7724 2389, Fax +44 (0) 20 7724 6817, [bashomusic@btinternet.com](mailto:bashomusic@btinternet.com) | [www.bashomusic.co.uk](http://www.bashomusic.co.uk)

Born in Salford in 1962, Mike launched himself upon the Manchester scene with River People, a much loved fusion band, and then went on to play with Alan Butler's quartet for six years. It was with the Mike Gibbs band that Mike was called upon to deputise for an absent John Scofield, during which he was heard by Kenny Wheeler who asked him to play with his big band. Also at this time, returning to his fusion roots, Mike had formed a band with pianist and composer Roy Powell which they called Some Other Country with bassist Gary Culshaw, and drummer Steve Gilbert. Mike and Gary had previously played together, and had already formed a deep, and almost telepathic, understanding and feeling for each other's playing. Some Other Country soon established itself as one of the North's favourite fusion bands, generating great excitement, and many devoted fans.

Mike's musical collaborations continued to expand during the late 80s and early 90s. One such was with Nikki and Richard Iles who had formed a band called Emanon, which provided a vehicle for the compositional and arranging skills of Nikki and Richard, and fertile ground for Mike's brand of inspirational playing. Nikki and Mike would subsequently enlist the skills of Gary Culshaw, and drummer Steve Brown, to form the Mike Walker Quartet, a group which entranced audiences with their empathic interplay.

Also at this time Mike was playing in the Sylvan Richardson band, where he met his long-time collaborator and friend, the sax player Iain Dixon. Mike, Iain, Sylvan, and drummer Mikey Wilson would later form the band which came to be known as Brazil Nuts.

Whilst in Zurich with the Kenny Wheeler Big Band, Mike met Julian Arguelles and subsequently joined his quartet. He also recorded several CDs with him, one of which featured on bass, Steve Swallow, with whom Mike would record again on the Mike Gibbs album 'By The Way'. In the early 90's Mike toured extensively in various bands led by Tommy Smith, including a quartet with Mick Hutton on bass, and the Canadian, Ian Froman, on drums. Occasionally Tommy added Niels Lan Doky or Jason Rebello on piano. One of Tommy's quartets featured the wonderful Scottish drummer Tom Bancroft, an association that would lead to Mike, Tom, and Tom's sax playing brother Phil, working together at the Glasgow Jazz summer school. Phil asked Mike to join his newly formed band. They've been touring steadily since, together with Thomas Strønen, the Norwegian drummer, and bass player Steve Watts who replaced Reid Anderson of 'The Bad Plus'.

During the last decade Mike has also visited the States, and most of Europe, as George Russell's guitarist, recording with him on several occasions. Also, as a member the Creative jazz Orchestra, Mike has played with Vince Mendoza, Anthony Braxton, Bill Frisell, Tim Berne, and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

Amongst the many other fine musicians that Mike has played and recorded with over the last 20 years, mention must be made of Dave Holland, John Taylor, Tal Farlow, Bob Moses, Arild Anderson, and Palle Mikkelborg, as well as some fine vocalists including Mica Paris, Norma Winstone, and Jacqui Dankworth with whom Mike regularly tours.

In 2008 Mike released his own album called 'Madhouse and the Whole Thing There'. It features the members of Brazil Nuts, plus strings, French horn, piano, brass section and vocals etc.

Mike says about it *"This album is the first under my name. It's about dissonance masked by consonance, and having clear statements despite the density. I wanted the harmony to be supported by the melody. I wanted the rhythm and bar lengths to feel completely natural, even though they're not. I wanted it to be singable, and street-walk whistleable. I didn't want the face to reflect the inner workings."*

Mike is very busy with new projects. He has written new material for another album which will feature some great musicians from England and USA. He has nearly finished his book 'The Comprehensive Fretboard System'. He is working hard to build a publishing business with long time friend and musician Iain Dixon, and there are plenty more gigs lined up in the future. He lives in Rossendale with his utterly beautiful children, who provide unending inspiration, without even trying.

**[www.mike-walker.co.uk](http://www.mike-walker.co.uk)**

**STEVE SWALLOW - bass**

Steve Swallow was born in New York City in 1940, and spent his childhood in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Before turning to the acoustic bass at age 14, he studied piano (with Howard Kasschau, who also taught Nelson Riddle) and trumpet. His otherwise miserable adolescence was brightened by his discovery of jazz. He took many of his first stabs at improvisation with Ian Underwood (who subsequently became a Mother Of Invention and an L.A. studio ace), with whom he attended a swank New England private school.

During his years at Yale University he studied composition with Donald Martino, and played Dixieland with many of the greats, including Pee Wee Russell, Buck Clayton and Vic Dickenson. In 1960 he met Paul and Carla Bley, left Yale in a hurry, moved to New York City, and began to tour and record with Paul Bley, The Jimmy Giuffre Trio and George Russell's sextet, which featured Eric Dolphy and Thad Jones. He also performed in the early '60s with Joao Gilberto, Sheila Jordan, and bands led by Benny Goodman, Marian McPartland, Chico Hamilton, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, Clark Terry and Bob Brookmeyer, and Chick Corea.

In 1964 he joined The Art Farmer Quartet featuring Jim Hall, and began writing music. Many of his songs have been recorded by prominent jazz artists, including Bill Evans, Chick Corea, Stan Getz, Gary Burton, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Kuhn, Lyle Mays, Jim Hall and Pat Metheny. And he was recently sampled by A Tribe Called Quest.

He toured from late 1965 through 1967 with The Stan Getz Quartet, which also included Gary Burton (replaced in 1967 by Chick Corea) and Roy Haynes. In 1968 he left Getz to join Gary Burton's quartet, an association he maintained, with occasional interruption, for 20 years. He has performed on more than 20 of Burton's recordings, the most recent being *Six Pack*, released in 1992.

In 1970 he switched from acoustic to electric bass and moved to Bolinas, California, where he wrote music for *Hotel Hello*, a duet album for ECM with Gary Burton. Returning to the East Coast in 1974, he taught for two long years at the Berklee College of Music. In 1976 he was awarded a National Endowment For The Arts grant to set poems by Robert Creeley to music, which resulted in another ECM album, *Home*. He performed with such diverse soloists as Dizzy Gillespie, Michael Brecker, George Benson and Herbie Hancock, and recorded with Stan Getz (on an album featuring Joao Gilberto), Bob Moses, Steve Lacy, Michael Mantler and Kip Hanrahan. He also played on recordings produced by Hal Willner, on tracks featuring, among others, Carla Bley, Dr. John and James Taylor.

In 1978 he joined the Carla Bley Band. He continues to perform and record with her extensively, in various contexts.

He toured and recorded often with John Scofield from 1980 to 1984, first in trio with drummer Adam Nussbaum and then in duet. He has since toured often with Scofield, and has also produced many of his recordings.

He has also co-produced several albums with Carla Bley, including *Night-Glo* (1985), which she wrote to feature him, and *Carla* (1987), a collection of his songs featuring her. In 1978 he also produced the first of four albums for the British saxophonist Andy Sheppard. In the ensuing years he produced recordings for Karen Mantler, Lew Soloff and Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, and recorded and/or toured with, among others, Joe Lovano, Motohiko Hino, Ernie Watts, Michael Gibbs, Rabih Abou-Khalil, Paul Bley, Henri Texier, Michel Portal and Allen Ginsberg.

Since 1988 he and Carla Bley have performed duet concerts in Europe, the United States, South America and Japan. *Duets*, an album of their songs arranged for piano and bass, was released in 1988, and a second recording, *Go Together*, in 1993.

In December of 1989 he reunited, after 27 years, with Jimmy Giuffre and Paul Bley to record two discs for Owl Records entitled *The Life Of A Trio*. This trio toured frequently until Spring of 1995, and recorded for Owl and Soul Note Records.

In 1991 he composed and produced *Swallow*, a recording featuring his five-string bass and several of his long-time associates, including Gary Burton, John Scofield and Steve Kuhn.

He recorded often in 1993. John Scofield and Pat Metheny's *I Can See Your House From Here*, on which he played with drummer Bill Stewart, was released on Blue Note Records; this quartet toured in the summer of 1994. *Real Book*, his third XtraWATT disc,

was recorded in December of 1993 and released in 1994; its cast included Tom Harrell, Joe Lovano, Mulgrew Miller and Jack DeJohnette.

In Spring of 1994 he was featured at the London Jazz Festival in a concert of his compositions with lyrics written and sung by Norma Winstone. 1994 also contained concert appearances in Japan with Steve Kuhn and in Europe with The Very Big Carla Bley Band, Jimmy Giuffre and Paul Bley, The Paul Motian Electric Bebop Band, Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, and Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard. A live recording of this trio, *Songs With Legs*, was released on WATT in early 1995, at which time they again toured Europe. He also recorded in Spring of 1995 with Steve Kuhn, Michael Franks, John Taylor, Pierre Favre and Julian Argüelles. In July he and Carla Bley performed duets in Brazil, and in the fall returned to Europe for a lengthy tour.

In Spring of 1996 he found himself again touring Europe, first with Bley and Sheppard and then with John Scofield and Bill Stewart. He subsequently co-produced and played on Scofield's first album for Verve Records, *Quiet*. He also co-produced and played on *The Carla Bley Big Band Goes To Church*, recorded live at Umbria Jazz in Perugia, Italy, and toured and recorded with Paul Motian.

In November of '96 he introduced The Steve Swallow Quintet, with Chris Potter, Ryan Kisor (subsequently replaced by Barry Ries), Mick Goodrick and Adam Nussbaum, to audiences in Europe, and recorded with this group after its tour. The resulting album, *Deconstructed*, features his compositions based on classic Tin Pan Alley song structures; it was released in early 1997.

He toured relentlessly in 1997 with Trio 2000 (with Paul Motian and Chris Potter), Carla Bley, John Scofield and several others, and recorded with several diverse artists, including Henri Texier (with Lee Konitz and Bob Brookmeyer), Glen Moore, Ettore Fioravanti and Michel Portal. He also produced the first of two recordings by French drummer/composer Christophe Marguet. In the Spring of 1998 he toured and recorded with Lee Konitz and Paul Motian, and toured with Brazilian guitarist Paulo Bellinati. He also participated with Carla Bley in the Copenhagen Jazzvisits program, and was nominated for the 1999 Danish Jazzpar. In April he directed and performed his music for big band with the Harvard University Jazz Band, and in June recorded with pianist Christian Jacob. In July he participated in a tour presenting the concert version of Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill*, and toured in trio with Lee Konitz and Paul Bley. He toured in the Fall with Paul Motian's Electric Bebop Band, and with John Scofield and Bill Stewart. He also toured in duo with Carla Bley, which resulted in a third Duets CD entitled *Are We There Yet?*

In March and April of 1999 he toured again with his quintet. Reviewing the band's performance at Ronnie Scott's Club in the Times of London, Chris Parker wrote "...this was as near a perfect display of small-group jazz - robust yet exquisitely poised, cogent but surprisingly delicate - as has been heard in London in recent years." An XtraWATT CD entitled *Always Pack Your Uniform On Top*, recorded live at Ronnie's, was released shortly thereafter.

Following a week in Tokyo with Carla Bley's 4X4, he toured with Bobby Previte's Bump The Renaissance (which also featured Ray Anderson and Wayne Horvitz), and then returned to Europe for the July festival circuit with 4X4. In August he produced *Karen Mantler's Pet Project*, his third collaboration with her. He continued a madcap year of touring in the Fall with John Scofield and Bill Stewart, Toots Thielemans with Kenny Werner, Norma Winstone with John Taylor and Ralph Towner, and finally with Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard.

2000 proceeded apace. After a return to Tokyo with Carla Bley, this time performing Fancy Chamber Music, and to Sao Paulo performing Duets, he travelled Europe again with Paulo Bellinati. European festival-goers found him with Bobby Previte in July, and with John Scofield in August. In September he reunited with Lee Konitz and Paul Bley for appearances in the USA, and then returned to Europe for further tours with Bobby Previte and Carla Bley.

2001 promises further adventures. He will tour again with Carla Bley and Andy Sheppard in the Spring and with John Scofield and Paulo Bellinati in the Fall. In November he will convene his own trio, *Damaged In Transit*, which includes Chris Potter and Adam Nussbaum. The trio will record following a European tour; this recording will be available on XtraWATT/ECM in the Spring of 2002.

He was placed first (electric bass) in the Downbeat International Critics Poll since 1983, and in the Downbeat Readers Poll since 1985. He has also won the Jazz Times poll (electric bass) for the past few years. He lives now in contented isolation with Carla Bley, in the mountains of upstate New York. [www.wattxtrawatt.com](http://www.wattxtrawatt.com)

#### ADAM NUSSBAUM – drums

Adam Nussbaum grew up in Norwalk Connecticut and started to play drums at age 12 after studying piano for 5 years, also playing bass and saxophone as a teenager. He moved to New York City in 1975 to attend The Davis Center for Performing Arts at City College. While there he began working with Albert Dailey, Monty Waters, Joe Lee Wilson, Sheila Jordan and he played with Sonny Rollins in 1977 in Milwaukee. In 1978 he joined Dave Liebman's quintet and did his first European tour with John Scofield. During the early eighties he continued working with John Scofield in a celebrated trio with Steve Swallow. In 1983 he became a member of Gil Evans Orchestra and played with Stan Getz as well. He later joined Eliane Elias/Randy Brecker Quartet, Gary Burton, and Toots Thielemans. In 1987 he began touring with the Michael Brecker Quintet. In 1988 they recorded the Grammy winning "Don't Try This At Home" During 1992 he was part of the Carla Bley Big Band and that same year John Abercrombie hired him to complete his organ trio with Dan Wall. Since then he's keeping active in a wide variety of groups. Among them a recently formed quartet 'B A N N' with Seamus Blake, Jay Anderson & Oz Noy, A co-op quartet 'NUTTREE' with Abercrombie, Jerry Bergonzi & Gary Versace, (a new CD with this group is coming out on the Kind of Blue label), 'We Three' w/ Dave Liebman & Steve Swallow, Eliane Elias Trio, The James Moody Quartet, and also busy maintaining an active freelance schedule. Adam has taught as an Adjunct professor at New York University, the New School and State University of New York at Purchase. He's also doing clinics and master classes around the world.

[www.adamnussbaum.net](http://www.adamnussbaum.net)

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## JUNE 2011 TOUR DATES

10 JUNE GATESHEAD, THE SAGE

[www.thesagegateshead.org](http://www.thesagegateshead.org)

12 JUNE AMBLESIDE, ZEFFIRELLIS

[www.zeffirellis.com](http://www.zeffirellis.com)

13/14 JUNE LONDON, PIZZA EXPRESS DEAN STREET

[www.pizzaexpresslive.com](http://www.pizzaexpresslive.com)

15 JUNE BRISTOL, COLSTON HALL

[www.colstonhall.org](http://www.colstonhall.org)

16 JUNE WAVENDON, THE STABLES

[www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org)

17 JUNE SWANSEA, TALIESIN ARTS

[www.taliesinartscentre.co.uk](http://www.taliesinartscentre.co.uk)

18 JUNE MUCH WENLOCK, EDGE ARTS CENTRE

[www.edgeartscentre.co.uk](http://www.edgeartscentre.co.uk)

19 JUNE SOUTHPORT FESTIVAL

[www.jazzinsouthport.co.uk](http://www.jazzinsouthport.co.uk)

21 JUNE MANCHESTER, BRIDGEWATER HALL

[www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk](http://www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk)

22 JUNE BARNSTAPLE, QUEENS THEATRE

[www.northdevontheatres.org.uk](http://www.northdevontheatres.org.uk)

23 JUNE DORKING, WATERMILL JAZZ CLUB

[www.watermilljazz.co.uk](http://www.watermilljazz.co.uk)



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