



Jazzwise
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McCann is a post-modern guitarist and composer with a cool sound on nylon and semi-acoustic instruments and a tidy mind. Even his nastiest electronic dissonances somehow sound clean. His photograph suggests he's in his late twenties and from his sound I'd guess his main influences are John McLaughlin and Pat Metheny. He wrote all 11 pieces here, most of them melodic and expressive, more European than American in mood. When not attempting a grunge ambience, his solos curl around modal changes in a fluent Metheny-like manner.

O'Gallagher, another unsung yet accomplished player, brings a similar approach to the alto and soprano saxes, but he also enjoys the occasional freaky moment and grows garrulous and excitable in places. Their tight unison phrasing and generally close-knit teamwork suggests a lot of bandstand time together. These two set the agenda, but pianist Holoher, who reminds me of Dave Kikowski, is a resourceful, high-spirited sideman who swings hard on pieces such as 'Rack 'Em Up', an up-tempo line of oblique logic.

'JM' is something that a young McLaughlin might have written, whereas 'Yes, My Friend' sounds like a tribute to Miles, circa Bitches Brew. Both numbers find McCann selecting his Hellfire Hendrix max-distortion channel and O'Gallagher going inside and outside the modes like a latter-day David Liebman. 'Las Tias', by contrast, is a handsome latin-ballad line that needs only a good lyric to become a classic. McCann plays it on nylon-string guitar, improvising in admirably graceful, spacey lines. Ferber and Hebert contribute lively but tasteful support throughout. This talented, multi-faceted group deserves wider attention.