

Primarily featuring jazz-based repertoire, the disc showcases the best of both their genres - classical and jazz. The Baroque chorale introduction to 'All The Things You Are' is inspired by the unsurpassed musical language of Bach. Ian's specialty - gypsy jazz - is pushed to the fore with 'Tchavolo Swing' and the musicians pay homage to jazz greats in such pieces as 'Round Midnight' and 'Body and Soul'.

"When I play with Simon I'm always thinking about how do we best tie classical and jazz music together? We've given the well known Jerome Kern tune 'All The Things You Are' a 'Bach-ish fugue treatment' and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, a rich Latin groove," said Ian Cooper.

"Coming from a classically-trained background, I've now been performing jazz for years and relish the opportunity to partner with musicians of Ian's calibre, who bring such a sense of musical freedom in performance," said Simon Tedeschi.

"Writing for Simon actually develops bad habits, because he can play absolutely anything on the page in front of him. I pity the next pianist I have to write for!" added Cooper.

Working with the best rhythm section in Australia, this CD features Australian jazz legend James Morrison, on trumpet & trombone.

"Recording a disc such as this with elite musicians allows us the opportunity to create musical arrangements and improvise with such vivacity and playfulness that we end up with a fine balance between surprise and familiarity in the repertoire," said Tedeschi.

"Jazz is all about ensemble playing. On this CD, sometimes we play something that's been thoughtfully constructed, but there are times where we just go for it, allowing the spontaneity to take over and play what we instinctively feel," said Cooper.

Produced by Cooper and Tedeschi, this album was recorded at the new, state-of-the-art James Morrison Studios.

"This album sparkles with vivacity, a rare quality in music. Obviously the material plays its part - it's hard to imagine heavy metal or Wagner, say, sounding especially vivacious! - but primarily it is a matter of touch. Sparks seem to fly from every note of Ian Cooper's violin and Simon Tedeschi's piano, thanks to some very personal black magic in the way both conjure up their sounds.

That vivacity goes hand in hand with a playfulness they often bring to bear, too. You can hear it in the song choice (Beethoven's 5th Salsa) and the arrangements (All The Things You Are) as well as in the actual improvising.

And what improvising. Ian, of course, is steeped in jazz, but Simon has come to the music from an august classical career, and this album shows just how convincing he now is within the idiom. He solos with verve, but that, in some ways, is the easy part.

The challenge for any player of a chord instrument is to find swinging, relevant things to say in company with the bass and drums behind a soloist, and Simon certainly adds to the buoyancy of bassist Brendan Clarke and drummer Andrew Dickeson behind Ian's glorious violin, the glow of Jim Pennell's guitar or the remarkable Mr Morrison's trumpet and trombone.

Tender readings of Body and Soul and 'Round Midnight are woven into the vivacity and playfulness, and the program as a whole boasts an engaging blend of surprise and familiarity. This is smile-making music."

John Shand, jazz critic for The Sydney Morning Herald and author of Jazz - The Australian Accent (UNSW Press)