

Julien Wilson's B for Chicken

Julien Wilson – Tenor Sax

Craig Fermanis – Electric Guitar

Chris Hale – Electric Bass

Hugh Harvey – Drums

Bursting on to the national stage at 22 Julien won the National Jazz Award at Wangaratta Jazz Festival in 1994, just after completing his studies at the VCA under Brian Brown and Barry Duggan. He built a reputation in the 90s with bands including SNAG, Festa, Ishish, Tibetan Dixie, The Big One and David Tolley's THAT as a player who could quickly juxtapose wistfully melodic and stridently fiery statements. He has made long term contributions to the Australian Art Orchestra and the Black Arm Band and plays on award winning albums by Barney McAll, Stu Hunter, Jonathan Zwartz, Augie March, Andrea Keller, Kristin Berardi, Ben Salter & Sam Anning.

Visiting Europe regularly and living and studying in the USA with George Russell & Paul Bley for a number of years he returned to Australia in 2001 and quickly became an integral member of many influential and varied groups including Assumptions trio, Los Cabrones, 12ToneDiamonds & Virus.

His quartet with McAll, Zwartz and Allan Browne released two albums on his own label, Lionsharerecords in 2013 & 2015 which received critical acclaim including three Bell Awards. He is the recipient of a Bell Award for Australian Jazz Artist of the Year, an APRA Art Music Award for Excellence in Jazz and the Freedman Fellowship for Jazz.

“the most potent tenor to be heard in Australia these days... stupendous power, his sound so massive it seemed to threaten the structural integrity of the saxophone's bell” **Sydney Morning Herald**

“He can create an air of majesty with a bold upward sweep on his tenor, or sustain a single, barely-perceptible note with the focus of a Zen monk.” **The Age**

This electrified version of Julien's quartet was formed in 2011 as a vehicle to showcase his original compositions. They have been performing regularly in Melbourne, developing new material together and refining the groups powerful, unified, interactive style. The quartet focusses on Wilson's originals, much of it written specifically for this group. While the gentle, lyrical inclinations so evident in his long-running trio (with Magnusson and Grant) are still present, this group provides an outlet for the more explosive, primal side of his musical personality. The inspiration stretches back to Ellington & Coltrane and forward to the latest contemporary non-genre-specific influences. They can swing from prog-rock to calypso to minimalist funk to Getzanova through the entire history of the blues to ambient euro-jazz to smoky ballads via slowcore-Zen-electro-punk and shoegaze, sometimes

within the same song. In short, they play music that's as predictable and varied as Melbourne's weather.

The inspiration for forming this particular quartet comes from the flexibility and drive of Hugh Harvey's astoundingly musical drumming, while Fermanis' blues-drenched, rock-singed, take-no-prisoners guitar work fits Wilson's music like a well worn glove. Add to this the virtuosic beauty, melodic creativity and flamenco flair of Chris Hale's 6 string electric bass playing and we have a unit that sounds like a meal that is simultaneously familiar and exotic.

In 2018 they have been recording their long overdue debut with assistance from a grant from the Australia Council for the Arts and look forward to sharing it with the world at the end of the year.

Selected Quotes

"You play like you're from the jungle" **George Russell**

"a direct lineage of influence runs from the late Merv Acheson to the explosive Mark Simmonds and on to Julien Wilson. Central to that lineage is a concept of how the horn should sound: massive, sprawling, wearing its heart on its sleeve, and gripping the listener from the first note. Wilson produced a sound that was haunting and burly – a rare combination that ensured the simplest melody was arresting." **Sydney Morning Herald**

"I can hear influences as diverse as Archie Shepp, Jan Garbarek, Ben Webster, Gato Barbieri, Dave Liebman... But particularly, of Mark Simmonds, who is one of the heroes of jazz saxophone in this country" **Dale Barlow**

"He appears unable to play an ordinary solo." **Jazzwise**

"a level of maturity, and a storytelling quality that place him proudly in the lineage of such great tenor balladeers as Lester Young, Dexter Gordon, John Coltrane, Stan Getz and Joe Lovano" **The Bulletin**