



Julie Sassoon/Lothar Ohlmeier/Mia Ohlmeier: Inside Colours Live

Editor's Choice

Rating: ★★★★★

Author: John Fordham

The Manchester-raised, former classical pianist and violinist Julie Sassoon diverted into studies of her own as a 1990s post-grad at Leeds College of Music - taking in Keith Jarrett, Egberto Gismonti, and violin studies with an Indian sitar teacher. Out of all that came the personal mix of linear jazz with Indian structures and Western minimalism that has characterised her music with German saxophonist and life-partner Lothar Ohlmeier (initially in the UK and from 2008 in Berlin), recently enhanced by the presence of their powerful drummer daughter Mia.

Two-thirds of this live set's tracklist features Sassoon and Lothar Ohlmeier's long-running Inside Colours duo - but when Ulli Blobel heard trio concert recordings, adding Mia's drums, Jazzwerkstatt Records promptly turned the pair's scheduled 2024 duo release into a double album featuring both lineups.

The contrasts between treatments of the same material on *Inside Colours Live* endorses the shrewdness of that decision. Sassoon and Lothar Ohlmeier's patient use of space, and playful pursuance of each other's lines embraced by a tonal centre, are as enticing as always. But the trio's account of 'Shifting' adds a muscular backbeat that seems to spur wilder free-sax passages alongside the original's silvery delicacies. 'To Be' opens with Lothar Ohlmeier's speculative lobs into deep space, until the drums pick up Sassoon's rolling piano groove, driving it toward a percussion finale that brings a storm of applause. 'Land of Shadows' retains its Garbarek-ish calls-into-the-wintery-dark feel, but generates an extra urgency in its conclusion, and the delicately inquisitive bass clarinet feature 'Expectations' winds up in a slamming climactic storm light years from its whispered lyrical beginnings. *Inside Colours Live* feels like the opening of a new chapter in this subtly independent musical family's story.

