

Crimson Jazz Trio – King Crimson Songbook, Volume Two (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1 *The Court Of The Crimson King* 2 *Pictures Of A City* 3 *One Time* 4 *Frame By Frame* 5 *Inner Garden* 6 *Heartbeat* Islands Suite 7 *Press Gang* 8 *Zero Dark Thirty* 9 *Formentera Lady* 10 *Sailor's Tale* 11 *The Plank* - 12 *Lament*

Jody Nardone - piano, vocals (track 5) Tim Landers - double bass, bass guitar Ian Wallace - drums Mel Collins - saxophones (tracks 4, 9)

With *The King Crimson Songbook Volume 1*, (DGM Live, 2005), the Crimson Jazz Trio reinvigorated some of the best tunes from one of the most influential progressive rock bands of all. The trio's drummer, Ian Wallace, played with King Crimson in the 1970s and was crucial to the sound of their fourth album, *Islands* (Island, 1971), while pianist Jody Nardone and bassist Tim Landers are clearly fans of the band and together the three musicians form a tightly knit ensemble. *The King Crimson Songbook Volume 2* showcases yet more of their re-interpretations of classic King Crimson compositions.

Stripped of their progressive rock production and Robert Fripp's distinctive guitar sounds these tunes are remarkably fresh and pliable, standing on their own merits even for those unfamiliar with the originals. The Crimson Jazz Trio's arrangements expand on the possibilities of the originals while adding new dimensions to their emotional impact. The one track that retains its lyrics, "Inner Garden," features an exceptional vocal performance from Nardone, whose piano solo is also a highlight of the album.

Saxophonist Mel Collins, another member of early King Crimson line-ups, guests on "Frame by Frame" and "Formentera Lady." On the former Collins takes on the vocal line from the original, while on the latter—part of the "Islands Suite"—he brings a much freer interpretation to the tune while Nardone and Landers take turns playing short phrases from the melody. Each trio member also contributes a short composition of his own: Landers' "The Plank," a solo on

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double-bass, is especially enjoyable, and all three tunes complement the album's overall feel.

Wallace was a first-call rock session drummer for almost 40 years. His playing here shows that his jazz talents were equal to his rock aptitudes, particularly his bop-influenced work on "Pictures of a City" and the beautiful "One Time," and his lovely, understated, brush work on the closing "Lament." Recorded in June 2006, only a few months before Wallace's death in February 2007, his fans can take heart in this fitting memorial to his fine playing. The King Crimson Songbook Volume 2 is a great record. ---Bruce Lindsay, allaboutjazz.com

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