



www.allaboutjazz.com
Thomas Greeland

Along with a prestigious career as a flexibly eclectic sideman, guitarist Pete McCann has released his third effort as a leader, *Most Folks*, an impressive outing showcasing his considerable chops and tuneful craftsmanship, backed by Mark Ferber (drums), John Herbert (bass), Mike Holober (piano) and John O’Gallagher (alto and tenor saxes). The recording boasts compelling original tunes, including the neobop title track and “Rack ‘Em Up,” the contemplative “Hunter Gatherer,” the jaggedly lyrical “JM” and the serpentine “Yes, My Friend,” propelled by a fifteen-beat goth-rock riff.

O’Gallagher’s sax peeling is rough-toned, ranging from through-composed linearity to short melodic fragments. The rhythm section is supportive, leaving room for the guitarist to shine, yet each player is highly capable in their own right when they step out of the shade. McCann plays with ease and grace throughout, fleshing out the melody of “Las Tias” with imaginative ornamentation, thickening the texture of “About Face” and “Hunter Gatherer” with artful harmonization, negotiating changes with quicksilver finesse on “Jojo’s Waltz” and kicking royal butt on “Rack ‘Em Up,” “Yes, My Friend” and “JM.”

The entire band showed up for the release concert at Cornelia Street Café last month: McCann revisited the acoustic guitar tracks on his Gibson hollowbody electric and the band—especially O’Gallagher—played with assertion and drive. The opening set went smoothly until the final number, “JM,” when McCann launched into a turbocharged, fret-melting solo that raised the roof and brought down the house.