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By IAN PATTERSON, Published: June 23, 2015 | 2,720 views

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Artur Dutkiewicz Trio

Artur Dutkiewicz, it's reasonably safe to say, is probably one of Poland's busiest jazz musicians. In a little over half a year he has played in China, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, Poland, Brazil, Portugal, and on this current tour in Indonesia, New Zealand and Australia. That he and his trio of bassist Michal Baranski and drummer Grzegorz Grzyb are in such demand internationally will have come as no surprise to the full house that witnessed this highly memorable gig at JMI Live on Thursday evening.

JMI is Jazz Music Institute, the only jazz studies course in Australia that offers a degree program. Performance is an important part of the JMI program and what better education could there be for jazz students than to watch the world class Artur Dutkiewicz Trio in action?

The trio felt its way slowly into "Passage" where the flow in dynamics was as striking as the musicianship itself. Spare bass slipped into a grooving ostinato, whispering brushes gave way to ever more vibrant stick work and Dutkiewicz' spacious impressionism soon gained wings, flying and tumbling playfully. A hypnotic solo intervention showed why Baranski has been voted Best Bass Player by the readers of Poland's legendary Jazz Forum magazine, with the trio then reuniting briefly for one final hurrah.

Equally convincing at slower tempos, the trio's lyricism was to the fore on a lovely interpretation of a Polish mazurka. Dutkiewicz has recorded an entire solo album of mazurkas—*Mazurki* (Pianoart, 2012)—and his playing shared some of the folk-cum-classical nuance of Czech jazz master Emil Viklicky.

An up-tempo burner followed; Baranski fulfilled an anchoring role as Grzyb's explosive drumming fired Dutkiewicz to thrilling improvisations that swept the length of the keyboard. A quiet passage framed a delicate solo from Baranski before Dutkiewicz revisited the melody. The trio went into the break on the back of a blues 'n' funk mid-tempo workout, with Grzyb employing hands then sticks.

The second set began with a sultry, blues-drenched slow number, with brushes, mallets and spacious bass underpinning Dutkiewicz's flowing lines. Baranski—first call bassist for Bennie Maupin when touring Europe—took another exquisite solo, eventually ushering the other two in, though it was Dutkiewicz who had the final say with an extended solo meditation of some finesse.

The trio was at its most dynamic on "Prana," the title track of Dutkiewicz's latest CD. From the stirring bass ostinato of the intro, the music unfolded in undulating waves of intensity. High energy trio dialog, brooding impressionism and freewheeling improvisation rotated in an absorbing musical carousel. By contrast, the simple elegance of a Hindu-inspired tune could almost have come from the Abdullah Ibrahim school of hymnal jazz.

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Baranski provided the fulcrum on "Warsaw Oberek"—another Polish folk-dance-inspired number—with Grzyb's muscular invention the blue touch paper to Dutkiewicz's animated improvisations. Grzyb's extended solo provided some fireworks before the trio revisited the head and then took their bows.



For the encore the trio gave a jaunty interpretation of Jimi Hendrix's "Up from the Skies." Dutkiewicz recorded an entire album of Hendrix tunes before—*Hendrix Piano* (Pianoart, 2010)—and clearly shares an affinity with the legendary guitarist for the blues, not to mention exhilarating chops. Bass and drums both enjoyed late flings before Dutkiewicz steered the trio once more back to the head and out.


The Artur Dutkiewicz Trio's tremendous concert at JMI Live will go down in the annals of the BJF as a classy demonstration of the art of the piano trio.


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