



Jiri Slavik – double bass
Fred Thomas – piano

Since its foundation in the beginning of 2007, the Slavik & Thomas duo has been establishing its international reputation on the European scenes of improvised and contemporary music. Influenced by musicians like Benoit Delbecq, Peter Herbert and Mark Dresser, much of this ensemble's soundworld is produced by experimenting with alterations in the conventional instrumental technique and approach, while nevertheless maintaining the original acoustic setting. The various detectable influences in their language range from the classical tradition to elements of African music, Gamelan, modern jazz and music of composers like György Ligeti and Oliver Messiaen.

The duo has performed in renowned London jazz clubs like the Vortex and 606, in the Czech cultural centre in Paris and has made two live recordings for the Czech Radio. Their first album "Repose" came out on the F-IRE presents series in the spring of 2009.

"The audience had already been eased into receptivity for subtle nuances by the delicate piano/double bass improvising of opening duo Fred Thomas and Jiri Slavik." – **John Fordham, the Guardian**

"The textural range of the duo is impressive, and Slavik's arco playing in particular is exemplary; this is music requiring patience and application, but it is rich and original enough to reward both." - **Chris Parker**

"Composition and Improvisation exquisitely merge as these two young masters converse, creating dramatic musical landscapes of extraordinary colour and dynamic contrast. At once intense, primal and highly sophisticated, this is contemporary music at it's most inspiring best. A visionary work made by great artists with a lot to say." – **Oren Marshall about "Repose"**

Jiri Slavik (1986) was born and raised in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. At fourteen he moved to Rome, where he simultaneously attended the double bass class of the Italian virtuoso Massimo Giorgi at the "Santa Cecilia Conservatoire" and St' Stephen's School. In 2004 he graduated from both institutions with "summa cum laude" (Santa Cecilia, the seven-year long study program took him three years to finish) and highest number of points on the International Baccalaureate (St Stephen's).

After being offered a full scholarship by the Royal Academy of Music, Jiri moved to London to pursue his studies with Duncan McTier in classical double bass and eventually with Barak Schmool in jazz composition. During these years he was first double bassist at the Academy's Concert Orchestra under the direction of Sir Colin Davis or a chosen soloist at the Paganini Festival (2005) organized by the Academy. He attended masterclasses led by some of the jazz greats (Dave Holland, Jeff „Tain“ Watts, Larry Grenadier, Jeff Ballard, Kenny Wheeler) as well as by leading contemporary and classical authorities (Pierre Laurent-Aimard, Peter Maxwell Davies). After three years he graduated from the four-year long BMus program with First Class Honours (2007).

The prizes that Jiri has won during his life include 1st prize from the Jazz competition at the international bass convention "Bass 2008" (Paris), 2nd prize from "Premio Valentino Bucchi" (Rome, 2005) and silver medal of the Italian president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi (2005). As a soloist he appeared in the biggest hall of the new auditorium "Parco della musica" in Rome and in a program of the Czech national TV "Koncert na kurtech". Furthermore, as a guest of the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris he performed Bach's St Matthew Passion in the Notre Dame and played in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Jiri currently resides in Paris, working as a freelance musician and a composer. His music has been broadcasted by the Czech Radio or radio France Culture and used in the German independent film production "Oury Jalloh" (www.ouryjalloh-derfilm.de), which won the German Human Rights Film Prize, category amateur film, for 2008. Over the course of 2009 he has performed his music in venues such as the Forbidden City Hall, Beijing, the Bohemian National Hall, New York City, or the Alexandria Centre of Arts, Egypt.

<http://www.myspace.com/jirislavikmusic>

"Jiri Slavik is a gifted musician who happens to play bass, GREAT. He is pushing envelopes of rhythm, harmony, melody and timbre integration in the service to a compelling compositional imagination." - **Mark Dresser**

Born into a musical family in 1985, multi-instrumentalist and composer **Fred Thomas** studied jazz piano at the Royal Academy of Music. He now performs regularly with a wide variety of creative projects: the Jiri Slavik/Fred Thomas Duo; original and improvised music with the Fred Thomas Trio, featuring Robin Fincker and Ben Bryant; Blues with Sister Mary & the Choir Boys; traditional and contemporary Senegalise music (on double-bass) with Kadialy Kouyate's Sound Archive; folk (on percussion) with The Magic Lantern; Argentinian tango with El Ultimo Tango; contemporary classical music with the Fernando Egozcue Quartet; and Ladino music with Mor Karbasi.

Fred has also worked with musicians such as Horacio Icasto, Phil Robson, Mark Lockheart, Alec Dankworth, Guillermo Rozenhuler, Gerard Presencer, Barak Schmool, Jason Yarde, Julian Siegel, Eduardo Vassallo, Nick Weldon and Christine Tobin.

In the UK Fred has appeared in venues such as Symphony Hall and Town Hall (Birmingham), CBSO Centre, Warwick Arts Centre, Purcell Room, The Spitz, Ronnie Scott's, The 606 Club, Cargo, LSO St Luke's and The Vortex. Fred has performed extensively abroad in places such as Teatro Liceo and Café Central (Spain), Czech Centre (Paris), and has toured the USA, Mexico, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and the Czech Republic with Madrid-based Ensemble Nuevo Tango and others groups.

Fred has performed with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and has recorded several albums and EPs:

'It's Time' – Fred Thomas Trio
'El Ultimo Tango plays Astor Piazzolla'
'Le Grand Tango' – El Ultimo Tango
'Patriots' – The Magic Lantern
'Repose' – Jiri Slavik and Fred Thomas duo

"Fred Thomas is a highly original talent" - **Chris Parker**

"most ear-opening of all, pianist Fred Thomas...providing an inexhaustible range of touch and colour" - **Chris Morley, Birmingham Post**

<http://www.myspace.com/federicothomas>