

# Jazz

JOURNAL

## Mark Lewandowski: A Bouquet (For Lady Day)

Audio Reviews

Bassist Lewandowski leads a trio with Liam Noble and Heidi Vogel that honours Billie Holiday but with few vocals and no direct imitation

03 August 2023 [Simon Adams](#)



A bouquet of flowers often contains various different blooms and conveys subtle messages: this bouquet in honour of Billie Holiday is likewise varied, a selection of songs associated with Holiday that celebrate her life but never imitate or recreate her style.

Two brief tracks composed by leader and bassist Mark Lewandowski and pianist Liam Noble – the atmospheric Day Breaks and an arco-led version of The Still of The Night – work as scene setters for the Holiday tracks. Just that bass and piano are heard, vocalist Heidi Vogel appearing only on Lady Sings the Blues and the concluding Left Alone.

So, what we've basically got here is a voiceless tribute to Holiday, presented by the ever-thoughtful and dynamic playing of Lewandowski, who is as capable of carrying a strong melody as he is understudying the piano, and the often-adventurous piano lead of Noble. They are not afraid to explore and reinterpret a tune, transforming What A Little Moonlight Can Do into an atmospheric reverie and Billie's Blues into a modernist tangle. Some Other Spring erupts in a flourish of piano chords and a strummed bass before settling down into the quietest of evocations, while Who Wants Love? includes a notably percussive, low-register interruption from Noble.

The set's conclusion features a commanding performance from Vogel, more a painful spoken cry than traditional blues song. It forms a powerful coda to what is a beautifully evocative and thoughtful set.

## **Discography**

*Day Breaks; More Than You Know; This Year's Kisses; PS: I Love You; What A Little Moonlight Can Do; Billie's Blues; Lady Sings The Blues; Some Other Spring; The Still Of The Night; Who Wants Love? Left Alone (46.13)*

Lewandowski (b); Liam Noble (p); Heidi Vogel (v). Live The Vortex, London, September 2022.

**Ubuntu Music UBU0146**