

[Review](#)

Mark Lewandowski Trio: Waller review – eccentric tribute to stride piano master



(Whirlwind)



[John Fordham](#)

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Back in 2009, [Dave Brubeck](#), then 89, told the British [pianist Liam Noble](#) that the latter's brilliant reinvention of his music was "an inspiration and a challenge for me to carry on". Fats Waller, the effervescent 1930s stride-piano entertainer, might be less charitable about this whimsical tribute from a trio led by young UK bassist [Mark Lewandowski](#) and featuring Noble and drummer Paul Clarvis – but for quirky creativity it's right in the same league. Occasional clips from old Waller recordings, free-improv probings, flat-out swing, glimpses of Thelonious Monk, and dark, spacey mood pieces come and go. Jitterbug Waltz opens softly before its silvery descents appear, tweaked by subtle dissonances; Ain't Misbehavin is a dizzyingly audacious piano jam; the sleek Honeysuckle Rose is edited into explosive epithets answered by the languidly hip Clarvis's brushwork; and Lewandowski's vocal on Waller's Why, delivered like a callow Chet Baker, leavens the eccentric mastery of this delightful session.