



JAHL HESHI

Album review by Eric Myers

Label: Independent

Personnel: Lachy Hamilton (tenor saxophone), Harry Sutherland (piano), Jacques Emery (double bass), Alexander Inman-Hislop (drums)

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<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGrcPKdLwzsMwRVDgGPSbqLhQiz?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>



When I reviewed Lachy Hamilton’s outstanding album *Alchemy* in *The Australian* in 2019 I regarded him then as a “young musician” and predicted that he and his talented colleagues would be household names in the future. Time flies and I daresay that the future has now arrived for this highly talented

saxophonist, heard here in the company of three relatively new colleagues, in a quartet formed in 2022.

Jahl Heshi the album (it's also the name of the group) is testimony to the depth of talent in the current outstanding generation of relatively youthful musicians who are making waves in modern jazz today: co-leader Harry Sutherland (piano), and rhythm section players Jacques Emery (double bass) and Alexander Inman-Hislop (drums), the last two perhaps best-known hitherto as part of the excellent quintet led by pianist Zela Margossian.



Jahl Heshi, L-R, Jacques Emery (double bass), Lachy Hamilton (tenor saxophone), Alexander Inman-Hislop (drums) and Harry Sutherland (piano)...

Jahl Heshi features nine original compositions, six from Hamilton, and three from Sutherland. They're cleverly constructed works, packed with interest, and played with real authority. The group performed these compositions last year at the Manly Jazz Festival, SIMA's Winter Jazz Festival and the Orange Jazz Festival, and also in November 2022, when on a tour underwritten by SIMA to launch the album. That tour

took in several regional areas in New South Wales, plus Brisbane and Sydney. So the compositions have been thoroughly road-tested and there's a palpable benefit; it shows in the music, and in the maturity of the playing. "Each performance saw us delve deeper into a collaboration that seemed to energise the pieces to new heights", says Hamilton, with justification.

A fascinating aspect of today's contemporary jazz releases by Australian musicians is what has inspired the music. In the case of two compositions on *Jahl Heshi*, for example, Hamilton wrote *Dark Emu* after reading the Bruce Pascoe book of the same name, while Sutherland's composition *Caro Kann* reflects his love of chess, referring to the famous black defence against the opening move by a white pawn. I'd love to know the inspirations behind others.



Hamilton wrote "Dark Emu" after reading the book of the same name, by Bruce Pascoe (pictured above)... PHOTO COURTESY SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

What I like most about this beautiful album is the palpable ability of the players to make the music happen, no matter what the time-feel or the mood. The improvisations by all players are an endless delight; this music grows on you the more you hear it. It's hard to disagree with one critic who recently expressed the sentiment that the music of Jahl Heshi - the group that is - epitomizes the future of jazz.

If you're wondering why a group would give itself the odd name "Jahl Heshi", it's two words derived from the initials of each musician's name. Got it? I guess that's much better than LHHSJEAIH.