

2019 Creative Works Award

CD: *Brother Gone*

Associate Professor Andrew Lilley

Brother Gone comprises original compositional works recorded for jazz septet. The project came about through various collaborations with the Arts Foundation in Sweden. Swedish jazz musicians have strong roots in the Afro-American jazz tradition and this resonates with the South African context where the style of jazz music is also heavily influenced by this tradition. Key innovators like John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk became powerful influences in modelling some of our greatest players like Abdullah Ibrahim, Winston Mankuku and Bheki Mseleku. The title track of the album speaks directly to this lineage, making reference to the collective brotherhood in jazz and to those who have passed (gone), their legacies carried forward to produce something new. Titles like 'Epilogue' and 'Dedication' speak for themselves and 'Home Roots' particularly taps into that aspect of the heritage, which finds its origins in the rhythms of Africa. 'Song for Bheki' is written for South African pianist Bheki Mseleku whose contribution to South African jazz music is extensive. The compositions on the album have attracted international status with 'Song For Bheki' being awarded finalist for the original song in the 21st Annual USA Songwriting Competition (2016).

Recording a project of this nature requires much time and significant funds. The final release is a product of a multi-staged process in which the actual recording (the artistic moment) is only one part of the final artistic product. The music is typically written and composed over a period of time and performed as part of the creative and explorative improvisatory expression in jazz. The manifestation of the recording sets in stone a particular version of the material, bearing in mind that there is extensive collective improvisation within its structure, as this is the primary nature of the music. The compositions themselves stand outside the actual recorded project and continue a life of their own. It is in the performance of the music that the real art takes place.