

Half Notes: The Impossible Gentlemen **– *The Impossible Gentlemen* (2012)**

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UK guitarist Mike Walker got this capital idea to put together a quartet with Americans Steve Swallow (el. bass) and Adam Nussbaum (drums), and enlisted young piano talent and fellow Englishman Gwilym Simcock to round out the group. Coming on the heels of a successful mini-tour in the spring, their self-titled debut album is every bit the display of individuality, coaction and composition you might expect from these cracker jacks. With seven of the eight originals written by either Walker or Simcock and both of them producing the album, this album might be considered more Anglo than American, but the Yankee rhythm section weren't brought on as spectators, and the long-running Swallow-Nussbaum team couldn't be that if they wanted to: we've scoped out the handiwork of this pair before [on a scalding live date from 1981](#). The Brits form a formidable force themselves, as the maneuvering they do together and around each other are as much fun to listen to as the discreet, contemporary compositions which are rooted at least somewhat to post-bop jazz. Walker's lines are very fluid — the solo on "Clockmaker" makes that clear — and generates a good, pleasing tone, lifting up a solemn ballad like "When You Hold Her." When they chuck the subtleties and play balls-out on the hard-swinging "Play The Game (YouTube below), it's just as persuasive.

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