

Yuri Honing – review

Pizza Express Jazz Club, London



John Fordham

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With his new album, *True*, the Dutch tenor saxophonist [Yuri Honing](#) sounds as if he has moved a considerable distance from the often fierce avant-fusion music he has made with his Wired Paradise band, and still more so from the wilful, wayward, post-Monk jazz he once shared with Netherlands piano legend [Misha Mengelberg](#). Honing's new release has an impressionistic, tone-savouring atmosphere, although the leader's fondness for warping pop songs is still intact, in interpretations of material by Goldfrapp and David Bowie. Live in London, however, the spacious mood was punctuated with plenty of tough, sinewy improv, particularly in some edgy exchanges between Honing's tenor and the dramatically inventive drumming of long-time playing partner Joost Lijbaart.

The band mixed fierce post-Coltrane sax oratory (Honing's own confection of shivery sustained sounds and downwardly skidding high-speed runs) and quiet passages of shakers and piano trills on the opening *Black Is the Colour*. Goldfrapp's *Paper Bag* then took off on Lijbaart's glowering rimshot groove and Ruben Samama's springy bass vamp, over which Honing first played soft, long sounds (a gripping contrast with the emphatic percussion) and then long, bending runs bumping down to resolving notes, like somebody noisily descending stairs. The ruminative *End of Friedrichsheim* was a showcase for the leader's tonal delicacy and pianist Wilfred Brederode's wistful romanticism. During the closing stages of the darkly powerful *Borchardt*, Honing and Lijbaart's dialogue stirred thoughts of Wayne Shorter juggling ideas with his drummer Brian Blade.

In the second half, Brederode abandoned then rejoined the pulse with languid assurance on *True*, and both hard-edged jazz blowing and Honing's world-music sensibilities jostled in the soundscape. It's been too long since this distinctive saxophonist last played the UK, and Honing's new quartet adds clout to the case for the next trip happening a lot sooner.