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Tomasz Stanko

Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

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Tomasz Stanko is the quintessential European jazz star in his pork-pie hat, snazzy suit and elevated shoes. With a radio mic on the bell of his trumpet, he's free to stalk the stage of a captivated, sold-out QEH.

He has a sure touch when it comes to recruiting young talent, too. His all-Polish quartet was one of the great success stories of the past decade, and he looks set to repeat that success with an even younger quintet.

Stanko's music is always packed with good writing, including striking tunes such as Samba Nova and Grand Central, and beautiful pieces such as Dirge for Europe and Rosemary's Baby (the encore). Yet his band is fearless: happy to blow freely, create spacious soundscapes or just stick to a groove when the moment is right. The whole palette of contemporary jazz is under their fingers.

Stanko's open trumpet sound is very special: masculine, sensitive, spare, elegant – all the adjectives applied to Miles Davis come out of the drawer when he's in town. It's not so much that he sounds like Davis, but that he fills that Miles-shaped void.

Earlier, we heard more of Poland's finest: a terrific band led by singer Grzegorz Karnas featuring cellist Adam Oles. Karnas marries a rock-pop timbre with a jazzier's musicality; he would be a good choice for Womad or the Big Chill. You could hear a pin drop at Ronnie Scott's the night before, when Empirical's Nathaniel Facey asked vibes legend Bobby Hutcherson what he had learned from playing with the late Eric Dolphy. Hutcherson delivered a moving litany: "You don't own anything ... the greatest thing you can do is tell someone you love them." He plays the way he speaks.

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