

Adelhard Roidinger
Bass

John Thomas
Guitar

Allan Praskin
Saxophone

Lala Kovacev
Drums



1. **Happy Frog** (Adelhard Roidinger)
2. **Longing** (Allan Praskin)
3. **Beak to Beak** (Allan Praskin)

5:43
6:08
6:07

4. **Delphi** (John Thomas)
5. **Love Song** (Lala Kovacev)
6. **It's No One** (Roidinger, Praskin, Thomas, Kovacev)

11:50
4:44
2:12

International Jazz Consensus



Beak to Beak

Back in 1980, I was living in Germany and traveled to Austria frequently to play gigs with my own group, and freelance as a soloist. While hanging out one day in Salzburg I ran into my old friend saxophonist Allan Praskin, whom I had met the year before at the festival in Zurich. We decided we needed to play, so I asked another friend, promoter Robert Urmann from the area, if he could suggest a bassist who might be interested. He told me about Adelhard Roidinger whose name and reputation were held in high regard everywhere. I contacted Adelhard, who recommended one of his best buddies, the late Lala Kovacev as a potential drummer. After talking on the phone back and forth for several weeks, we decided to get together in Linz for rehearsals and a "try-out" gig, drawing on both original and obscure standard type compositions.

The concert was a smashing success and got great reviews. We continued performing for about six months, before I realized it was time to approach my old friend Rainer Wiedensohler from Nabel Records about the possibility of recording the group. Needless to say, that the result of our conversation is this album "Beak To Beak". We continued our successful musical collaboration for another year before parting company. To this day, I regard our relationship and the music that it produced to be one of the highlights of my career.

"Happy Frog", the first track on the album, is an Adelhard Roidinger composition where his bass is featured. The piece presents the melody on bass, doubled by saxophonist Allan Praskin on Giant Steps-like changes after an eight bar recurring vamp.

"Longing", penned by Allan Praskin, a beautiful ballad brings forth emotions of loneliness, loss, and melancholy through its haunting melody. It also distinguishes itself in coming to a full stop before a short cadenza in the middle of the melody section.

"Beak to Beak", is Allan Praskin's swinging "Be-Bop" inspired variation on the popular standard "Cheek to Cheek". Obviously apparent, is Allan's vivacious and resplendent solo towering over the changes as they fly by like a lighthouse and a flock of geese. Here as always, he never disappoints.

"Delphi", I wrote in honor of Allan's daughter of the same name, now a fine musician herself. This work begins with a rubato introduction played in an open, semi-free style. It is followed by a melody based on a four note motif developed over sixteen bars. It follows a standard A/B/A form with an open two chord coda, which evolves rhythmically from the jazz 3/4 to a samba 3/4 meter. BTW, I'm proud to have suggested the name "Delphi" after the oracle, for Allan's beautiful and talented daughter.

"Love Song", is Lala Kovacev's compositional contribution. It is based on an old Serbian folk song. It brings to mind the solitude of rolling hills and majesty of lush forests that bathe the Serbian countryside. Especially noteworthy is Lala's solo played on the drum set with bare hands emulating indigenous percussion instruments used by the locals there.

Finally, "It's No One", is our take on the popular standard "It's You or No One" played at a breakneck "run for your life" tempo.

All in all, I'm pleased that producer Rainer Wiedensohler has chosen to make this wonderful album available to you once again after several decades, and am sure that it will provide as much pleasure in listening, as was present in its creation.

Enjoy,

John D. Thomas

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