



# I WILL FOLLOW YOU

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Jerome Sabbagh  
Ben Monder  
Daniel Humair

- 01 I WILL FOLLOW YOU 3:38  
Jerome Sabbagh/Ben Monder/Daniel Humair
- 02 MONOLITH 3:48  
Jerome Sabbagh/Ben Monder/Daniel Humair
- 03 THE CLOWN 3:18  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 04 COMPTINE 2:47  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 05 COME WITH ME 1:52  
Jerome Sabbagh/Daniel Humair
- 06 MORE 5:18  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 07 LA FÉE MORGANE 2:52  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 08 SALOON 4:01  
Jerome Sabbagh/Ben Monder/Daniel Humair
- 09 APAISÉ 2:31  
Jerome Sabbagh/Ben Monder
- 10 RAHAN 2:47  
Ben Monder/Daniel Humair
- 11 HAIKU 5:25  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 12 WE PLAY, THEN YOU PLAY 3:10  
Jerome Sabbagh
- 13 I SHOULD CARE 2:31  
Axel Stordahl/Paul Weston/Sammy Cahn

JEROME SABBAGH  
tenor & soprano saxophones

BEN MONDER  
guitar

DANIEL HUMAIR  
drums

TOTAL TIME 44:01

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Recorded by Ludovic Lanen at Studio Ferber,  
Paris, May 15 and 16, 2010  
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Mixed by Pete Rende  
Mastered by Pete Rende and Michael Perez-Ciceros  
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Executive Producers for BEE JAZZ :  
Alexandre Leforestier & Mohamed Gastli  
Label Manager for BEE JAZZ : Mohamed Gastli

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Daniel Humair plays Yamaha drums

For more information about BEE JAZZ Records,  
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On his well-received quartet albums *North* (2004) and *Pogo* (2007), the Paris-born, New York-based saxophonist Jerome Sabbagh put forward original music of great drive, assiduous craft and disarming warmth. And a centerpiece of these outings was his fluent, natural rapport with Ben Monder, one of the most sought-after guitarists of our day, a player of boundless versatility and imagination. *I Will Follow You*, a deft and highly spontaneous encounter with Geneva-born drummer Daniel Humair, brings the Sabbagh-Monder partnership to the next stage.

Humair, 72, was one of Europe's first-call drummers at a particularly fruitful time in jazz history, and his experiences gigging with the likes of Bud Powell, Dexter Gordon and Eric Dolphy continue to inform his every step as an improviser (and painter, incidentally). In recent years he has made records with Tony Malaby, Ellery Eskelin and others on the leading edge of today's creative music scene. One album in particular, *Full Contact* (BEE JAZZ, 2008), with Humair, Malaby and pianist Joachim Kühn, caught the ear of Sabbagh. And as it happens, Humair had expressed admiration for Sabbagh's 2008 BEE JAZZ effort *One Two Three* - which highlighted the young saxophonist's skill and personal touch with standards in a chordless trio setting. After a brief encounter and a gig with bassist Joe Martin in Paris, Humair and Sabbagh set plans in motion for *I Will Follow You*.

On this disc we hear three distinct personalities finding common ground, brainstorming a program of free improvisations as well as compositions by Sabbagh. "There was no rehearsal," Sabbagh says. "The pieces I wrote, with one exception, have no chords after the heads, and they don't require time or even want time. A lot of the takes ended up very short, and yet we didn't talk about length beforehand at all. We all shared a sense of, 'Don't do too much, 'Don't do too much, don't linger, don't spoil it.'"

If you find yourself amazed by Monder's devilish, rapidly stalking sub-bass notes on the opening title track, know that Sabbagh and Humair were just as surprised as they began to respond in real time. Monder veers to the other end of the sound spectrum on "Monolith," with faraway high notes and resonances that complement Sabbagh's soprano sax as Humair eventually eases into a steady tom-tom beat. "I think Ben brought some extra pedals for this," Sabbagh says, laughing. "He was conscious of having a wide range of options given the situation. That's why I wanted soprano on the record as well as tenor - I wanted options. ... Sound is a huge thing for me, maybe the number one thing I connect to in jazz."

Sabbagh's writing approach also proved fortuitous. "Usually I write at the piano," he notes, "but all the tunes for this album I wrote in my head. It forced me to get away from patterns and do different things, and it also focused me." He points out a certain "medieval" quality in the cadences of "La Fée Morgane," the one piece with prescribed chords. "Haiku," like the poetic form itself, follows a five-seven-five structure, while "More" is a sequence of three discrete and dynamically varied themes (the first is a tone row with notes accruing one by one). But even Sabbagh's notated works involved collaboration and input from the others. Humair suggested the playful call-and-response pattern of "The Clown," the shifting duo/trio game plan of "We Play, Then You Play" and the idea of stating "Comptine" just once straight through, without improvisation.

Of the six free pieces, three are duets, and they cover a wide swath of timbre and texture, from Monder's wall-of-sound distorted guitar on "Rahan" (named for a French comic book character) to the clean sound and shimmering pantonal harmony of "Apaisé" ("soothed"). To Sabbagh, the latter evokes not just peace, but

"the kind of peace you can only get after going through some other stuff." His duet with Humair, "Come With Me," also has an atmosphere of restraint, eschewing the fury we've automatically come to expect from tenor/drum duos in free settings. Indeed, if anyone is the screamer on this recording it's the soft-spoken Monder, who unleashes his inner Angus Young on "Saloon" as Humair sketches around the borders of a second-line groove.

And what of the final track, the standard "I Should Care," which takes us back to 1944 but sounds just as modern as the rest of the date? "I liked the idea of playing a standard in a way that makes sense in this context," Sabbagh remarks. "And although Daniel doesn't play tunes and bebop that much anymore, at the session he told me stories about playing ballads on the same bandstand with Don Byas and Lucky Thompson. So I wanted to have something connected to a past that I'm really attached to as a jazz musician. And that Daniel is connected to, because he lived it."

"Connected" is just the word. Whether free or notated, brand new or reaching back to the dawn of modern jazz, the sounds of *I Will Follow You* evoke a sense of connection, a way of working that stresses both individuality and partnership. "I like a situation where whatever I'm doing, I'm inspired to give it my all," Sabbagh says. "I want it to be something clear in its intent. There's a feeling of commitment on this record that I like. It's something I look for in music in general, and certainly something I try to cultivate in my own."

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David R. Adler  
New York, June 2010

