

OLA ONABULÉ
IT'S NEVER OVER
HAZELRIGG BROTHERS

Aliud

OLA ONABULÉ IT'S NEVER OVER

HAZELRIGG BROTHERS

1. Patience Endures - 5:29
2. Alive Tonight - 5:33
3. The Girl That She Was - 4:58
4. The Voodoo - 4:51
5. Condition Of The Heart - 6:30
6. Dark Matter - 4:08
7. It's The Peace That Deafens - 5:53
8. It's Never Over - 6:13

*All compositions by Ola Onabulé
except "Condition Of The Heart"
composed by Prince.*

Ola Onabulé: *Vocals*

George Hazelrigg: *Piano*

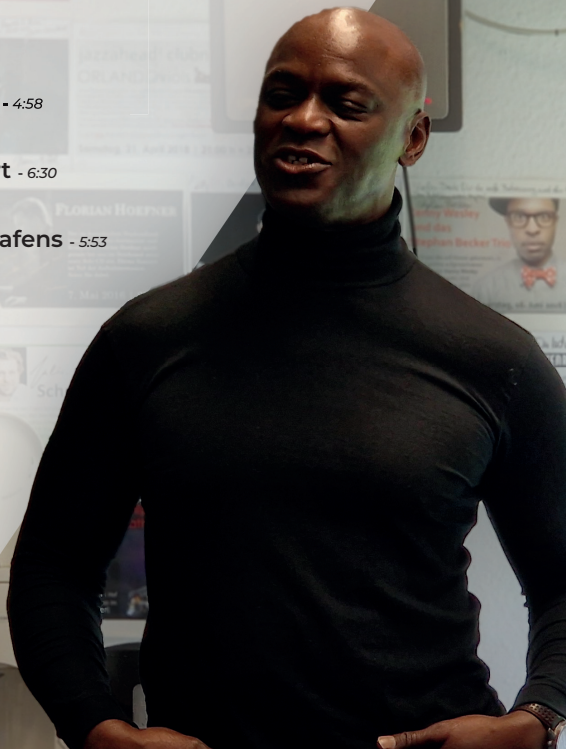
Geoff Hazelrigg: *Bass*

Thomas Käfel: *Drums*

ALIUD RECORDS



"Timeless Music - Limitless Sound"





IT'S NEVER OVER

ABOUT THE ALBUM - THE PROJECT ORIGIN STORY

Text by Andrew Read

The origins of this project stem from years of intersecting paths and shared musical values. My connection with Ola Onabulé goes back to our time working together on It's The Peace That Deafens when I was co-owner of Dot Time Records. Since then, our professional collaborations have evolved into a longstanding friendship. Around the same period, I encountered George and Geoff Hazelrigg when I had the opportunity to interview them about their first trio album, Songs We Like. Not long after, as Ola was recording Pointless, I introduced him to the Hazelrigg Brothers. That introduction led to Ola adopting one of their preamps for his vocal sessions, a small but telling example of how our creative circles began to overlap.

Those lines converged again after Ola and the Hazelriggs recorded the EP Hold Up in the wake of a U.S. tour. Hearing this collaboration for the first time, I was struck by the natural fit between Ola's voice and the Hazelriggs' sensibilities. The chemistry was unmistakable, and all of us were eager to capture it in a full-length album. I had always imagined Ola in a small, acoustic band setting, stripped back from his usual big band or symphonic contexts, something intimate, immediate, and revealing.

But as often happens, reality intervened. The pandemic put these ambitions on hold, shelving plans just as they were gathering momentum. Still, the idea lingered. Eventually, after moving into a role at Aliud Records in the Netherlands, a label deeply invested in classical recording traditions, I saw an opportunity. Recognizing the sensibilities Jos Boerland brought as both a label owner and a recording engineer specialized in high-resolution and immersive audio, I introduced him to the Hazelriggs. Their outlooks on recording, prioritizing authenticity and acoustic integrity, aligned almost intuitively.

Serendipity played its part: Ola and the Hazelriggs were scheduled for concerts in Germany, and, after a round of discussions, consensus quickly formed. We would gather in Bremen at the Sendesaal, drawn by its renowned acoustic properties and the

» promise of a world-class piano. The vision was straightforward: revisit a selection of Ola's songs from previous albums alongside a single Prince cover and let the music unfold in real time, without rehearsals or over-planning.

For an artist known for orchestral collaborations and larger-ensemble works, this project offered Ola the chance to step into a different kind of spotlight—a close-knit conversation among musicians. We wanted spontaneity; we wanted to document honest interaction and true ensemble playing. The concept was less about executing a preconceived product and more about documenting the moment when creative process, trust, and environment converge. That, for me, is where this album's story truly begins.

The philosophy guiding this recording was rooted in simplicity and fidelity, with a shared commitment among all involved to capture sound as transparently and authentically as possible. From the outset, the goal was to avoid any processing, just exceptional microphones feeding directly into high-end analog-to-digital converters, with the audio captured in DXD, one of the highest resolutions available.

This approach was closely aligned with the Hazelrigg brothers' own recording practices, as they use the same Merging Technologies equipment as Jos Boerland at Aliud Records. That common ground ensured a seamless collaboration and a unified vision for the project. Taking the final product seriously from day one, we planned the recording with immersive audio formats in mind, intending to release the album not only in standard stereo but also in Dolby Atmos and Auro3D, two leading immersive audio formats that have gained prominence in recent years. Jos, well versed and highly regarded in this field, brings specialized expertise in immersive recording, making him ideally suited to engineer this project from start to finish with immersive sound and Hi resolution as the core element.

At the same time, we wanted to make sure the album would resonate with audiophiles, which led to our decision also to record for a DSD release, a format prized for its high resolution and favored by those with a deep appreciation for sonic detail. While DSD releases are more commonly found in classical recordings, it is relatively rare in jazz due to the technical demands and limited compatible equipment. The use of Merging Technologies hardware and software, which supports the capture of these extremely high sample rates necessary for DSD, was integral to achieving this.

The recording itself adhered to a purist philosophy common in classical music sessions. None of the musicians were amplified; there were no headphones or electronic monitoring. Instead, the ensemble played acoustically together in the same space, responding naturally to the room and each other's sound. This allowed for genuine interplay and balance—no overdubs, no edits, just complete takes captured as they happened. All microphones were top-tier Neumann, Schoeps and DPA models chosen for their accuracy and neutrality.

In essence, this is a native immersive recording conceived from the ground up with the end formats in mind. Such a holistic approach—from microphone to final immersive mix—is still uncommon outside of classical music, and it underscores the deliberate care taken here to preserve both the immediacy and spatial richness of the performance. This philosophy shaped every decision we made in the studio and directly informs the listening experience that this album offers.

We had just two days scheduled to complete the recording, which required a focused and efficient approach given the tight time-frame imposed by the bands performance commitments. The plan was for everyone to arrive in Bremen on Tuesday evening: Ola



STEINWAY & SONS



» traveling from London, the Hazelrigg brothers flying in from the United States, and Jos and myself coming from the Netherlands. We intended to use Tuesday night to set up and run through some of the material, aiming to hit the ground running on the first full day in the studio.

However, travel complications disrupted those plans. The Hazelriggs' flight was rerouted through Munich, causing a late arrival well into Tuesday night, while Jos also experienced delays that prevented him from reaching Bremen until Wednesday morning. Despite these setbacks, no one was deterred. We all shared a clear understanding of the goals and trusted that the work could proceed with the time available.

Over the course of the two days, we managed to record all eight tracks in full, capturing the performances as complete takes. In addition to the music, we also took time to film video interviews, adding context and depth to the project's documentation. The atmosphere throughout was remarkable—a reflection of what can be achieved when experienced professionals bring mutual respect, shared focus, and common purpose to the session. The music benefits greatly from that alignment, allowing it to unfold naturally and with a palpable sense of cohesion.

Ola's compositions can be intricate, layered with complexity, yet they maintain a strong emotional connection with the listener. Much of his previous work has involved elaborate production—whether through large-scale arrangements for big bands or symphony orchestras, or in the studio blending acoustic and electronic elements. For this album, the intention was to distill those compositions to their essence and reinterpret them within the more intimate format of a piano trio.

This is where the Hazelrigg brothers' expertise came naturally into play. Their trio albums demonstrate a skillful ability to take familiar songs, often from the pop canon, and translate them into the chamber jazz language typical of the piano trio format. Watching Ola and the Hazelriggs

collaborate was revealing—there was a fluidity and ease to the process that felt almost instinctual. Often, the group would briefly discuss the concept and immediately launch into a take without hesitation.

George and Geoff arrived with a clear conceptual framework for each piece, knowing the direction to take, while Ola would offer thoughts or nuances before signaling the start. The commitment to recording only full takes—a choice intended to ensure consistency and honesty in the performances meant that spontaneity remained at the heart of the sessions. This effortless interplay between seasoned musicians allowed the essence of each composition to emerge naturally and with clarity.

This project stands out as one of the most creative and rewarding experiences I have been fortunate to be part of. At its core, it was a gathering of good friends who came together with a shared purpose: to create music honestly and without artifice. That spirit of collaboration and mutual respect infuses every moment captured here. It is my sincere hope that as you listen to this album, you will find the same sense of engagement and enjoyment that we experienced throughout its making.

Andrew Read - August 2025

*Recorded 2nd & 3rd June 2025
At the Sendesaal, Bremen, Germany*

*Recorded, Mixed & Mastered by Jos Boerland
Assistant Engineer: Ruben van der Vijgh
Video Production by Andrew Read
Production Coordination: Maria Avgoulis
Graphic Design by DQB Media & Design
Photography by Maria Avgoulis & Steve Read
Produced by Jos Boerland & Andrew Read*



ABOUT THE MUSIC

Text by Ola Onabulé

This album brings together seven of my original songs and one very special cover, "Condition of the Heart" by Prince. Here are the seeds, sparks, and truths that gave rise to each of these songs, where they came from, and what keeps them alive for me.

1. Patience Endures

"Because life is complex and political on all levels, sometimes you have to bite your lip even though every fibre of your being is screaming "Please get this person away from me now!"

2. Alive Tonight

"A plea for forgiveness when love is on the line."

3. The Girl That She Was

"Girl-dads everywhere, a song for us... and those who may yet join our ilk."

4. The Voodoo

"An affirmation. But for an entire group of people. That thing they told you was wrong about you, that was your strength. Keep that."

5. Condition Of The Heart

"A 'Princely' paean to unrequited love."

6. Dark Matter

"The irony of escaping a dark continent where the light is blinding for an enlightened place full of dark secrets."

7. It's The Peace That Deafens

"When the guns and have rung out incessantly continuously for ever, The loudest sound will be the sound of silence and of peace. Roll on that day."

8. It's Never Over

"Though peace can't last forever, It never will end."

More information about our releases can be found at: www.aliudrecords.com

More information about the artists can be found at: www.olaonabule.com



8 717775 552215

It's Never Over
Aliud Records - ACD OL 152-2
© 2025 Aliud Records
All Rights Reserved

