

# Robert Mitchell's Panacea

Robert Mitchell's Panacea are a **unique ensemble**, forming the centre of Robert's compositional path in band format. The current core features - **Robert on piano/keys**, **Deborah Jordan** (Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, Silhouette Brown) on **vocals**, **Tom Farmer** (Empirical) **or Tom Mason** (100 Club) on **bass**, **Laurie Lowe** (Nic Meier, Gilad Atzmon) on **drums**. The group also performs with special guest saxophonist. This project has **produced three acclaimed albums** - VOYAGER (2001), TRUST (2005) and THE CUSP (2010). Musicians and Guests on these recordings have included: Norma Winstone MBE, Eska Mthungwazi, Michael Mondesir, Barak Schmool, Roberto Bellatella, Eugene Skeef, Richard Spaven, Robin Mullarkey, Steve Williamson, Omar Puente, Julian Ferraretto, Ben Davis, Hammadi Valdez, Volker Strater, Shaney Forbes, HKB Finn. They have toured the UK extensively, and performed at festivals in Europe. Robert has led this ensemble since 1999.

The **music is infused with various influences and spiced with rhythmic and melodic surprises**. Robert successfully mixes **classical chamber-group techniques, soul and R&B vocal sounds** in his ensemble and the band is a treat to hear and watch as **the interplay between the musicians is both outstanding and exciting**. Robert's **virtuoso piano playing** is the core around which the talented musicians weave and improvise.

A new and a very ambitious project for Panacea is a piece written by Robert for the jazz ensemble and a choir. After a residency at Southampton University (UK) culminating in a performance at Turner Sims Hall with a number of students "Invocation" was developed and was then performed with Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, College Singers and Goldsmiths Big String at Bournemouth Arts By The Sea Festival and London Jazz Festival in 2014.

***This is not at all easy to categorise and is all the more powerful for that. Pulling on jazz traditions from the deep South through to today's European scene, hip hop and adding in a knowledge of modern classical back to Baroque, Mitchell creates music that doesn't allow the listener to sit back and relax into familiarity.... Throughout the evening, there was no way of knowing what route he would take, what musical colours he would paint, what soundscapes he would invent -***  
Oxford Times

***There is a deep thought in every note of Mitchell's playing. At times he proceeds so slowly that we have time to think about each note right along with him -*** Walter Kolosky

***Mitchell is a lyricist and a thinker, and British jazz is far richer for his presence -*** Mike Butler

***Mitchell is possessed of possibly the most prodigious technique I've heard in any pianoman and he used it to the full -*** Lance Liddle

***...a very important influential musician -*** Gilles Peterson

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## **Video** (*Robert Mitchell's Panacea*)

The Red Bridge <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLXx64IxbIA>

Flawless

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dex5GoFR9ww&feature=related>

Mio Inamorato

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsMmlwa0vFY&feature=relmfu>

Aura <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvIfVJjm1FU&feature=relmfu>

The Memoir Casts A Spell <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzpc0ZgX66U>

## **Robert Mitchell – musical biography**

*Music, especially now, is essential to continually reveal our potential, and to speed our evolution towards it. We are fighting the devaluation of depth, integrity, and the development of the spirit especially in the West [RM]*



Composer/pianist Robert Mitchell is a throwback to the powerful tradition of artistic mastery in pursuit of transcendence. Whether performing in the solo context or with his 4/5-piece ensemble *Panacea* or any of his other formats, Robert's focus is upon the highest ideals of the essence of jazz. Like many artists who grew up in the post-60s environment, Robert was exposed to a full gamut of musical disciplines from hardcore Western Classicism through World music traditions. Growing up in a musical family – his father was a vocalist who organized variety shows and participated in the great production of *Carmen Jones* at

London's Young Vic Theatre - Robert began serious piano studies at the age of 6 in the established UK conservatory system. Blending this with a listening love of Soul, R&B and popular music of the 70s/80s, Robert began to develop his own sense of musical expression.

An epiphany occurred upon hearing the legendary jazz pianists Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson “*at just the right time for my ears and heart,*” provoking the young pianist to “*understand the components that made their approaches so special...and to begin discovering how to make my own versions of that special beauty.*”

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Continuing to pursue his formal education, a BSC degree followed at City University in London, which included a course of study at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In the early 90s, Robert began to emerge as an important member of the London scene with two groups Quite Sane and Tomorrow's Warriors. Poles apart in their music and purpose – New York influenced fusion/hip-hop vs 40s-60s bebop/hardbop – the diversity foretold Robert's wide-angle view of jazz expression. This quickly led to further involvement with internationally known figures from both sides of the Atlantic, including Steve Coleman, Greg Osby, Courtney Pine and Steve Williamson.

Over his 20 years entrenched in the art of music, Robert has recorded seven albums of his own projects, participated in over 100 projects as a sideman and has performed in more than 30 countries. Robert has won awards in the UK - **BBC Jazz Awards (Innovation)**, as part of the Fire Collective), **Best Jazz Album** (BBC DJ Gilles Peterson Worldwide Awards) has been nominated for many more. Robert is proud to be a **Steinway Artist**.

These days his primary focal points include his long-running ensemble Panacea; solo performance (including a current fascination with one-handed works, of which he has been curating a festival in London since 2013 and recorded a solo CD for left and only "The Glimpse"); ongoing collaborations with Cuban violinist Omar Puente and Cuban percussionist Ernesto Simpson; and a tribute to Nina Simone with U.S. vocalist Jhelisa Anderson (reuniting for the first time since their highly acclaimed UK tour with Mavis Staples in 2008). In addition to all of this Robert is involved in a variety of institutional and private educational activities.

Working with long-time U.S. arts consulting and management organization, Outward Visions (George Russell, Steve Reich, John Zorn, Art Ensemble of Chicago, World Saxophone Quartet), Robert is organizing a Collective of innovative and prominent UK musicians and developing recording projects with Whirlwind and Edition Records. As his reputation has consistently grown as one of the UK's most serious and respected composer/pianists, Robert Mitchell is ideally suited to be a powerful force in the newest developments of both the music and its business environment.

***I wish to encapsulate the feeling of endless upward progress - to remove the apparent divisions between inspiration, notation, deployment, and performance. And to appeal to the idea that there is no limit to the amount of beauty we can reveal in the universe***

For more information about Robert visit [www.robertmitchellmusic.com](http://www.robertmitchellmusic.com)