

## The John Watson Trio Live In London



On Saturday, January 23, 2010, *Jazz Notes* caught John Watson, one of the UK's finest jazz pianists, who leads a swinging jazz trio at The Langham Hotel's Palm Court. Watson plays straight from the heart and has a diverse repertoire that included a blue *Round Midnight*, a pulsating samba on Stevie Wonder's *Another Star*, an exciting *Night in Tunisia*, a groovy *Fly Me to the Moon*, a soulful *Imagine*, and even a humorous *Pink Panther*. Mr. Watson's piano style is mainstream with modern voicings edging toward the mysterious. He excels at creating mood, and displays excellent technical facility. It doesn't hurt that he plays and swings with the warmth of the old timers.

Bassist Miles Danso lent strong (unamplified!) support with a tone quality that brought Paul Chambers to mind. 'JC' Caddy, the drummer, played well, responding with finesse to his fellow musicians, and his sensitive brushwork was reminiscent of a young Billy Higgins. The pretty stories the Watson trio wove made for an uplifting musical evening, all for no cover or minimum charge (although coffee is £5). The relaxed crowd at the Palm Court responded well, ranging from 20-somethings out for a drink to 50 and 80-somethings out to dine, unwind and perhaps hum along.

**by Lionelle Hamanaka (New York singer and jazz journalist)**