

# Jazzwise

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Publication: **JAZZWISE**Date: **March 2016*****Tord Gustavsen with  
Simin Tander and Jarle  
Vespestad***

What Was Said

ECM 475 8967 ★★★★★

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**Tord Gustavsen (p, elec, syn bass), Simin  
Tander (v) and Jarle Vespestad (d).  
Rec. 13-15 April 2015**

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This album is all about the subtlety of sound, which has been perfectly captured in Oslo's Rainbow Studio. First are the nuances of phrasing and timbre in Simin Tander's voice. Singing mostly in Pashto, the mix of what we would consider consonants and vowels in the West and their formation – most notably the bilabial (consonants shaped when the flow of air is restricted by the two lips) and alveolar (consonants shaped by the tongue) – produces sounds that are quite different to the Romance languages and so are used to creative and idiosyncratic effect by Tander, who is both arresting and hypnotic. Then there's Gustavsen's acoustic piano, his touch, his use of the pedals and his often perfectly articulated legato phrasing and his electronics, used mostly for shading and coloristic purpose, but emerging in their own right to telling effect. Finally, there are percussive textures created by Vespestad, a master colourist whose sounds range from a door slamming to a tiny ping. Taken together they create a genuine and profound listening experience. A lot of time was spent in preparing the libretto for Tander, translating Norwegian hymns into Pashto to take advantage of how the language is articulated in her native tongue, while the text has been reproduced in the liner notes for those who wish to ponder the works of Rumi, the Persian mystic, and the American poets Barks and Rexroth. But the meaning of text here can distract; it is the sounds heard and those yet to be discovered that make for this album's mysterious appeal.

**Stuart Nicholson**