

# Pete Donnelly

## Phases of the Moon

Pete Donnelly's latest record Phases of the Moon is a departure from any expected norm. While the pop songs remain, the jazz predominates. The CD comes in at eighteen tracks, ten of which are instrumentals. These include renditions of tunes by **Thelonious Monk, Ornette Coleman, Erik Satie, Claude Debussy, and Oscar Pettiford**, yet the majority are PD originals. Recorded mostly at Pete's NJ studio **Westmont Station** over the previous couple years, POTM reaches beyond the personal interpretations of a songwriter and into the "lyric and language" of sound and performance. "Phases of the Moon" wholly, unabashedly, and gleefully bops around stylistically, resulting in a circuitous listening experience not unlike a curated playlist.

With a recently acquired piano, the instrument became the driving force of much of the record. "I was really trying to achieve some fluidity and get tunes under my fingers. Old tunes were coming back to me and I was burying my face in music scores with attention like never before." "**Gymnopedie** I orchestrated for different instruments while '**Crepuscule [with Nellie]**' I intended to learn as Monk had played it." Focused more intensely on music for the piano, Donnelly propels with originals such as "**Spuyten Duyvil**" and "**Over the Delaware**." Maybe most striking is his take on Debussy's bitonal impressionism "**Premier Livre**," where Donnelly reimagines and co-composes the music as a jazz combo doing variations on the theme. The piano is also directive in the song writing, most notably on "**Afrodite**," an illustration in American pop song form, with a lyrical testament to the muse and the inevitable torture in managing passion. "Love can be a killer / Honestly"

Not to be over shadowed, the guitar remains central to Donnelly's delivery. "**Dr. Richard**" brims with pop cynicism and demand for answers in an unjust world "There's a lot of us vying for a sliver of pie / I'm really trying to get this straight". "**Let's Call the Whole Thing Off**" tells of a defeated continuum of bad domestic decisions. "When I first met your mother / I should have know and said / LCTWTO baby / Let's not even be friends". And at the center of the album, the title track depicts a widow grappling with waxing and waning fortitude. "Every time I look / There's someone I mistook / To be here all the time"

Phases of the Moon incorporates lessons learned with The Figgs, his essential tutelage under **Terry Adams** during his tenure in **NRBQ**, and myriad other musical endeavors of the last quarter century. The music speaks to a loose comfort, unashamedly created. Each song has its own intention yet eclecticism gives way to focus and the result is quintessential Donnelly-indulgent and authentic, motivated to make the world a more musical place.

Tim Perri



### Track Listing:

- **Blues Connotation**
- **Out of Wits**
- **Spuyten Duyvil**
- **Dr. Richard**
- **Over the Delaware**
- **Afrodite**
- **1ere Gymnopedie**
- **Let's Call the Whole Thing Off**
- **Another Hundred Miles**
- **Premier Livre**
- **Phases of the Moon**
- **Crepuscule with Nellie**
- **Vision Control**
- **In the Sound of Things**
- **Bemsha Swing**
- **Spherical**
- **Tricotism**

"Pete Donnelly is one of those rare musicians. He finds the core believability in any music he plays, allowing his own rich and supple compositions to stand shoulder to shoulder with Monk and Satie. There's an organic quality to Donnelly's approach to shaping a full album experience. Free of artifice or irony, rocking numbers nestle alongside jazz and it all flows as one thoughtfully emotive work."

David Greenberger - NPR

"His embrace of so many facets of modern music and more importantly his deft integration of them into something both new and familiar is powerful medicine." Aaron Levinson – Grammy winning producer

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