

ALEX HUTTON TRIO

PRESS RELEASE

Magna Carta Suite

F-IRE LABEL (*F-IRE Presents Series*)

Release date 13th July 2015

15th June: ALBUM LAUNCH - MAGNA CARTA 800th ANNIVERSARY, **St. Andrews Church**
13th July **606 Jazz Club**, Chelsea
13th August **Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club**, The Late, Late Show, 11pm, £10
(*part of the Ronnie Scott's International Piano Trio Festival*)

Alex Hutton is one of the UK' Jazz's hidden treasures. A fine composer, with an ear for folk and classical influences, he is a gifted, thoughtful improviser and a mainstay of the London Jazz scene who has worked with the leading figures from Jim Mullen and Pete King to Pete Wareham. Hutton's own albums have been noted for a move away from conventional piano trio music, with a search for fresh approaches to the song form and an emphasis on capturing a broad spectrum of textures. **Magna Carta Suite** is his fourth album and offers a musical journey of ideas exploring the layers of history and landscapes from 1215 to 2015. The suite highlights the influence of Magna Carta as a founding document of the western traditions of *liberty* and *democracy* in this the 800th anniversary of its signing and its influence in the creation of the American constitution. Magna Carta Suite features Hutton's long established trio with drummer **Asaf Sirkis**, who brings "*a wide palate of colours, a full dynamic range and an optimism and calmness which is essential on both the studio and live dates*" and bassist **Yuri Goloubev**, who can "*both lead and accompany like no other bass player I have met*" and whose roots in classical music mean his sound is sonorous and distinct. The album also features spoken word from **Neil Sparkes** on the last 2 pieces and his words and performance (from a larger publication 'Xerox sonnets & X-Ray Blues' which will be published by Hesterglock Press in June 2015) add a huge dimension and drama to the album.

The inspiration for Magna Carta Suite came on Hutton's daily dog walk through the ancient woodland where the Magna Carta was signed, between the villages of Wraysbury and Runnymede, near Windsor. Capitalizing on the wide range of colours and textures available to him with his trio, he composed a suite that draws on music from northern European and especially English sources over the last 800 years. Hutton then tied these themes to specific political or social events in history. Using early music, baroque classical and English folk as melodic and harmonic fragments Hutton depicts a forward momentum in the music as Western music developed in parallel with the pursuit of liberty and democracy.

The album opens with **Old Yew** (the Magna Carta was signed beneath a 2000 year old Yew Tree). It's an organic theme, where Arco bass and baroque flute lines twist and turn over a percussive piano foundation. **King John's Hunting Lodge**, was born from Hutton's desire to

compose a simple restful folk song that had the same emotive quality as Greensleeves. **The Barons**, brings a mood of urgency and conflict (as they push their demands on the King). It segues into **June 15th 1215**, a sort of English Jig that celebrates the signing and that nods to *Vaughan Williams*. The delightful **Gutenberg Press** is rooted in baroque like harmonies of the day and celebrates one of what *Francis Bacon* (writing in 1620) hailed as three world changing inventions: the Gutenberg press, Gunpowder and Compass. Which brings us onto track 6, **Gunpowder and Compass**, two of the driving forces behind the colonisation of the new world and a direct link to the Magna Carta becoming the bedrock of the American constitution. **Self Made Man** is a song for the romantic era as Hutton attempts to describe the optimistic values of the 19th Century. **The Fog of War** is a phrase Churchill used to describe the confusion and disinformation of war, but could just as well apply to the whole of the last century. Musically the piece starts innocently enough with an idea influenced by Alexander Scriabin (early c20th) then moves into a cycle that picks up momentum and tension before fading out. **King Johns Hunting Lodge (reprise)** returns back to the hunting lodge. Its still there - in Wraysbury - and the melancholy cor anglias seems even more poignant on this reprise. The suite ends with **Old Yew (reprise)** as we come back to our starting place; the tree still remains in 2015. A stronger more defined version of the piece, the cry of the flute seems more haunting offering a fitting end to a suite that seeks to engage us with ideas and beliefs that resonate down the centuries. Finally, the inspired words of Neil Sparkes plot this trip through poetry. Using the same starting point, the Old Yew Tree, the words follow the Magna Carta to the new world, just as Hutton's music follows the Magna Carta's influence down the ages to today.

www.alexhuttonmusic.com

**For further information, interviews and images please contact Kerstan Mackness:
Phone: 0777 56 555 73 email: Kerstan@riotsquadpublicity.com**

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Magna Carta (Latin for "**the Great Charter**"), also called ***Magna Carta Libertatum*** (Latin for "**the Great Charter of the Liberties**"), is a charter agreed by King John of England at Runnymede, near Windsor, on 15 June 1215.^[a] First drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to make peace between the unpopular King and a group of rebel barons, it is one of the most famous documents in the world. The Magna Carta established for the first time the principle that everybody, including the king, was subject to the law. Although nearly a third of the text was deleted or substantially rewritten within ten years, and almost all the clauses have been repealed in modern times, Magna Carta remains a cornerstone of the British constitution. Most of the 63 clauses granted by King John dealt with specific grievances relating to his rule. However, buried within them were a number of fundamental values that both challenged the autocracy of the king and proved highly adaptable in future centuries. Most famously, the 39th clause gave all 'free men' the right to justice and a fair trial. Some of Magna Carta's core principles are echoed in the United States Bill of Rights (1791) and in many other constitutional documents around the world, as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950).