



**PIROUET**  
P R E S S   R E L A S E

**PIROUET Records**

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**Ronny Graupe**  
**The White Belt**

**Release date: November 4, 2016**

Pirouet Records · PIT3098

**Distribution:** Believe Digital | USA, Canada: NRW Distribution ·  
Europe (except GB): NRW Distribution · GB: Discovery Records ·  
Japan: Gats Production · Hong Kong, China: Shun Cheong Record ·  
Korea: C&L Music

**Ronny Graupe** · guitar

**Jonas Westergaard** · bass

**Christian Lillinger** · drums

1. Kappler Drehe 2. Szene auf dem Lande  
3. Sunset Setting 4. Elfenau 5. The White Belt  
6. Conduct 7. Iberia 8. Aniot

**Press release**

**Ronny Graupe:**

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## Ronny Graupe—The White Belt

Jazz'n More magazine's Reiner Kobe calls the Berlin guitarist German guitarist Ronny Graupe "one of the most promising talents in German jazz" who is "on the right path with his ideal lineup". That lineup call themselves also Spoom, a group name Graupe conjured from the combined sounds and ideas of a creative "big bang" and ocean spray. Musical partners since 2004, Graupe, bassist Jonas Westergaard and drummer Christian Lillinger have already made their mark on the jazz scene. On *The White Belt*, Spoom's second album for PIROUET, Graupe and co masterfully approach their music as a new beginning. ▶





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In martial arts the white belt is the one worn by the novice. For Ronny Graupe, “it is the most important belt of all, since it stands for openness and questioning; when you are a beginner you can’t fall back on what you already know. This also goes for music. *The White Belt* represents the road you have in front of you, the one you are about to travel.” He’s taking that road alongside two long-time musical companions with like minds and impressive credentials. Danish bassist Jonas Westergaard and Graupe began their musical relationship when they attended Rytmisk Music Conservatory in Copenhagen. Graupe says, “The first time I heard him, I knew we would play together.” Since then Jonas has spent time in New York, worked with such major players as Tim Berne, Herb Robertson, Oliver Lake, and

eventually moved to Berlin where he has become a linchpin in the contemporary music scene. Graupe marvels that drummer Christian Lillinger “has an energy that brings everything to a different level.” Called a “drum revolutionary” by the prestigious *DER SPIEGEL* magazine, Lillinger has worked with such greats as Rolf and Joachim Kühn, Alexander von Schlippenbach and John Tchicai, and his 2015 PIROUET album *Grund* received critical acclaim. As for Ronny Graupe, *London Jazz News* described Graupe’s playing as veering “from percussive riffs to white noise. Sometimes he played long lines behind the others, or the blues, or distorted, rock-edged phrases... precision, virtuosity and playfulness.” His work credentials include Richie Beirach, Joachim Kühn, Chris Speed and Pablo Held. ▶





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► Graupe explains that, “together with Jonas and Christian, I feel driven to delve into the depths of the music. Every album reflects the band’s actual artistic position at that moment. If you compare our records, you’ll hear a further artistic development, a deeper immersion into the material from one CD to the next.” There are pieces where the process is compositionally predetermined, with sections of improvisation supporting the composition’s progress. In other pieces, improvisation and spontaneity hold sway. For instance, Graupe remarks that *Szene auf dem Lande* (Countryside Scene) completely forgoes any compositional guidelines, yet one thing remains a constant throughout: “Regardless of whether there are formulated guidelines or the music is freely improvised, we’re all on an equal footing.”

Graupe makes the point that he wrote all the compositions on *White Belt* specifically for this trio and this CD. “The pieces evolve their sound only in this trio only with these particular musicians, and only in this repertoire.”

As for the compositions: the name of a section of street with an impressive 90 degree curve in Chemnitz, Germany, *Kappler Drehe* starts off and stays in an almost straight-ahead swing feel, although with Graupe’s music, things are seldom quite the way they seem. There is a breathy quiet to the twilight melody of *Sunset Setting* as it lies weightless on the horizon before “...the sun sets and eventually burns out in the sea.” *Elfenau* is a type of country house on the banks of the Aare river in Bern, Switzerland. This personal ballad ►





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▶ borders on the visionary, grounded by Jonas' warm, down-to-earth bass solo. Graupe takes on *The White Belt* solo, starting with a folksy feel that moves on into a startling array of improvised colors and textures.

Ronny explains that *Conduct* "plays with rhythm in the widest sense. You can go 'backwards' and 'forwards' in 'time', play faster or slower, depending on the point of reference." For the most part, the drums determine the interpretation of 'time', and Ronny and Jonas respond to their

call. In *Iberia* there are portents of the Spain of the future as Graupe's dynamic, fluid lines play against Jonas' and Christian' rhythmic contrasts, and The Polish word for 'angel', *Anioł* maintains an unadorned ethereal quality throughout.

With *The White Belt*, Graupe has divined a new musical language out of the ashes of the old, creating a personal aesthetic and a masterful new beginning. ■





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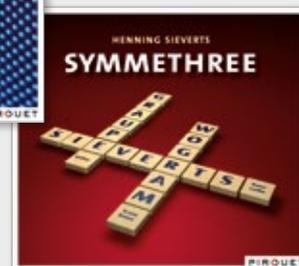
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**Ronny Graupe**  
**Discography on Pirouet Records**



**As a leader**

2016 Ronny Graupe: **The White Belt** (Ronny Graupe, git · Jonas Westergaard, b · Christian Lillinger, dr) · **PIT3098**

2013 Ronny Graupe: **Spoom** (Ronny Graupe, git · Jonas Westergaard, b · Christian Lillinger, dr) · **PIT3072**

**As a sideman**

2012 Henning Sieverts: **Symmethree** (Henning Sieverts, b,cello · Ronny Graupe, g · Nils Wogram, tb) · **PIT3061**

**CD Release Tour:**

11/03/2016 Chemnitz (DE) · Weltecho

11/04/2016 t.b.a.

11/05/2016 Nürnberg (DE) · Jazzstudio Nürnberg

11/09/2016 Baden (CH) · Isebähnli

01/13/2017 Basel (CH) · Bird's Eye

01/14/2017 Basel (CH) · Bird's Eye

01/17/2017 Berlin (DE) · A-Trane

02/14/2017 München (DE) · Seidelvilla

02/15/2017 Traunstein (DE) · Tropical

