

[HOME](#) › [REVIEW](#) › [CD REVIEW](#) › [OLA ONABULÉ – IT'S THE PEACE THAT DEAFENS](#)

Ola Onabulé – It's The Peace That Deafens

BY [PETER BACON](#) on [22 OCTOBER 2015](#) . [\(0 \)](#)



(Dot Time Records)

Gregory Porter is getting a lot of attention and acclaim, and very rightly so, but he is not the only big soul-jazz singer on the block. Step forward **Ola Onabulé**.

The British-Nigerian singer and songwriter has in fact been stepping forward for 20 years now, but it is only in the last six or so his career has really taken off with feature spots with the German radio big bands and an appearance at the Montreal Jazz Festival. His popularity has continued to rise but he is perhaps less well known in the country of his birth than in Germany, or Latvia, or Canada, or Romania.

This album features 12 of his compositions, a top-notch session band which includes **John Parricelli** and **Femi Temowo** on guitars, **Ross Stanley** on keyboards, and trumpet and saxophone solos from **Jukka Eskola** and **Villu Veski** respectively, and lovely, sumptuous production.

But it's very much the singer's album. He has a high tenor, rich and warm right up to a particularly sweet high range (especially on the title track) with sometimes a touch of Michael McDonald's husky nuance (try *Love Again* or *Orunmila*). He also has a gorgeous sense of "funk-swing" for want of a better term (cf *In Your Shoes*).

His song-writing is strong and varied in mood, sometimes incorporating tricky timing with aplomb (*Orunmila*), and the lyrics are intelligent and carefully expressed. Particularly outstanding is *The Girl That She Was*, a beautifully twisting and turning tune that Onabulé navigates with easy style.

Overall there is a graceful dignity about this music that fills the chest and raises the head.

Like so many albums these days, this one could have been trimmed a little, but I'm not suggesting which tracks I'd drop: they are consistently strong. All in all it's something of a leap forward by a singer who has always been worth listening to but now is impossible to ignore.