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JAKA KOPAC

Biography

Jaka Kopac began playing alto saxophone when he was 14. Already at the age of 16, he began taking saxophone lessons in Zagreb, Croatia, under Sasa Nestorovic (e.g. Zagreb Saxophone Quartet). At 18, Jaka began studying playing the saxophone with Karheinz Miklin at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz-Austria. Jaka's talent was quickly noticed at Graz and, as a result, one of his teachers, trumpeter Stjepko Gut, took him to New York to listen to local jams and to get to know American musicians. This was the starting point for several visits to New York, where Jaka received private lessons e.g. from Bradford Leali, Vincent Herring, Miguel Zenon, Joleel Shaw and John Percell.



At the age of 22, Jaka attended an international applicant audition in Paris for the Berklee College of Music in which he was granted a scholarship worth 40 000€ for four years. As the expenses would still have been too high for Jaka to be able to study at Berklee, he had to abandon his dream of studying in the United States. After this, Jaka heard several musicians around Europe recommending the Sibelius Academy in Finland and in particular its high-standing jazz department. Jaka first came to the Sibelius Academy as an exchange student in winter 2006. Then, the following autumn, he began studying at the master's program at the jazz department. He will take his Master of Music degree in spring 2009.

During his career, Jaka has played at various assemblies and big bands e.g. at the European Youth Jazz Orchestra, the European Movement Jazz Orchestra, the New York University Big Band, the RTV Big Band Slovenia, HMG Big Band (Zagreb-Graz), The Fool Cool Jazz Orchestra (Slovenia), the Graz Big Band, Sibis Big Band (Helsinki), the Igor Lunder Group (Zagreb Saxophone Quartet) and Outi Tarkiainen Nonet . He has worked together in joint projects for example with the following musicians: Jonathan Blake, Jimmy Owens, Dack Hammond, Dusko Gykovic, Bosko Petrovic, George Garzone, Lennie Pickett and Primoz Grasic. Jaka has also performed at important European jazz clubs, like at the UMO Jazz club and Storyville (Helsinki), Jazz House (Copenhagen) Porgy & Bess and Birdland (Vienna). In addition to this, Jaka has given concerts as a member of various assemblies in countries such as China, Portugal, France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Finland, Denmark and Sweden.

New album "Almost there"

Jaka's debut album, "Almost there", will be released in early spring 2009. The musicians in the new album feature, in addition to Jaka, the well known Finnish jazz musicians Sami Linna (guitar), Jori Huhtala (double bass) and Joonas Riippa (drums).

The album was recorded on 15 and 16 October 2008 at Kallio-Kuninkala in Järvenpää, Finland. The sound recording, arranging and mixing was done by Mikko Raita and the mastering by Svante Forsbäck/ Chartmakers.

All the compositions and editions of the album "Almost there" are Jaka Kopac's own work. The fresh and energetic modern jazz compositions play with variations in meter with the mood of the album also including a touch of Scandinavian melancholy. This album will definitely stand out, if only just for its exotic Slovenic-Finnish line-up.