

The Pan Atlantic Band (biographies)

Bobby Previte

Bobby Previte "can break your heart with one cymbal crash."

Bobby Previte began his life in music as a great way to meet girls, but then fell in love with the drums instead. At thirteen, he fashioned his first set out of a rusted iron garbage can turned on its side (the bass drum), four upside-down rubber trash bins (the toms), a box with loose junk rattling around inside (the snare), three plungers with aluminum pie plates nailed on top, (the cymbals), and two pieces of linoleum crimped together, stuck through with a wire coat hanger wound into a spring, crowned with a rubber ball on top (the kick pedal) - and for hours on end would play to records in his dark basement with a lone spotlight shining on him. Eventually hired by a band, he rehearsed with them for a year, only to get fired the day of the first booking for not having "real" drums. After this experience he decided to strike out on his own, and has been doing so ever since.

Brought up playing soul and rock music in the old bars, clubs, and bordellos of Niagara Falls, NY, he later studied formally at the University of Buffalo, which boasted musicians John Cage, Lucas Foss, Morton Feldman, and Jan Williams. He then ran head on into Miles Davis, Edgard Varese, Charles Mingus, Terry Reilly, Abstract Expressionism, Igor Stravinsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, George Balanchine and William Faulkner. That was that.

He moved to New York City in 1979, with great fortune quickly met the leading lights of the "Downtown" scene, settled in, and never looked back. For twenty-five years he has remained a leader, widely hailed for his electrifying drumming and his stunning, unclassifiable compositions.

He has played an astonishing range of genres and venues, from the Palace Burlesque House in Buffalo, NY to country music at Gloria's Corral Club in the Kentucky backwoods (complete with, yes, a real corral surrounding the bandstand) to Carnegie Hall, and has presented his music at the major festivals around the world, from Europe to Russia, Japan to South America, and back.

The subject of articles in the world's major publications as well as in many books on music, Previte leads more bands than he probably should, and has added the electronic drums to his ever widening arsenal.

Wolfgang Puschnig

To be open-minded without forgetting where one comes from. A cosmopolitan attitude with strong regional roots: Wolfgang Puschnig, both as a person and musician, embodies this essential bi-polarity which is being reduced to a simple catch-phrase far too often. From the early 1980ies onwards, this has made him not only an advertisement but a perfect example in the world of European jazz. For Puschnig, Austria's southernmost province Carinthia has been the basis for his socialisation, the foundation of his musical thinking and feeling, located at the intersection of Germanic, Slavic and Romanic culture and language. He was born in Klagenfurt (Celovec in Slovenian) on 21 May 1956 where he also spent his youth, characterised by folk songs ("there always was a lot of singing"), jazz and a variety of other musical movements. Shortly after his school-leaving examinations, in the autumn of 1974, he turned his back on Carinthia in order to try his luck in Austria's faraway capital Vienna. His only artistic experience until then had been the Klagenfurt-based underground-band "Sokrates Sixtinic Bongoloids" and an amateur theatre. Wolfgang Puschnig registered to study musicology and English at the University of Vienna. Due to problems with the embouchure, he cut short the study of classic flute at Vienna's Academy of Music and Performing Arts. Instead, he went on the look-out as a saxophonist in Austria's jazz scene and attended jazz lessons at Vienna's Academy of Music. On 19 May 1977, in the course of a concert during which he originally wanted to perform only as a duet together with pianist Mathias Rüegg, he unexpectedly contributed to the foundation of an ensemble which should become famous as "Vienna Art Orchestra" (VAO). The recording of their first single "Jessas na!" ("Oh my God!") in co-operation with the "working class poet" Otto Kobalek and a "concert for four trees, fireworks, Swiss military pay-book, semi-militant kids and orchestra" were exemplary events of the anarchistic, flux-like early phase of this big band. They achieved their breakthrough by recording the LP "Tango From Obango" in 1979 and through their first important festival-performances abroad in 1980/81. In the years to follow, Wolfgang Puschnig became the leading soloist of the orchestra in many legendary programmes such as "Concerto Piccolo" (1980), "From No Time to Rag Time" (1982), "The Minimalism of Erik Satie" (1984) and "Lonely Nightride of a Saxophone Player" (1985), both composed and arranged by Mathias Rüegg. Guest performances in Thailand and the United States in the mid 1980ies and first places of VAO in the ranking of "Down Beat"-polls within the TDWR-category (1984 and 1985) consolidated their reputation as leading European big band as well as leading European big band-musicians.

From the beginning, quite a few "bands within the band" circled the original orchestra just like satellites in order to swing onto own orbits at some point. Puschnig performed i. e. as part of the quintet "Part of Art" (together with Herbert Joos, Uli Scherer, Jürgen Wuchner and Wolfgang Reisinger) which recorded two LPs between 1980 and 1983 and took part in projects with the highly experimental poet Ernst Jandl, their first project manifesting itself through the LP "Bist eulen?" in 1984. In the mid 1980ies the co-operation of Puschnig and Reisinger continued being prolific and constant in the much celebrated ensembles "Pat Brothers" (with Linda Sharrock and Wolfgang Mitterer) and "Air Mail" (with Harry Pepl and Mike Richmond). As far back as the 1970ies, Puschnig had indulged in a musical duet-

relationship with Alter ego (old Ego) Uli Scherer, VAO's pianist of many years. Now, this preference became even stronger: From 1981 onwards, Hans Koller, then aged 58 and father-figure of Austrian and European jazz, was happy to invite Puschnig to so-called free sax-dialogues. Puschnig's duet co-operation with Wolfgang Mitterer resulted in the highly experimental electroacoustic LP "Obsooderso" in 1986. The degree, of how much Puschnig cared for this most intimate and concentrated of communication-forms, became also visible on "Pieces of a Dream", his debut as a soloist published in 1988: duets with Carla Bley with whom he had been working since 1985, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, the ex-bassist of Ornette Coleman, Hans Koller, Linda Sharrock, Hiram Bullock, Harry Pepl and many more were being given finishing touches through a choir-arrangement of the Carinthian folk song "Is scho still uman See" (It's already quiet around the Lake), representing a programmatic statement for Puschnig: for the first time, the big world of international jazz met the small one of his homeland. And for the first time it became clear that his most expressive inspiration, the "singing", Blues-like phrasing which had already in the 1980ies become the unmistakable trade mark of Puschnig's alto saxophone-playing, actually had its roots in the melancholy of Carinthian traditional music, heavily influenced by Slavic culture. Soon came the turning point: out of the vast number of co-operations and projects he has been involved ever since (mostly side by side with Linda Sharrock), only the most important are to be named here: his working together with the Korean percussion-quartet "Samuel Nori" (since 1987), the electrifying "Gemini"-duet-funk-twin-relationship with Jamaaladeen Tacuma, the equally bizarre and brilliant venture "Alpine Aspects", in the frame of which Puschnig confronted funky-groovy jazz dynamics with the brass band-like harmonically dissonant compressed properness of the Amstetten-based folk brass band in traditional costumes. This can probably be regarded his most inspired coup. Carinthia, Afro-America, Korea and back. Especially as the soloist in Carla Bley's "Very Big Band" or in formations such as "Mixed Metaphors" which confronted Ernst Jandl's "Konkrete Poesie" (concrete poetry) with jet-black Rap-lyrics which are the contemporary grooves and rhymes of Afro-America, and moreover, side by side with the Austrian bard and singer Willi Resetarits, better known as Kurt Ostbahn, together with whom he makes standards into rituals, Puschnig has always remained himself. His elegiac intonation, melodious vocal expression of lines which contribute to his personal style, move both amateurs and connoisseurs. They furthermore show that even today – in the era of an irritatingly confusing post-modernist variety – it seems possible to develop an idiom, already recognisable at first sound, so to speak "romantically grown". Open-mindedness without forgetting one's roots. Only very few succeed in such aesthetic splits. Hardly any are as credible and disarmingly sensuous as those of Wolfgang Puschnig. A message which can provide a model. Not only for Europe. Not only for Carinthia.

Andreas Felber

Gianluca Petrella

Born in Bari in March 1975, he graduated from Bari Conservatory in 1994 with top marks.

In 1993 he started a long relationship with the saxophone player Roberto Ottaviano, who included him in his latest recording project, which also saw the participation of Michel Godard (tuba), Tom Varner (French horn) and Marcello Magliocchi (percussions).

In the same year, he took part in another recording project as guest artist, along with American saxophonist Greg Osby. In 1995 he played lead trombone in the O.F.P. Orchestra, under the direction of Carla Bley, Steve Coleman and Bruno Tommaso. He took part in the "Italian Jazz Today" compilation, produced by the Italian magazine "Musica Jazz" and released with the January 1996 issue.

In 1997, he spent some time in Germany where he played with several local and Dutch musicians. At present, he plays with Enrico Rava, who wanted him for his Canadian tour, in the summer of 1997. Since 1980, he has participated in several tours and with the "Noisemakers", the group led by drummer Roberto Gatto.

He is a member, since September 2000 of the "Orchestre National de Jazz", under the direction of Paolo Damiani.

In 2001, he played with Enrico Rava's quintet at the Town Hall in New York.

In the same year, he was awarded the "Django d'Or" as best talent.

His international collaborations include, among others: Steve Swallow, Joy Calderazzo, Jimmy Owens, Greg Osby, Bob Moses, Carla Bley, Gerard Pansanel, Klaus Suonsaari, Steve Coleman, Tom Varner, Michel Godard, Joel Alouche, Lester Bowie, Han Bennink, Marc Ducret, Roswell Rudd, Lonnie Plaxico, Ray Anderson, Pat Metheny, Oregon, John Abercrombie and Steven Bernstein. He has also worked with several important Italian musicians: Enrico Rava, Roberto Gatto, Antonello Salis, Gianluigi Trovesi, Roberto Ottaviano, Enrico Pieranunzi, Paolino Dalla Porta, Paolo Fresu, Danilo Rea, Paolo Damiani, Maurizio Gianmarco, Flavio Boltro, Salvatore Bonafede, Enzo Pietropaoli, Piero Leveratto, Nicola Conte and others.

He has performed in the most important and international festivals. Actually he's active with his Indigo4 (with Francesco Bearzatti on sax, Paolino Dalla Porta on bass and Fabio Accardi on drums), the "Bread & Tomato Trio" (with Michele Papadia on Hammond Organ and Fabio Accardi on drums), the duos with Furio Di Castri (bass) and Antonello Salis (piano and accordion) and – sometimes – with the "Domino Quartet" together with Sean Bergin, Antonio Borghini and Hamid Drake.

2006: He wins the "Top Jazz" award as "best Italian jazzist of the year 2005" ("Musica Jazz" magazine) and the "Down Beat Critics Pool" award as best rising star trombonist.

Benoît Delbecq

Born in 1966. Lives in Les Lilas, near Paris.

A dreamer and an adventurer, french pianist Benoît Delbecq has been one of the activists of Hask (1992-2004), a Paris-based cutting-edge jazz collective that has contributed to revitalize the french creative music scene. His musics and projects including works for theater, dance, litterature, visual arts, are being regularly invited by major events around the world.

Anchored in both jazz history and contemporary endeavours, Delbecq's works are being regularly acclaimed since the early nineties. He is one of the specialists of prepared piano, and has an regular activity in the electronic field. His works are experimenting a blend of improvisation and composition in which he reveals a rich pallet of sounds, enlightened by stratas of multiple grooves, phrases and harmonies. Inspired by alternative urban musical experiments, he also improvises a personal approach of drum'n bass, ambient and on-the-spot remixes. His acoustic works are published mainly on Songlines (Canada), his electronic ones on Plush (GB).

Instruments : piano, prepared piano, bass station Novation, casio cz101, laptop, max-msp *dlooper* programmed by Tom Mays., Usine.

Nils Davidsen

Nils Davidsen has performed on the Danish and international jazz scene for about 20 years now. He has played and recorded with people like John Tchicai, Tim Berne, Dave Liebman, Marc Ducret, Django Bates, Ray Anderson, Herb Robertson, Adam Nussbaum, Tom Rainey, Chris Speed, Iain Bellamy and Gary Thomas. He has toured and recorded w numerous danish bands, such as: When Granny Sleeps, New Jungle Orchestra and Copenhagen Art Ensemble.