

JAZZ LIVE TRIO

The Jazz Live Trio has a commission by the Swiss radio station to put together an in-house trio for a jazz concert series to thank for its very existence. Between 1964 and 1982, we were able to take on this demanding task a total of 111 times, with many different people making up the trio. The fellow musicians who played with me for the longest were the bassist Isla Eckinger, then Peter Frei and the drummers Pierre Favre and Peter Schmidlin, who went on to found the jazz label TCB.

We were enormously lucky that at the time there were a large number of world-class American musicians living in Europe, who were always available for radio gigs. We were also able to play with some of them later outside of the radio environment, such as Slide Hampton, Dexter Gordon, Booker Ervin or Sal Nistico. More often still we were able to play with Lee Konitz, and for some time as a regular fixed quartet with Johnny Griffin. Thirteen CDs are available from TCB and bring this radio concert series back to life.

Our many years working with Franco Ambrosetti, which were primarily in Italy, and the young Roman Schwaller, were unforgettable.

The desire to work with like-minded people to take the risk of developing our own group music which did not follow standard patterns over a long period of testing led to us forming our sextet "Magog", whose first appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1973 immediately led to unexpectedly high levels of success with both the audience and the international press. The recording of the concert was published a little later as an LP by Evasion. A studio production with Japo/ECM followed afterwards. Both recordings are now back on the market as CDs (TCB OI 232 and TCB O2 302). For me, Magog, with Hans Kennel, Andy Scherrer, Paul Haag and my trio including Peter Frei and Peter Schmidlin, was the highlight of my long musical career, and something that can possibly only ever be achieved once. We were probably in the right place at the right time, as my friend Peter Schmidlin once said.

Working purely as a trio was predominantly in Italy, where we were not quite as well known as an accompanied trio. I have a very strong link to this country. This is possibly why we found such welcoming ears there.

In 1997/1998, "focal dystonia" put a temporary end to my work as a musician. Only in 2012/3 was I able to get back to the stage, after a lot of mostly unsuccessful treatment. This was with restricted abilities, as dystonia is incurable. But with the exciting challenge, of using the restriction to create my own message and to develop my own distinctive style, I brought the trio back to live with the two young and highly talented musicians Patrick Sommer, b, and Andi Wettstein, dr. A year later, we founded the quintet "Seven Things" bringing the trio together with Dani Schenker and Christoph Merki, with whom I had worked as "Magog 2" before my illness. Our first quintet CD "Piazza Rotonda" (TCB 33 102) was given the highest award of five stars in "Jazz'N'More". The first trio CD, "Nausikaa", (TCB 32 502) also received positive reviews both here and abroad. Our second "Seven Things" CD "Seven Things I Always Wanted T Say" (TCB 35 402) will be released in "Moods" on my 80th birthday in October 2016, our second trio record "Night Thoughts" (TCB 35 202) in Baden in April 2017. We already have music prepared for further CDs in 2018/9.

Instead of more words from me, here are a number of insights into my press portfolio, which has understandably become quite substantial:

Kenny Wheeler/Alan Skidmore + Jazz Live Trio (TCB 02 282): "...The Swiss players are excellent. Koenig and Frei benefit from the fine recording quality. Koenig is a fine pianist who was also a recording engineer at Swiss Radio". (Jazz Journal, London, 9/2012). The CD received the maximum of five stars.

Dexter Gordon / Magog (TCB 02 382): "...Zu hören ist die damals in Europa lebende Jazzlegende Dexter Gordon und das sagenhaft groovende Sextett Magog, bei dem Koenig das Jazz Live Trio mit Topbläsern ergänzte und beweist, wie hochklassig (und gleichzeitig unterschätzt) der Schweizer Jazz schon in den Siebzigern war. Ein Muss für jede Schweizer Jazzsammlung". (Jazz'N'More 4/2014). The CD also received five stars.

"Magog live at the Montreux Jazz Festival 1973" (jetzt: TCB 10 232): "...It's all high octane, energetic youthful stuff, and is enthusiastically received by the cheering Montreux crowd...All six members are world class musicians..." (Melody Maker, London, 13. 4. 1976). This recording also received the highest award, with five stars.

On the performance by the Jazz Live Trio at the Bergamo Jazz Festival in 1976: "...Una sorte migliore, per mera questione di qualità dei suoni, e toccato al Jazz Live Trio di Zurigo. Affiatati da anni di lavoro in comune, il pianista Klaus Koenig - oggi pervenuto a un livello artistico di valore mondiale - il contrabassista Peter Frei e il batterista Peter Schmidlin hanno offerto le sequenze più convincenti di tutto il concerto..." (Il Giornale Milano, 13. 3.1976).

"...Il Jazz Live Trio e di altra estrazione. Si sente la "cultura" dei suoi componenti e principalmente del pianista Koenig che non disdegna i riferimenti alla musica contemporanea, nei suoi passaggi al pianoforte con una punta di freddezza "nordica".... (L'Eco di Bergamo, 13. 3. 1976).

Klaus Koenig.

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KLAUS KOENIG, p, composition, studied at the Acoustic Institute of the University of Music in Detmold, which he left in 1962 with a degree in sound engineering (with a distinction). He worked as a recording manager for the Swiss radio station SFR in Zurich until 1997. Alongside this he developed several hundred shows for the jazz department. In 1964 the radio station made him responsible for accompanying guest soloist in the radio concert series "Jazz Live". His "Jazz Live Trio", the most important players in which included Isla Eckinger, Peter Frei as a bassist, Peter Schmidlin and Pierre Favre as drummers - could be heard in more than 100 live broadcasts with soloists from around the world until 1982. The performers included many top American and European musicians such as Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, Clark Terry, Benny Bailey, Phil Woods, Cliff Jordan, Kenny Wheeler and Albert Mangelsdorff. A 13-CD series by TCB documents this series of concerts. Longer-term links were established with Johnny Griffin, Lee Konitz, Sal Nistico, Franco Ambrosetti, Gianni Basso, Roman Schwaller and others. The group "Magog", made up of Hans Kennel, Andy Scherrer, Paul Haag and the Jazz Live Trio, was formed on his initiative in 1973 and enjoyed a great degree of international success. The collaboration with the actor and reciter Gert Westphal in a "jazz and lyrics" programme spanned several decades. A "classics and jazz" programme developed over several years with the classical pianist Annette Weisbrod. Participation in around 25 commercial recordings. Work on musical theory (on the tempering of keyboard instruments in old music) and musical education (piano voicing). In 1998 he had to stop his musical activity due to an illness in both of his hands. After many years of therapy, the 2012/2013 season with the old/new "Jazz Live Trio" and the 2013/2014 season with the "Seven Things" quintet with Dani Schenker, Christoph Merki and the trio meant a return to the music scene.

PATRICK SOMMER, b, composition, born in 1976. Patrick studied contrabass and electric bass at the Swiss Jazz School in Bern and in Los Angeles. He lives in Zurich and works as a freelance musician. A solid feeling for timings, a broad stylistic and instrumental range, an unswerving taste and his ability to adapt make him one of the most in-demand bassists on the Swiss music scene. He holds regular concerts both in Switzerland and abroad and is involved in theatre and dance projects as a musician and composer.

Selected discography: Tony Renold Quartet: Places (Unit Records 2011); Pius Baschnagel's Latin World: Son Song (Altrisuoni 2011); Martin Lechner: Gentlemen Are Hard To Find (BHM 2011); Bucher Sommer Friedli & Aeby: Expanding (Dryrecords 2011); Bucher 5: Here And There (Unit Records 2010); Limber Lumber - Rösli Sommer Sartorius: Diapassion (Unit Records 2010); Tim Kleinert Trio: Free Passage To Now (Covariance 2010); Peter Zihlmann & TOW Orchestra: Tales Of The Old World (Unit Records 2010); Roli Frei & The Soulful Desert: Strong (Sound Service 2010); Adrian Frey Trio: No Flags (Unit Records 2010); Julian Amacker Universe: A Tea And Me (FF Records 2009); Marianne Racine Quartet: Jazz (2009); Patrick Sommer: Speechless (Rock Archive 2009); Bucher Sommer Friedli: Farb (Dryrecords 2008); The Moondog Show: Marfa (Fazerecords 2007); Tony Renold Quartet: Timeless Flow (Universal Records 2005); Lisette Spinnler Quartet: in Between (TCB Records 2004). He has been playing for the Jazz Live Trio since 2012.

ANDI WETTSTEIN, dr, born in 1978. Studied the drums at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and at the Zurich University of the Arts.

His active involvement in concerts has brought him together with, among many others, Franco Ambrosetti, Peter Madsen, Theo Kapiladis, Adrian Frey and Tobias Preisig.

In addition to his artistic work, he also teaches at the Staufien School of Music.

Future projects: The Murder Of Amus Ames, Mistura, Markus Bischof Trio, Ray Bourbon, Kabel, Jazz Live Trio.

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