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'What happens if you combine a minimum of musical limitations with a maximum of creativity and experience?'

earswideopen is a trio that consists of Jurriaan Berger (piano, melodica, lost & found department), Felix Hildenbrand (acoustic and electric bass) and Achim Heine (drums and various percussion).

Their music is based on (jazz) improvisation; sometimes serious, sometimes slightly mad, maybe a bit sentimental or fat 'n groovy. It could go different ways, but it's not without direction. Music from all kinds of sources is welded together in unexpected medleys.

Ever since Achim, Felix and Jurriaan started playing together in 2003, they noticed a common trademark style: 'ears open and just play' – hence the name. earswideopen produces amazing, swinging, thoughtful, exuberant, beautiful and eardrum bashing sounds. From Ghanese war dances and old-time blues via Thelonious Monk and Jennifer Lopez to their own compositions and completely improvised pieces.

Music that happens in a specific time and place, that is what earswideopen is about. To expand the adventure, they invite guests with the same open minded attitude. So far, this has resulted in collaborations with Dutch jazz giants like Eric Vloeimans, Benjamin Herman, Yuri Honing, Anton Goudsmit, and Oene van Geel. But they have also shared the stage with lesser known rappers and dj's, singers from different backgrounds, and others who share their sense of musical adventure.

Their self-titled cd was released in 2011 to enthusiastic reviews, expanding the notion of what a jazz trio could sound like.

earswideopen have played stages such as

Bimhuis, Amsterdam

Paradox, Tilburg

Serah Artisan, Zaandam

Zaal 100, Amsterdam

Lucent Danstheater, The Hague

Jazzpodium Drienerlo, Enschede

Schlot, Berlin (DE)

Stellwerk, Hamburg (DE)

Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, Greece

Zygos Night Club, Athens, Greece

Jazz&Sail festival, Bergen

Delft Jazz Festival, Delft

Jeker Jazz Festival, Maastricht



and with artists such as

Anton Goudsmit (guitar)

Eric Vloeimans (trumpet)

Benjamin Herman (alto sax)

Yuri Honing (tenor sax)

Efraim Trujillo (tenor sax)

Oene van Geel (viola)

Maria Markesini (singer)

Tony Miceli (vibes)

earswideopen: from left to right Jurriaan, Felix, Achim



photo: Herman Ypma

Jurriaan Berger

Jurriaan (b.1976) plays the piano. And the melodica, and a broad array of musical objects: megaphones, beer glasses, electronic devices from ages past, as well as more conventional instruments (saz, mandolin). As a youngster he took piano lessons, but liked to play on whatever instrument was around (drums in a punk band, bass in Dutch song based group Peter60 etc). After various musical adventures he enrolled in the Amsterdam Conservatorium, where he studied jazz piano and bass guitar, and attended workshops by jazz legends such as Kenny Werner, Richard Bona and Bobby McFerrin. Here he met Achim and Felix. In 2007 he graduated with a Master of Music degree.

Apart from playing in earswideopen, he concentrates on composing and arranging. For singer Maria Markesini, he wrote new versions of old Greek songs. And for the city of Zaanstad, he started various musical projects, mostly involving unusual combinations of different musical cultures. Even in larger ensembles, he nearly always allows for the unexpected in his compositions, staying true to the spirit of improvisation.

Felix Hildenbrand

'If I weren't a musician, I would surely have become a dancer,' is Felix's motto. Music (whether it be salsa, samba, tango, funk....) to him is always a physical experience. As a teenager in the German town of Freiburg, he saw the great reggae stars perform. Impressed with their thumping bass sounds, he chose to play bass guitar. It was during his studies at the Amsterdam Conservatorium that his attention shifted to the double bass. He took classical lessons to enhance the lyrical side of his playing. Felix's second great passion, traveling, can also be heard in his playing. Rhythms from all over the world are just around the corner. He became an expert in South American folklore and Brazilian music. In his monthly showcase 'Felix Fusions' (in the Muiderpoort Theater, Amsterdam) he performed with unexpected combinations of musicians and styles (with a.o. Kristina Fuchs, Bart Fermie, Niti Ranjan, Michael Moore, Magda Mendes, Nelson Latif). Felix plays regularly with Fado diva Maria de Fatima. He founded and leads two bands in South American music: Tierra and Gosto Delicado. In 2007, he founded his own record label: EBF.

Achim Heine

Because Achim (b.1979) has always heard and played rhythms everywhere, the drums were a logical choice for him. At age 12, he started playing, adding more and more percussion instruments along the way. Especially during the Master program he attended at the Amsterdam Conservatorium, where he specialized in tabla, sabar and djembé.

After graduation, he studied in New York City for three months (on a Dutch scholarship). In this period, he was taught by master drummers Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Jim Black, Joey Baron, and Billy Martin. He also worked on the combination of drums and tabla rhythms with Dan Weiss and Samir Chatterjee.

Achim is the drummer for a variety of Dutch bands beside earswideopen: singer Anne Chris, at the Floating Jazz Sessions, the Convocation Bigband, the Daan Herweg Trio, Twitching Eye (percussion) Trio, and Multifoof. With Twitching Eye Trio and Multifoof, he produced musical theatre shows 'Romeo & Julia in India' and 'Trommelvuur' (drumfire).