

Listen! with friends, on tour October 8 - 25

Listen! has existed since 2002. It's an awarded jazz trio which has toured in both Europe and the Middle East, and they released their debut album "Listen!" in 2007. The sequel to this album is bound to be released in autumn 2009, and this new recording represents the trio's diverse repertoire in combination with their untraditional composition of instruments. Listen! wants to present their new music to the audience on a release tour in cooperation with three Syrian musicians. The concerts will offer both an exciting meeting between Western and Arabic musical traditions, in addition to the trio's own trademarks.

Bendik Giske - saxophones • **Espen Berg** - piano • **Daniel Herskedal** - tuba
Amer Dahbar - percussion • **Afif Dahbar** - percussion • **Maher Mahmoud** - oud

Listen! toured for two weeks in Syria in November 2008, as a part of a big international project "Dialogue and peace, Scandinavia - Syria 2008". Meeting the people and the culture made a strong impact on the trio's musicians. They met local musicians and students who showed great engagement and interest in Listen!'s musical background. They didn't even hesitate to learn Norwegian folk music - with an Arabic accent, of course.

A constellation settled during the tour, and in addition to Listen! it consists of Amer Dahbar and Afif Dahbar on percussion, and Maher Mahmoud on oud. All three are playing actively as professional musicians in Damascus, and their music have roots in both the traditional music of their region, and the improvisation. Listen! wants to create a follow-up from the project in 2008 based on a tour in Norway together with their Syrian friends. Considering the political tensions between the Western and Arabic regions, it's important to focus on cultural exchange. The universal language of music will hopefully contribute to greater understanding and acceptance between the two cultures.

PRESS REVIEWS OF LISTEN!'S DEBUT ALBUM IN FEBRUARY 2007 (translated by Listen!):

"It's seldom to hear such an interacted ensemble, no matter the genre. Listen!"
- Erling Wicklund, NRK, March 2nd 2007

"It's an exciting band with an exciting constellation which plays exciting music, which hasn't reached a stagnating path, but which presents tunes that make you constantly listen in eagerness of what's around the next corner."
- Roald Helgheim, Dagsavisen, February 25th 2007

"The music is both rich of ideas, playful, smooth, elegant and highly original."
- Svein Andersen, Aftenposten, March 5th 2007 - rating 5 of 6

"The exclamation mark is often misplaced, but Listen! gets away with it. The reason is that their debut CD is unusually exciting. [...] A lively CD with great range spanning from soft and lyrical to full power."
- Trygve Lundemo, Adresseavisen, March 6th 2007 - rating 5 of 6

Bendik Giske from Oslo, Norway, has become an active player in the Norwegian arena of art and music during the last years. He's been touring with his own band BG-5 in northern Europe, and he has played as a solo artist at the Norwegian festival of contemporary music, Ultima. Together with singer and performance artist Nils Bech he has played the opening concert of the acknowledged art exhibition Høstutstillingen in Oslo, in addition to well-known Norwegian festivals as Øya, Oslo-live and Parkenfestivalen in Bodø. Bendik Giske has performed as a composer, saxophone and flute player with the following groups and artists: BG-5, Nils Bech, Listen!, Latinga, Mira Craig, Bare Egil Band, among others. He completed his education at the jazz division of the conservatory in Trondheim and Rythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen in 2002, and since then Bendik Giske has played at Oslo Jazz Festival, Molde Jazz Festival, Kongsberg Jazz Festival, Nasjonal Jazzscene, Dokkhuset in Trondheim, Gipfel du Jazz in Germany, Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Hennie Onstad art center, Jazzkerho in Finland, Brötz in Gothenburg, and more.

Espen Berg has a master's degree in music which he completed in 2008 at the acknowledged jazz division at the conservatory in Trondheim. He works as a pianist, composer and arranger in many different settings. Espen worked with grammy nominated soprano Sissel Kyrkjebø as a pianist, arranger and conductor, touring Denmark and Sweden in autumn 2008. He has written music for the grammy nominated Trondheim Soloists, Cikada String Quartet, and Nidaros String Quartet, and he's the band leader of the awarded jazz trio Green Serene. The trio has carried out several successful projects with Per Jørgensen and Eirik Hegdal, among others. Espen is playing in Jo Skaansar Quartet, Kåre Kolve Quartet and occasionally Mambo Compañeros. He was awarded with the prize for best soloist at Hoeilaart Int'l Jazz Competition in 2007. Espen has been one of the main teachers at Trøndertun college since 2005, and in 2009 he's participating on at least five CD releases.

Daniel Herskedal is known from several different constellations and releases, and he's considered to be one of Norway's leading talents as a tuba player. He did his bachelor's degree at the jazz division at the conservatory in Trondheim (2006), and later he completed his master's degree at Rythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen (2008). There he wrote an essay about yoik and jazz, in addition to completing his orchestral piece "A sacred narrative", which premiered in the church of Kong Haakon. Daniel was a regular member of the internationally acclaimed Trondheim Jazz Orchestra during his studies, and in Copenhagen he played in professor Django Bates' student orchestra "stoRMChaser". Today he's hired as a regional musician in Nord-Trøndelag, Norway. Daniel received the prize JazzTalent at Molde Int'l Jazz Festival 2008, and he was awarded with the prize for best soloist at Getxo Int'l Jazz Competition 2004 in Bilbao, Spain.

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