

INTERVIEW WITH GINA SCHWARZ

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1. When did you realize that music would become your profession?

Soon after, I became passionate and quite serious about composing my own music. And ever since, composing and improvising music has become a very personal, reflective experience for me. My love for all kinds of jazz music and a magnetic attraction to the lower register brought me into contact with my main instrument - the BASS - and since then I wanted to be a professional artist.

2. Jazz was your first musical choice?

After beginning to play the accordion at the age of eight I came in touch with contemporary music – original compositions for accordion, which I also studied years later. Being captured by the sound of the piano, I learned this instrument, too- mainly classical music.

3. There is a album or an artist, in particular, that struck you and say, "I want to be like him" and then drew you to a career as a musician?

There are so many great musicians, bassplayers and so much different music I love.

There is an Austrian bassplayer, who lived in New York as a profession for 15 years, Peter Herbert. With his playing and teaching he showed me the deepness of music, what I am looking for.

4. Jazzista is your first album as leader, but you have a lot of experience with different combos. How you have matured the idea? The compositions were already born before or you've written straight off?

Gina Schwarz "SchwarzMarkt" 2006 was my Debut Cd as a leader, followed by "Airbass" in 2008.

SchwarzMarkt was my first band as a leader. It was very important for my musical development, to deepen my skills in composition, arranging, improvisation and bandleading.

Airbass was a cooperation with a famous Austrian harp player (Richard Oesterreicher). Most of the tunes I composed for this album, this special instrument.

"Jazzista" is my third album as a leader. Some compositions were already born and some pretty new.

5. You called your album Jazzista: why you used this name (Italian, I presume)?

Touring with US saxophonist George Garzone, and playing (mainly modern jazz) with him was a highly inspiring experience for me. I wrote the tune "Jazzista" for the "In the Zone-Tour" featuring George Garzone, who has Italian roots, in 2007. I like this title, because it says what I am, and somehow I have the feeling of being connected with the Italian culture and music.

6. Three parts and different kind of styles, different music. Is it a trip through different cultures?

On Part I "Caballitos" you can hear music in three four time, what is very typical for Vienna and for music for accordion, too. A sip of classical music meets the feeling of going round in a carousel in Vienna.

With Part II "Milonga Luzia" I tried to combine tango, modern jazz.

Recently I listened to the great music of Avishai Cohen. His afro cuban music style influenced me a lot, you can hear this on Part III "Santiago".

7. It's a big surprise for me the bandoneon, because it gave a romanticism that I did not expect: was this the sound you wanted already from the beginning?

My mother and my sister played accordion. So for me it was clear, to learn this instrument, too. This specific unique sound impressed me from my childhood on, during my studies at the Conservatory Vienna, till now. That's why I made the conscious decision to write an accordion suite for this album. But after listening a lot to the great music of Astor Piazzolla, I changed my plans and choosed the bandoneon.

8. I have read that you had dedicated this album to Jane: who is her? (if you want to talk about her) ... *Where did you read this?*

Suite Imagination Part II: "Milonga Luzia" is dedicated to my mother Luzia. I want to thank her for supporting me and sparing no efforts for my musical education. I remember when I was a child sometimes she brought me to the music school with her bike, the accordion on the drag link and me on the carrier.

Music is something special for her, full of gladsome and peaceful feelings and full of joie de vivre.

9. As I wrote, I appreciated very much your album and your technique: I listened a lot of groove in your hands and this groove is so natural! Who is your mentor?

After studying electric bass at the Conservatory Vienna I started playing acoustic bass without a teacher.

Again I have to mention Peter Herbert, the Austrian bassplayer, who gave me a few lessons, always honest feed back, lots of attention and support.

Later I had the opportunity to be in the class of John Lockwood at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

In New York I took a few exiting lessons with famous American bassplayers like Buster Williams, Cecil McBee, Dennis Irwin.

Reffering to my left hand technique, I really appreciated working with the principal bassist of the Wiener Symphoniker, Ernst Weissensteiner.

10. Do you have a stylistic reference in your compositions?

In my new compositions I have taken a trip down memory lane. From early childhood on, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to play challenging music.

During my career as a bassplayer my music has been influenced by a wide variety of musical styles. (Modern Jazz, Latin, Funk, Contemporary Music, Classical Music...)

In recent years I have discovered my love for free improvised music, as well. Working with the Vienna-based acoustic bass sextet (Bass Instinct) comprised of bassists – largely from the symphonic field – explored a mix of composed and improvised music, drawing from traditional and avant-garde genres, opened another door of sounds and colours for my new compositions. With „Jazzista“ I have tried to combine all my musical influences with a varied and many-sided line up – from duo to septet.

11. I like to speak about your musicians: how did you choose them?

After playing some Gigs with the trio BlackHairyTricks, Heimo Trixner on guitar and Harry Tanschek on drums, plans and ideas of a new CD came in my head. Beneath their phenomenal skills in different musical styles, I like their enthusiasm for the music. Soon it was clear, that both are incredible musicians, fitting perfect to my music and people I want to work with.

Since my Debut-CD “SchwarzMarkt” 2006 I had an intense collaboration with the outstanding trombone player Robert Bachner. With Bastian Stein on trumpet and Bernhard Wiesinger on saxophone and Philipp Jagschitz on piano I made a really great choice.

They are players who are sensitive and are listening to the others. You can hear that especial on the freely tunes “Brush Hour” and “Free”.

Ingrid Eder on bandoneon studied accordion at the same time as I at the Conservatory Vienna. It was obvious for me to ask her for this “memory lane”-CD.

12. Is there anyone in particular that you'd like to collaborate?

Working with Maria Schneider or Carla Bley would be very special for me.

13. What bassists listens with more interest?

Amongst others I love Scott laFaro, Charles Mingus, Dave Holland, Charlie Haden, Miroslav Vitous, Avishai Cohen, Larry Grenadier...

14. What are your dreams?

Playing great music every day around the world.

15. Now, it's time to play your work in Italy: can we hope to listen you soon in Italy?

Sorry, I have no plans for Italy, but I would love to play there.

16. What are your future plans?

Right now I am preparing for my next tour in November with "Jazzista".
(Austria, Germany, Switzerland).

I am that kind of a person, who loves living in the present not in the future.

But I have some future plans:

Playing with my project "Jazzista" in many countries all over the world.