

the blue goat quartet



The blue goat quartet has existed for seven years. Hess, working as a sideman for Rodrigo Botter Maio (among others) presents his own ideas in this group, and they are ingeniously interpreted and melted into one stunning unity by the band, amongst the best in Contemporary Jazz!

The group won the Contemporary Patterns Competition sponsored by Migros in 2001. In the same year they also won the first prize at the Jazz Festival Zurich, Switzerland.

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Costi Topalidis, ts&ss

Saxophonist Costi Topalidis studied with George Robert and Andy Scherrer. In 2001, playing with the Daniel Woodtli Sextet, he won the first prize at the Chrysler Competition held at the Montreux Jazz Festival 2000. Playing with the blue goat quartet at the Jazz Festival Zurich 2001, Topalidis won an award as outstanding soloist. He regularly played on TV (Night Moor Show) and plays regularly with George Gruntz.

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Jodok Hess, p

Jodok Hess studied at the Berklee College of Music with Tim Ray. As the pianist of the Swiss Youth Jazz Orchestra, he played with Franco Ambrosetti, Jerry Bergonzi, Mike Richmond, among others. He started composing in his own trio with Peter Hunziker and Pit Gutmann, and played his music with Roli v. Flue, Christoph Grab, Tony Renold, Dominic Egli, Raetus Flisch, Peter Frei, and Fabian Gisler. He composes all the songs played by the blue goat quartet. Playing with the band at the Jazz Festival Zurich, Hess won an award as outstanding soloist. He currently plays as a sideman with Rodrigo Botter Maio in 'The Return of the Bossa Nova' and 'Gafiera Alpina'.

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Markus Fischer, kb (www.flyingfischer.ch)

Markus Fischer's aim is to transcend all barriers in a unity with his instrument. Amazing musical energy, the ability to interact and re-invent are second nature to him. His musical output is nothing short of prolific, including Jazz, Freely Improvised Music, Classical Music, Flamenco, Tango and Bolero, as well as Music for Film and for the Stage. He played with Pierre Favre (several trio gigs), Glenn Ferris, Franco Ambrosetti, Claudio Roditti, Mark Nightingale (among many others) at an early age. He also achieved outstanding reviews playing as a soloist in Classical Pieces, such as the Concerto for Double-Bass in E major by Karl Ditter von Dittersdorf and has also played with the Basler Sinfonietta. In 1995 he was awarded 'Werkpreistraeger' (scholarship for outstanding art work) in Solothurn, Switzerland. His own projects include "KonzerTanz – Flamenco und Jazz – eine Montage", founded together with Lein Derol; "Makabaer", a modern radio play by Rolf Strub, Rene Reimann, Markus Fischer and [noisy neighbourhood]. Markus Fischer has been the blue goat quartet's first-choice-bassist since 1996.

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Tobias Friedli, dr

Drummer Tobias Friedli has been coached at an early age by people like Andy Brugger and Peter Frei. Playing drums in the Swiss Youth Orchestra he worked with Bob Berg, Randy Brecker, Barry Lee Hall, Buster Cooper, Tommy Smith, Christian Jacob, Adam Nussbaum, and Mike Richmond. He has been studying with Billy Brooks, George Robert, Andy Scherrer, and William Evans at the Swiss Jazz School since 1999. As a member of the 'Foerderpreisband' (a promotional award winning band) he played in workshops led by Benny Golson and Billy Drummond, among many others. Playing with the blue goat quartet at the Jazz Festival Zurich, Friedli won an award as best youngster. He also plays with the group Dirty Chicken and in B3-Legacy with Ralf Ruh.

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Press

Jazz Time: “The blue goat quartet made the impression of being very much at ease with each other, and their performance was outstanding, musically as well as rhythmically and emotionally. Another excellent drummer (Tobias Friedli), a very fine and supportive bassist (Markus Fischer), a saxophone player on the right track (Costi Topalidis) and Hess, soloing originally, comping tastefully and presenting wittily. Should this group stay together, they will certainly arouse some attention, for there are not many young lions playing on the same level.”

Aargauer Zeitung: “The arrangements did indeed fit the band perfectly and created a striking one-ness. There was no phrase, no motive, not a bit of a solo or accompaniment that would not have served the whole. And the musicians did indeed not choose the easy way out; neither did the tunes prove easy to play on, being very complex at times and often providing odd-metres, and the musicians did not restrain themselves either. Thus the mood grew very exciting and intense, there was a permanent creative restlessness, based in the rhythm section, and especially intensified by bass and drums. Bassist Markus Fischer played with a preeminent, warm and full sound, with a strong forward drive on energetic ostinato figures, heavily swinging on walking lines, or freely interacting with the piano and the saxophone. Drummer Tobias Friedli simply clicked with Fischer, as if his twin; and played on the same level of energy, whether playing time or not, adding stunning figures on the snare drum, creating a palpable wall of sound. – The art of playing ballads is mastered by less and less musicians. Jodok Hess and Costi Topalidis certainly are an exception to this rule. They both played remarkably well on slower tunes, and so did Hess in introductions and solo interludes, where he created truly balanced melodies of great beauty. Every now and then he would mix block chords in his playing, only to deconstruct them into single lines. Costi Topalidis mostly played the soprano sax, although he displayed a full-bodied sound when choosing the tenor — especially on ballads — and created well-balanced and strikingly consistent lines and melodies, emphasizing the individual aspect of the group.”

Jazz'n more (CD review): “On ‘Talking Idly’, four soul-mates (Jodok Hess, kbs; Costi Topalidis, ss, ts; Markus Fischer, b; Tobias Friedli, d) have joined forces and managed to create a remarkable one-ness, which turns listening into pure joy. The musicians all play

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on an equally high level. The compositions (all written by Jodok Hess) offer a wondrous yet coherent blend of post-impressionism and post-bop. Topalidis has matured into a top-player and displays an equally exquisite sound on both tenor and soprano saxophone; never showing off but instead playing altogether light-heartedly, sensitively and inventively. The two men in charge of rhythm could not possibly play more dynamically and supportively. Hess, bursting with energy and always playing to the point, has composed songs full of tricky melodies and changes, and yet the band plays all that jazz with their eyes closed. Good stuff.”

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