

# Nik Bärtsch's MOBILE

The group MOBILE develops integral musical concepts within a ritualistic framework. The performance of the music is usually combined with a multi-medial set-up of the surrounding space.

RITUAL GROOVE MUSIC is the title of the band's first CD and, at the same time, contains the essence of Nik Bärtsch's musical thought. The purely acoustic music is full of surprising turns and bold combinations. The ingredients from funk, new classical music as well as elements of Japanese ritual music are combined to produce an exiting sound mixture, at times funky, at times ambient-like and relaxed and then again dramatically charged. It is a sound world of raw poetry, propelled by obsessive motion.

The compositions leave room for a variety of phrasing, which is readily exploited by the very diverse musical personalities that constitute the band. The drummer Kaspar Rast, with his powerful groove, is as much at home in jazz and funk contexts as in the studio. Alt saxophonist and bass clarinetist Sha captivates the listener through rhythmic refinement and implacable calm and has already earned a reputation as a newcomer in the New Minimal scene. Mats Eser is known as an interpreter of new music and is a member of the Swiss Percussion Group. Nik Bärtsch, the inspirational don of MOBILE, easily crosses the borders between all of the above codes, setting connections which in turn mutate to fuses. (Michel Mettler)

MOBILE has collaborated with different partners and guest performers: with the architects of oos, with the german laido-Master Martin Krahl, with butoh dancer Imre Thormann, solo violoncello player Walter Grimmer and Xala player Ania Losinger.

## Press

»The motto 'Ritual Groove Music' is not accidental in Nik Bärtsch's music; it reconciles minimal music with funk, Steve Reich with James Brown, Lennie Tristano with Japanese Nô-music.« (Peter Niklas Wilson, Du – Die Zeitschrift für Kultur)

»Cool modules instead of true songs, polyrhythmic funk that's hypnotically tenacious.« (Rolling Stone)

»Groove without ego – Swiss musician Nik Bärtsch makes magnificent zen-funk.« (Süddeutsche Zeitung)

»Bärtsch, 33, has been refining his aesthetic of manual repetition for years, both as a solo pianist and in various formations. He has so far released half a dozen CDs of 'modules'. His new album 'Rea' brings out the best in this sonic paradox: the more rigid the frame, the more intense the drive.« (Die Zeit)

»Mobile: hypnotic, repetitive, purely acoustic, primarily dark coloured and enormously complex groove music.« (Der Bund, Bern)

»Minimal, maximal prepared« (NZZ; Zürich)

»Nik Bärtsch is an unsung wunderkind of European new music« (Ellen Pearlman, Brooklyn Rail, New York)

»Extremely subtle erotic of material poverty« (Basler Zeitung)

»Nik Bärtsch, the scientist of groove.« (Tages Anzeiger Zürich)

»Bärtsch has managed to discover a style of his own before nonexistent.« (Jazz`n`More)

## Member Biographies

### Nik Bärtsch (comp, piano)

Born 1971 in Zurich. Pianist, Composer and Producer. Lives in Zurich and Berlin. Instruction in piano and percussion from the age 8. 1997 Graduation from the 'Musikhochschule Zürich'. 1989-2001 studies in philosophy, linguistics and musicology at the University of Zurich. 2003/04 stay in Japan for half a year.

Ongoing work on his RITUAL GROOVE MUSIC as pianist and composer. Leader of MOBILE (since 1997; with Kaspar Rast, Mats Eser & Sha) and the zen-funk quintet RONIN (since 2001; with Kaspar Rast, Björn Meyer, Andi Pupato & Sha). Instructor for 'Practical Aesthetics' at the 'Musikhochschule Zürich/Winterthur' (2000-2003).

1999 and 2002 career award of the 'UBS Cultural Foundation'

2002 'Werkjahr' (career award) from the city of Zurich

2004 culture-award from the town of Zollikon (appreciation-award)

Relevant concerts & projects:

With MOBILE:

Production and composition of the BLUE trilogy, performed over a period of three years with concerts of 36 hours respectively:

2000: 'AREA BLUE' in Zurich; 2001: 'AQUA BLUE' in Baden; 2002: 'MU BLUE' in Zurich (together with the architects oos)

2003: 'Water Church Ritual', Wasserkirche Zürich, with guest Walter Grimmer, cello, 6 hour mirror performance.

2005: 'Perpetual Rhythm - a musical dance ritual', with Butho dancer Imre Thormann & his Bodygarage Tokyo, 8 hour performance in the Rondorama on the Stanserhorn (Co-Production with Stanser Musiktage).

2005: 'SEE - a live musical soundpicture', 4 hour performance on the lake stage in Zurich; together with oos (Co-Production with the Theaterspektakel Zurich).

2005: Openair performance together with the Gagaku ensemble of the Osaka Gakuin University Japan at the Hiyoshi Shrine in Otsu Japan.

Large Compositions:

'Modul Ritual', New Chamber Funk I, composition for 4 saxophones, piano, rhodes, drums & percussion (70 minutes, written in Japan 2003/04 for the ARTE QUARTETT).

'Orchestrated Moduls', New Chamber Funk II, composition for RONIN and the Ensemble für Neue Musik Zurich (2005, 60 Minutes).

'Macbeth' by Shakespeare/Müller, UA Sophiensäle Berlin 2004, music theatre, director: Nora Somaini.

Solo project 'Hishiryo' for prepared piano and percussion (since 2001)

Concerts at important Festivals:

'Athens Festival' in Athens (Gr); for the 'Mozarteo Brasileiro' in Sao Paulo (Bra); 'Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival'(Ger); 'JazzClassica' at Schloss Elmau (Ger); 'Rheingau Festival' (Ger);

'Festival de Musique de Menton' (F); Pianofestival St. Petersburg (Rus); Sergey Kuriokhin International Festival St.Petersburg (Rus); Jazzfestival Kaunas (Lit); Jazzfestival Schaffhausen (CH); Jazzfestival Onze Plus Lausanne (CH); 'JazzNoJazz' festival Zürich (CH); 'Live at Sunset' festival Zürich (CH); Menuhin Festival in Gstaad (CH); Stanser Musiktage (CH).

Film music for the documentary film projects PHOTO SUISSE (2003/04) and DESIGN SUISSE (2005/06) of Swiss TV SFDRS.

Music for the CD 'Design Hören' of the architecture magazine 'HOCHPARTERRE' & the ITH (2004)

#### Collaborations:

Collaboration with the clarinet player, composer and producer Don Li on his TONUS-MUSIC (1996 - 2002); CH New Jazzfestival tour with Harald Haerter 1997; Final at the 'European Jazzcompetition' of the Jazzfestival Leverkusen 1995 with the band 'the groove cooperative'.

#### Other important theatre-compositions:

'Titus Andronicus' by Shakespeare/Müller at the Theater Kampnagel in Hamburg (Festival Junge Hunde 1999); 'Gier' by Sarah Kane and 'Kühltransport' by Maxim Biller at TIF Dresden 2001 resp. 2002; 'Medea' by Euripides' at the Stadttheater Mönchengladbach 2002; director: Nora Somaini.'

#### Selection of Recordings

Nik Bärtschs Ronin, »STOA«, ECM, Release: Februar 2006  
Nik Bärtschs Ronin, »REA«, Tonus-Music Records 2004  
Nik Bärtschs Ronin, »Live«, Tonus-Music Records 2003  
Nik Bärtschs Ronin, »Randori«, Tonus-Music Records 2002  
Nik Bärtschs Mobile, »AER«, Tonus-Music Records 2004  
Nik Bärtschs Mobile, »Ritual Groove Music«, Tonus-Music Records 2001/2005  
Nik Bärtsch, »Hishiryō«, Piano Solo, Tonus-Music Records 2002

#### **Kaspar Rast (drums)**

Kaspar was born in 1972 in Zurich. He has been playing drums since the age of 6. Trained at the JMS in Zurich and the Drummers Collective in New York. Kaspar's list of concerts and tours covers Europe, Africa and South America. He works in various Swiss musical formations and projects, plays sessions and acts as a studio musician.

CD's: Rast, Repetto, Li »KUN«, Tonus-Music Records 2001  
Kaspar Rast, Part 52, Tonus-Music Labor Research Result, Tonus-Music Records 2003

#### **Mats Eser (marimba, percussion)**

Mats was born in 1964 in Zurich. Having received his general education, he began his studies at the Zurich Conservatoire. Today he performs as a soloist and a chamber musician, with his band LYN LEON and with the Xala Player Ania Losinger. Mats is a co-founder of The Swiss Percussion Group and a member of Ensemble für Neue Musik Zürich. Mats's performance is found on a variety of vinyl, radio and TV recordings. From 1989 on he has written numerous compositions for The Swiss Percussion Group.

CD's: Swiss Percussion Group & Carolyn Leonhart, GLASS SONGS, Percords 1998  
Lyn Leon, GLASS LOUNGE, Percords/RecRec 2001  
Lyn Leon, PRIVATE POP, SPV Records 2005

### **Sha (bass/contrabass clarinet)**

Sha was born in 1983. He plays the saxophone and the bass clarinet. Among his teachers are Don Li, Nik Bärtsch, Sujay Bobade and Bänz Oester. Sha is presently studying at the Jazz School in Lucerne. He is also a member of Mik Keusen's 'Blau' and the leader and composer for his own band 'Banryu'. Sha has worked with Anja Losinger, Walter Grimmer, Michael Gassmann, Philipp Schaufelberger and Claudio Puntin.

CD's: Mik Keusen, Blau, Tonus-Music Records, 2005.  
Zimouns's Momental, Hans, Ammoniac-Records, 2002.

### **Gioia Scanzi (light design)**

Gioia was born in 1979. Trained as dressage rider in Zurich and Aachen. She has worked as technician and light designer at the Theaterspektakel Zurich, at Teatro Matto Nero, Novecento and La Voce Del Mare. Since 2000 freelance at the Delux Theater Lighting Lightdesign and at »SAFT Marcel W.Meier's Show Or The Play of Sculpture and Performance«.



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