Szabolcs Oláh – Biography

The character of Szabolcs Oláh's music is determined by his special relationship with the melodies, that are flowing naturally and instinctively, while it still sounds profoundly constructed. Although, he has well defined jazz roots, his style often ignores the boundaries and here comes another interesting aspect of his music. Szabolcs Oláh merges the different musical styles with confident sense of proportion into his music.

He switched from violin to guitar at the age of fifteen, and it turned out early that he can clearly express himself through composing. He studied from 2001 until 2005 at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, under the direction of Gyula Babos and Sándor Horányi. He founded his first internationally acclaimed quartet in 2002, with which he won awards in Hungary and Italy (Barga Jazz International Jazz Competition, 1st prize) as well, toured in the Czech Republic and performed at the Technopolis Jazz Festival, in Athens. In 2020, he started his master’s studies in jazz composition and arranging at the Amsterdam University of the Arts.

His interest in the big band arrangements brought him to be a founding member of the Modern Art Orchestra in 2005, which has a huge influence in his work since then. The music of Szabolcs Oláh has the same concentrated calmness as the Modern Art Orchestra’s, whether it is about stacking genres, or using composition techniques that are not usual in jazz.

He became a member of Kornél Fekete-Kovács's quintet, played with Nikoletta Szőke, and in the trio of András Dés as well as with the Konzervnyitó Akciócsoport which played interactive musical performances. His own quintet was founded in 2012 with János Ávéd (saxophone), Gábor Cseke (piano), Márton Soós (bass) and András Dés (percussion). The line-up released three albums, *Connection* (2013), *Gleam* (2015), and the *Dream Path* with vocalist Panni Kalmár (2016). He made a guitar-piano album (*Message from The Sun, 2017*) with Gábor Cseke, but also appeared as composer on two Modern Art Orchestra album (*Eclectic Path, 2009*; *Winding Road, 2018*). The music of Szabolcs Oláh sounds on these records with mellow serenity, and with perfect balance between the things of the soul.

In 2019, Ádám Bögöthy (bass) and László Csízi (drums) pumped fresh blood into his quintet. Their first record, the *Crystal Brook* has been released in September 2019 and was selected the ‘Album of the year’ by the readers of the prominent online journal, JazzMa.hu. The ten new songs, each composed by Szabolcs Oláh, continue the journey, maybe in a little bit more ethereal way than before, but with the same focused serenity as we get used to it in Szabolcs Oláh’s music.

„A guitarist to love and to keep on loving” (Alexander Schmitz – Jazz Podium, 2017)

„This music leaves me feeling calm, satisfied and uplifted.” (Mike Gates – UK Vibe 2019)