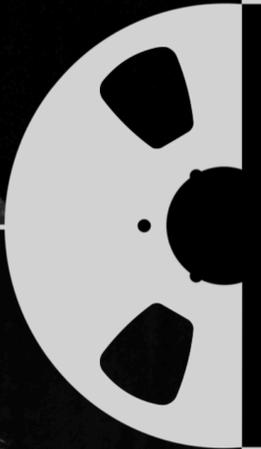


GABOR VARGA JAZZ QUARTET



MY REEL CLUB

IT'S GETTING COOLER

GABOR VARGA JAZZ QUARTET

Gabor Varga

piano

Richard Szaniszlo

vibraphone

Tibor Csuhaj-Barna

double bass

György Jeszenszky

drums

Drum, bass, vibraphone, piano, forms a rare permanent formation in Hungary.

When I created my trio formation, I didn't think it would be self-evident for the trio to expand into a quartet years later.

By then we already had several joint concerts with the trio and my friend Ricsi Szaniszló, appearing on stage as a quartet. This line-up can be followed in the world of jazz through the footsteps of great predecessors. This is the quartet's second solo album, but I look at it as if it were the first. Our first 'Sound of Colors' album is more of an imprint of the harmony, the collaboration of the formation in the studio, I think of it as a kind of cornerstone. If that was the cornerstone, I think this album became the superstructure. I and my fellow musicians, the four of us, have been involved in recording dozens, perhaps more than a hundred albums, in total.

Yet this recording held surprises for all of us. This was our first album, for which not only I wrote pieces, but also my friends Tibor Csuhaj-Barna (bass) and Ricsi Szaniszló (vibraphone) enriched the sound with their own compositions. Besides, the conditions of the recording, for all of us, were influenced by the power of novelty. Because there is the classic studio recording, where the band is well prepared, in the company of a sound engineer and maybe the producer, making the album in the solitude of the studio. We always record our material in a concert-like way, at the same time, this is the accepted and more common recording method in jazz. In some cases, during a track, there is an opportunity for corrections, or we can try several times if we consider that the solo hasn't been realised the way we imagined. Then there's the concert recording.

Radically different circumstances, the heightened state of the concert, the presence of the audience, are all influencing factors, and the quality of the recording varies depending on the technique, but typically falls short of the precisely crafted conditions of the studios.



GABOR VARGA

This shot was halfway between the two. We recorded the material in a studio in front of an audience of twenty. The instruments were placed in the same space and the audience sat opposite us, as in a classical concert. And not. The recording was recorded on an 8-track tape. One tape was 45 minutes long. The audience couldn't clap, they barely took a breath, yet we felt their interested, attentive gaze. This was particularly challenging, considering the band's album-making methods. True to the 'neo cool' style we represent, and also prepare for a single recording with partially unfinished and not practiced material. The tracks have practically only harmonic frames, on which harmonic pillars the superstructure gets its final shape during recording. It was especially exciting with three of the quartet composing songs for the album. The final result was created in two 45 minute sessions, and as the dear listener can see and hear, we couldn't always decide from the full musical repertoire, recorded in the two excerpts, what we should include in the final version.

Personally, I have been able to play in front of one of the best audiences of my life because, although they weren't many, every one of them were dedicated fans of the music. It was a really professional audience, but not in the strictest sense of the word. If you could pick an ideal audience, maybe that would have been it, as all of those present, obsessed music fans, most of them having excellent high-end quality music playing devices, searching the best sound, yet independent of style, merely for their love of music, honoured us with their presence. Imagine people who are no strangers to the world of jazz, yet not necessarily professional jazz musicians, as it is not always a grateful thing to preach to priests. Although there were nearly thirty of us – including our band – we sat in the otherwise spacious recording room during the recordings, and there was not even a single noise, but we were still inspired by the interested eyes and ears.



TIBOR CSUHAJ-BARNA

The two recording stages are different. In the first 45 minutes, we all played unspoken but noticeably on the recording, more restrained, emotionally a little awed, thanks to the unusual circumstances. The fixed material is thus more restrained in 45 minutes, sometimes airier. The second 45 minutes, in contrast, were characterized by more confident, in some places more dynamic and voluminous solos. We selected from both recordings for the final album.

I was very glad that the musical world of Tibi and Ricsi could also appear on the album, so while maintaining the style, we were able to record a more colourful, exciting material. It was real teamwork. It has been an interesting experience that, unlike the usual studio recordings, we did not replay the recorded songs one by one, but we played the whole musical material at the same time, and then we repeated it. In doing so, we let go of the otherwise tiring and emotionally stressful part of the studio recording. We were able to concentrate much better on the joy of the play. Since we had already recorded a vinyl record as a trio, it was not unusual to pay attention to the length of each track. It is an interesting and authentic feeling that not only the harmony of the written songs, the style, tempo, and sound of the play but also the length of the improvisations adapts to the form of the recordings which were recorded 40-50 years ago. It's a beautiful challenge as a musician, in an age when certain genres of jazz, allow musicians to make improvisations seemingly endless exploration journeys without a time limit, thanks to modern recording techniques and digitalisation.



GYÖRGY JESZENSZKY

And something else that I haven't encountered in my studio work so far, it's true, that jazz recordings are typically recorded in a concert-like way, but as customary, the instruments are detached in separate rooms, separated by soundproof windows, providing a visual connection between the musicians. And through the earphones, we hear each other perfectly. In this case, it was different. We were positioned as if we were on a stage, barely 1 meter apart. Thanks to this, the invisible force that really only belongs to real concert recordings worked between us. This clearly comes across in the album. The vibraphone and the piano often, successively accompanying each other, supplemented, build strength from each other, weave the musical thoughts. The drums and bass are perfect for channelling musical ideas into a rhythmic and harmonic channel. The fact was that we could hear each other's instruments acoustically during the recordings, without earphones, none of the world's best membranes can replace the vibrations of hundreds of bass and piano strings in the air or the all-pervading warm sound waves of the vibraphone. They are for our ears, and the membranes of the drum, the cymbals, caused vibrations in the air.

It was a special day for all of us. The end result can be heard in many forms. One of the most unique VGO releases, recorded with DSD 256 technology, recorded at the highest resolution available today. This is a real holiday for both musicians and listeners. We wrote the music these days as an imprint of our current feelings and thoughts today. The technique of recording still combines the method of almost half a century prior to the highest quality expectations of today.

In the classical sense, there was no post-mixing, only the two 45 minutes were cut according to the tracks, through an analogue sound mixer, mixed and re-recorded.

It is often said that time is like a parchment paper. The end winds up, surrendering itself to oblivion, and the front unwinds, revealing new perspectives. We rolled back the end of this parchment a bit so we could unwrap the front even more. It was a real-time travel, where the virtues of the past and the future formed a present, fresh musical material. It's always good to be a musician, especially in this case.

Gabor Varga



GABOR VARGA

My first impressions about vibraphone was a miracle. Long and bright sounds, crystal clear bell-wise soundscape...

Was totally a miracle to hear for the first sight. As a jazz vibist, have been playing and practicing jazz vibraphone in Hungary, basically. This band for me, especially this band is about our friendship, musicianship. I brought a few pieces of my brand new compositions like Judith's dream (composed for my wife) and Story of you. I was so curious about our joint playing over these melodies and chords in live recording situation like this. The unique atmosphere of this great studio was a mind blowing experience for me.

Richard Szaniszlo



RICHARD SZANISZLO



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The aim of the Gábor Varga Jazz Quartet is to extend dimensions of the so called "cool-sound" developed in the classical trio lineup (György Jeszenszky - drum, Tibor Csuhaj -Barna bass, Gábor Varga - piano) with one of the most exciting instruments, the vibraphone. The vibraphone is - as its name suggests - vibrant, hugging, rich, or if desired soft or percussive. The quartet's 'M55 Gold Pro Vibe' vibraphone played by Richard Szaniszló is a special instrument by David Friedman, a NewYork-born jazz vibraphone legend. Drum, bass, piano, vibraphone: this line-up is as rare in Hungary as it is a responsible challenge in the musical sense, because the world has become familiar with this form of quartet sound through legendary formations.

Gabor Varga

Live recording at the **Supersize Recording Studio**,
Hungary, **07th December, 2019**

Balance and recording engineer: **András Makay**

My Reel Club DSD Production: **Ferenc Koscsó, László Papp**

Piano: **Steinway & Sons Model D Grand Piano**

Piano technician: **Balázs Tóth**

Vibraphone: **M55 Gold Pro Vibe**

David Friedman gave his instrument as a present for **Richard Szaniszlo**

Richard Szaniszlo uses **Vic Firth** mallets

Cover: **HRZ**

Photos: **Gergő Gosztom, Attila Kleb, Róbert Tóth**

Recorded audio formats:

Native DSD 256, Piramix, Merging Hapi

High-End file format conversion by **Sygnalist's Hqplayer Pro**

Producer: **Róbert Zoltán Hunka**

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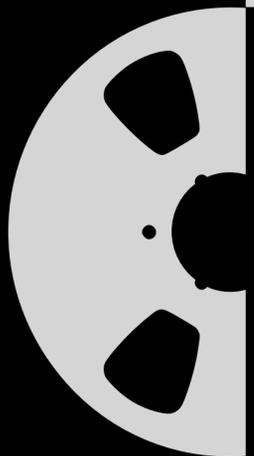
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Sygnalist Hqplayer Pro



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1. **128th Str.** Gabor Varga 4:45
2. **Moments** Gabor Varga 6:55
3. **Little Star** Gabor Varga 5:40
4. **Judith's Dream** Richard Szaniszlo 5:00
5. **Take Your Time** Tibor Csuhaj-Barna 5:36
6. **Story of You** Richard Szaniszlo 6:07
7. **Little Star** (alternate take) Gabor Varga 5:47
8. **128th Str.** (alternate take) Gabor Varga 4:54