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THE K SQUARE Blue Desert

Charis Karantzas: guitar
Julian Külpmann: drums
Thomas Stieger: bass
Manuel Schmiedel: fender rhodes
Johannes Böhmer: trumpet, flugelhorn
Kati Brien: sax, clarinet

Special guests:

Nils Wogram: trombone on 6
David Friedman: marimba on 7
Zola Mennenöh: vocals on 3

THE K SQUARE - Blue Desert

The K Square? A place: here a street opening onto the square, there another, and back there yet another. You meet one another, coming from various directions: Athens, Weinheim, Stuttgart or Hannover, packed with different experiences, different past lives and preferences, journeys and movements, different passions and minds; but you come together. From the left the arpeggiated harmonies, from the right hammering eighth notes, the slightly distorted guitar with its sharp flageolets, and from the center the calm bass. From someplace the sensitive and laid back melodies of the trumpet and saxophone, the broad wall they build when they join together in unison lines. The breezy chime of the Rhodes Piano and its dazzling screams, that it blurts out when the knobs are turned all the way up. The odd rhythms, at the same time round and flowing, physical and dodgy – The K Square: a tangle of diverging voices, that commit to a very energetic type of connection, generating plenty of frictional heat.

The K Square is a sextet from the colorfully blooming young Berlin jazz scene, a melting pot in which the migration movements that have always been typical for jazz, once again come into a new legitimization. There is Charis Karantzas, the guitarist from Athens, who initiated this band with the drummer Julian Külpmann. They together are responsible for composition and arrangements. Besides Thomas Stieger, the bassist, no other band member is originally from Berlin. Karantzas just like Külpmann and Manuel

Schmiedel on Rhodes or the horn section Kati Brien on saxophone and clarinet and Johannes Böhmer on trumpet and cornet as well as the special guests, Nils Wogram on trombone, the singer Zola Mennenöh and the vibraphonist and college professor David Friedman: all of them are Berlin immigrants, lured by the city's reputation that it has gigging possibilities and a great forum for exchange to offer for curious, adventurous musicians.

With the K Square they set themselves a double mission: for one, the small luggage must suffice; the music should become mobile again, suitable for the street – and can thus potentially become a factor in the events of everyday life. And for another, the music should break the logic of classification; it should continue there, where it has once already turned into witches brew 45 years ago. The freedom and the improvisational culture of jazz are enriched by the raw energy of more popular music genres; the archaic, physical impact of rock and punk enlivened by the depth and refined sound of more complex forms of music. In doing so, the band is completely aware, that some time has passed though and pay great attention not to fall into the trap that once took down rock-jazz. The competitive exhibition of muscle-flashing showcased virtuosity, doesn't mean anything to the K Square; instead of adulating musicians on their ego trips, the improvisations here, are strictly incorporated into the musical surrounding. In this way the K Square becomes a place where the spirit of openness and mutual respect creates a well structured and neatly elaborated utopia: music.

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LINKS

Web: <http://theksquare.com>

Traumton: <http://www.traumton.de/label/releases/?id=243&lang=de>

BIOs

Charis Karantzas (guitar)

Charis Karantzas was born in Athens, where he also started playing the guitar. At the age of 18 he went to Amsterdam (Holland) to study jazz guitar at the Conservatory Amsterdam. Two years later he moved to Berlin to study with masters like Kurt Rosenwinkel, John Hollenbeck, Greg Cohen and Peter Bernstein. He has partaken in master-classes with Peter Erskine, Jim Black, Peter Bernstein, Dave Liebman, Mark Turner, Barry Harris, Jeff Ballard, Jonathan Kreisberg and others.

Julian Külpmann (drums)

Besides his band the K Square, the Berlin-based drummer works, among others, with Richie Beirach, Steffen Schorn, Emil Mangelsdorff, Julia Hülsmann, RTL Allstar Band, Nené Vásquez, Jean-Louis Rassinfosse, Marko Lackner, Mike Herting, T.A.S. Mani, Ramesh Shotham, Tino Derado, Geir Lysne, Lars Möller, Achim Seifert Project, DNA Group, Toke, and is the drummer of the "Bundesjazzorchester" (BuJazzO).

After his junior-studies at the HMT Hannover, he began studying at the Jazz Institute Berlin in 2009 with jazz greats like Prof. John Hollenbeck, Jeff Ballard, Joey Baron, Jim Black and Dan Weiss.

Julian has won many awards – both solo and with bands: „Best Young European Musicians Competition“ 2002, „Jugend Jazzt Niedersachsen“, „Skoda Jazzpreis“ 2007, „Winning Jazz“ 2005/09, „Drummer Of Tomorrow 2007, WDR Jazzpreis, Future Sounds 2010.

Thomas Stieger (bass)

Thomas Stieger is a very busy sideman, but also composer and bandleader for his own trio. His creativity finds outlets in various genres like jazz, funk, fusion but also pop and rock. Live and in the studio he's working with Adrian Mears, Kuno Schmid, Torsten Goods, Cosmo Klein, Della Miles and is an important young bass player for the Berlin music scene. In 2011 he finished his studies with Greg Cohen at the Jazz Institute Berlin, where he also had classes with Kurt Rosenwinkel, John Hollenbeck and David Friedman.

Manuel Schmiedel (Rhodes)

Manuel Schmiedel, K Square's pianist, is one of the most sought-after musicians of Berlin's creative scene. Born in Weinheim, he already started playing the piano at the age of 5. Immediately after finishing High School he moves to Berlin to study music with Hubertus Nuss, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Greg Cohen, where he meets the other musicians of the band. Among others, he plays with "Roman Ott Quartett", "Fini Bearman Band"(UK), "Kalle Zeier 4", as well as the "Lisbeth Quartett". Manuel tours a lot through Germany and Europe and has played festivals like the Jazzmeeting Berlin, Jazzwoche Burghausen and Jazz Baltica. Currently he is a member in Kurt Rosenwinkel's up-and-coming new band project.

Johannes Böhmer (trumpet)

Johannes Böhmer was born 1984 in Göttingen and started playing the trumpet at the age of 11. With 16 he became a junior-student at the HMT Hannover and shortly after began studying at the Conservatory Amsterdam as well as the University Philadelphia, where he graduates in 2009. He is currently living in Berlin and plays with many different projects such as Jean Quadrat, BuJazzo, K Square, Julia Hülsmann Large Ensemble, Skazka Orchestra, SNO, RJA and many more.

Kati Brien (sax)

Kati Brien was born in 1989 in Stuttgart. In 2001 she begins playing the saxophone. 2007-2008 she was a member of the "Landesjugendjazzorchester Baden-Württemberg" and a junior-student at the Conservatory Stuttgart. More and more often she started playing with professional musicians, especially around Stuttgart; for example Martin Schrack, Thilo Wagner, Lorenzo and Davide Petrocca. After graduating from High School in 2008, she moved to Berlin to continue studying there at the Jazz Institute with Peter Weniger. In 2009 and in the two following years, she was invited to the Theaterhaus Jazztage Stuttgart with a different one of her projects each year. Besides her own bands like „el.briño“ or her „Dream Band“, she has been a member of the Bundesjazzorchester since 2010.