

## Artistic Process of Artvark

One of Artvark's unique characteristics is the collective creation process of their compositions. From the beginning of the quartet's existence the band members have written their own music themselves. As they rehearsed and performed the compositions from the different band members they were inspired to adapt it constantly, and they still do this! Gradually this never-ending adaptation became their core composition process. As a result, the unique and compelling sound of Artvark was born, coming from a true co-creation process of four completely contrasting musicians with different personalities. Since the fifth album 'Bluestories' all compositions have been collectively created by Artvark and have become special and diverse co-compositions.

### Co-composing? How does that work?

It all begins with someone bringing an idea to the rehearsal room. This can be part of a piece of music like a base line or a specific melody or sound, or even a finished composition! The idea or sound is the starting point of a collective experiment. By practising and improvising around, on top and underneath the idea, it encourages the emergence of a base line or melody as something new evolves. It is through this course that even a composition which was considered to be finished, can be changed entirely.

Each musical entrepreneur of the quartet has very specific and outspoken ideas on music, and by discussing this together and practising trial and error, they seek the form that best fits Artvark. That particular form in which the core of the art is best expressed and which adds something entirely new to the Artvark repertoire. This process of fine-tuning and updating continues often until say, the 30<sup>th</sup> time it is performed for an audience. In that precise, even magical moment of focus and exchange with the audience, they can experience what works. As soon as a piece of music has evolved into its 'final' form the collaborative improvisation starts, with this form. This means that they continue to vary on the form and play it in different ways. The music must always be fresh and alive! Artvark's eternal search for the illusive truffle ....

Besides the major differences in musical backgrounds of the Artvark members they have something in common which is key to the life force of the quartet: their unshakeable focus on how the music communicates with the listener. Compositional and saxophonic techniques are always in service of the sound. Depending on how it feels when it is played, a section of music is included in their repertoire and is there to stay. Artvark is always looking for music with a strong visual or narrative character, a collective pulse, for poetry. In order to create a specific feeling or texture, the base of a piece of music is often formed by an unorthodox sound or playing mode on the saxophone.

### Latest album: Trance

By creating **Trance** Artvark strikes a new match, a new direction. Their dream was to conceive one big story instead of many separate pieces each with their own character and sound. Each member of the quartet brought compositions from multiple parts, like a suite to the rehearsal room. Through their unique co-composing process they've recreated all of this into one huge, powerful arc of tension. The central musical starting point of composing **Trance** is: departing from one note, the listener will be taken through a pulsing rhythm and system into a kaleidoscopic universe of different melodies, layered and overlapping each other, all to return to that one note.

'Darkness' is a clear example of this process. It consists of two parts; part 1 is based on a repetitive melody in Ab minor (a key with a remarkably dark character). This melody is performed as a constant pulse which suggests a drum with a lazy backbeat. Then the melody is passed as a baton in relays and the rest of the parts are improvised. Who is playing the melody, who is improvising, where and when? All is discovered through trial and error. Part 1 is descending into a laying-low Ab from which a tenor solo begins. In Part 2 the laying note pulses at the rate of Part 1. The unison Ab slowly floats into a sound borrowed from the third symphony of Gorecki: a stack of seconds. Together with the tenor solo this is ever building to a groove and dynamic peak. A sudden stop and three echoes of fragments of the first melody finalise the music.

Artvark's **Trance** dares to take the listener on a cinematic journey!



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