

ARTVARK SAXOPHONE QUARTET

Away with chairs! Away with music stands! Artvark moves! Artvark meanders through musical traditions and slides across the stage according to an improvised choreography. Artvark stands for innovative original compositions, strong individual soloists and the adventurous groove of four saxophones. Artvark thrills, Artvark stinks, growls and sizzles.

Rolf Delfos (alto sax), Bart Wirtz (alto sax), Mete Erker (tenor sax) and Peter Broekhuizen (baritone sax) blend their different backgrounds to form a unanimous, creative and unique sound; the sound of Artvark!

Artvark has performed at major international festivals such as The North Sea Jazz Festival, The Cairo Jazz Festival, The Bohemia Jazz Festival in Prague, Jazz Bruges and toured in Ireland, Turkey and South Africa. The saxophone quartet has engaged in special and remarkable collaborations, such as with jazz legend Peter Erskine, Senegalese master drummer Doudou N'Diaye Rose and the Danish band Efterklang. With the classical soprano Claron McFadden they recorded the 'Sly Meets Callas' record and played at numerous prestigious festivals, like 'Grachtenfestival Amsterdam' and 'Rotterdamse Opera Dagen' and toured the theatres extensively. The fifth record 'Blue Stories' was the prelude to a big theatre tour of the project 'Polder Beast' with actor John Buijsman.

During 2014/2015 Artvark celebrated it's tenth anniversary with a number of great events at diverse locations: from the prestigious concert hall of Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam with contemporary classical music ensemble ASKO|SCHÖNBERG, to the dark caves of jazz café DJS in Dordrecht with movie creator Lenny Oosterwijk.

It was in 2015/2016 that Artvark toured the Dutch theatres for 2 whole months with Dutch/Cameroonian jazz singer Ntjam Rosie. This brought about the release of the CD/DVD 'Homelands'. With dance group 'De Stilte' Artvark created a musical theatre performance for children based on the work of Dutch master painter Hieronymus Bosch: 'Bosch in Bed'. In the spring of 2016 Artvark took their sound on tour to South Africa for two weeks, delivering their music to jazz venues, university concert halls, and their workshops to students.

By popular request both 'Homelands' and 'Bosch in Bed' went on a second tour in 2016/2017. In 2016 Artvark and classical soprano Claron McFadden created the programme 'POE' and invited cellist Jörg Brinkman as their special guest. The premiere of 'POE' took place at the Cello Biennale Amsterdam 2016. Artvark was invited by the renowned Apollo Saxophone Quartet to join them on stage and headline at the Royal Northern College of Music Saxophone Day in Manchester in November 2016. In 2018 the collaboration with Apollo has continued with the composition of 8 brand new pieces for 8 saxophones and a premiere at Amersfoort Jazz Festival. A joint tour in England and the Netherlands will be scheduled in 2019/2020.

In 2017/2018 Artvark has created a new theatre show with dance group 155: 'PULSE'. Together with producer/percussionist Frank Wienk, they explored the boundaries and possibilities of the saxophone and bursted into new sounds instigated by the PULSE. In the spring of 2018 the PULSE theatre tour took off.

After several intense and fruitful collaborations over the past few years, Artvark released a new album as a quartet: 'TRANCE'. This time they bring one story, in one breath. The listener will be invited to join them on a fantastic journey. Departing from one note, the listener will be taken through a pulsing rhythm into a kaleidoscopic universe of different melodies, layered and overlapping one another. 'TRANCE' is being performed throughout 2018 and 2019 in the Netherlands and abroad.

Artvark aspires to connect worlds and cross borders, both in themselves and their music. They tirelessly look for more, keep digging and rooting through the mud, looking for that one truffle.



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BIOGRAPHIES

Rolf Delfos is a teacher at the Academy of Music of The Hague and Zwolle. Since the eighties he has been performing with THE HOUDINI'S, during which time he recorded 12 CD's with this jazz sextet, and played at the famous Rudy van Gelder Studio in New York. During his career Delfos has recorded more than 100 records with artists such as GINO VANNELLI, AZYMUTH and DR LONNIE SMITH, and he is active part in several of his own bands, like THE JAZZINVADERS, DELMONTIS and the hugely groove-based big band LICKS AND BRAINS. For the latter he is the chief composer and writes majority of the arrangements, in addition to directing the future course of the band. At the end of the 1990's he received the prestigious 'Gouden Notenkraker' award with the HOUDINI'S and in 2014 he was granted the PETER SCHILPEROORT award. In 2017 he released his first piece of work as DELFOS: 'Road trip for the last 90 days of your life'. Since 2015 he has been involved in theatre projects like NEW YORK ROUND MIDNIGHT and SWINGING HARLEM. Delfos continues to travel the world with his projects and bands; from Australia to South Africa, from Colombia to Canada. In 2017 he was asked to arrange the programme 'Sophiatown' for a small ensemble with compositions of South African composers during the 'Apartheid'.

Bart Wirtz graduated cum laude in 2002 at the Rotterdam Conservatory and pursued his study in New York. Wirtz was co-founder of the bands MONSIEUR DUBOIS, YOUNG SINATRAS and THE VERY NEXT. He is also a member of THE ROTTERDAM JAZZ ORCHESTRA. From the moment he released his début album 'Prologue' his career took off. Wirtz won several prizes like the Erasmus Jazz Prize, Leiden Jazz Award, Breda Jazz Price, two Edison nominations and the Edison for his album IDreamer. He recorded 'IDreamer' in New York with an all-American band starring NICHOLAS PAYTON. The track 'Evolution of the Innocent' was streamed more than 3.5 million times on Spotify. In 2014 Wirtz released the album 'Interview', a collaboration with trumpet player SEAN JONES. In 2017 he released his latest album 'Beneath the Surface' with a new band thus delivering an entirely brand new sound. This resulted in another Edison nomination and a tour at several great venues and festivals like The North Sea Jazz Festival.

Mete Erker graduated from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague in 1998 and subsequently was invited by DAVID LIEBMAN to join his group at the North Sea Jazz Festival. Over the years he has worked in a great variety of musical settings, ranging from the premiere of his 2015 'Near East Up North' project with modern classical ensemble ASKO|SCHÖNBERG and kemente virtuoso DERYA TÜRKAN, to the 2016 recording of the latest album of his hard-core-impro group ESTAFEST at the renowned BMC label in Budapest. In 2017 three new albums were released: FUCHS, ERKER & VAN VLIET: 'Linden', ESTAFEST: 'Bayachrimae' and METE ERKER TRIO: 'Live!'.

Peter Broekhuizen studied at the Rotterdam Conservatory and his long career started off in soul-jazz/funk: he toured the world for years with artists such as SUE CHALONER's Soultrain (UK, support act Ray Charles) and CANDY DULFER's Funky Stuff (Japan/Asia/USA/Europe, performing with VAN MORISSON and MAVIS STAPLES). He has performed latin/world music with Lucas van Merwijk's CUBOP CITY BIGBAND (and also with the fabulous harp player EDMAR CASTANEDA) and with RUMBATÁ (touring in Colombia). He has also played impro jazz with the JAZZERALL drummer Arend Niks. Broekhuizen has now released four albums with his own soul-jazz band THE AURATONES. Highlights are guest performances and recordings with GERARD PRECENSER (tpt/UK). He's currently performing with Dutch jazz talent KIM HOORWEG and, together with Delfos in THE JAZZINVADERS and DELMONTIS. His latest project is the hard-bop band MESSENGERS REVISITED.



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PRESS QUOTES

“Bright and sparkling performance with melancholic and serene melodies, the lyricism radiating pure emotion. Everything falls into place in this seven-piece suite. A state-of-the-art craftsmanship.”

- Jazzenzo Erno Elsinga on Trance

“Artvark has added another landmark to their body of work. ‘Trance’ is a cd to cherish and enjoy endlessly.”

- Jazzflits Sjoerd van Aelst on Trance

“Tragic and light-footed compositions, unrivalled pioneers in music.”

- HMC Dagbladen John Oomkes on Trance

“Artvark’s music is alternately meditative and exciting and has a very visual character. It never gets boring, because at the right time the alto sax players snatch you from the upcoming hibernation. It’s that playfulness, ever remaining musical, that is the characteristic of this musical ensemble. The music of Artvark sounds fresh and new every time.” – Jazzenzo Cyriel Plummakers on Trance

“Four saxes together have more sound possibilities than you would think and in addition this quartet is playing with a lot of fantasy and the improvisations are perky without becoming freaky.”

- NRC on Homelands with Ntjam Rosie

“The smooth flow of rhythmic arrangements embedded in the African and European music traditions are moody and playful: a fertile ground for Rosie’s passionate lyrics ... Together they form a lively entity with multiple dimensions due to the stirring saxophone solos of the quartet.” - Jazzenzo on Homelands

“Artvark wins respect for their insane perfection and propulsion. It is extraordinary how well they interpret the African feel for rhythm and melody with their horns.” - Jazz Zine on Homelands

“Artvark combines stunning precise play with groove, guts and strong solos, well-thought-out catchy pieces, played with passion. Totally hip.” - Volkskrant

“They say music knows no boundaries and, we add, jazz knows even fewer. Dutch act Artvark does not simply play but performs their music. Literally from the first step, this saxophone-only band was different from all others. The band snapped and tapped on stage, turning their movements and sound into a dance. If it can be said for jazz players: they rocked the house.” - The Daily News Egypt

“The group uses a wide variety of styles, even modern dance is there.” - Kwadratuur Belgium

“With ‘Whosa Mwatana’ Peter Broekhuizen did celebrate on the baritone sax a wonderful folksong by Abdullah Ibrahim. A fine reminiscence and homage to the many Apartheid refugees from South Africa.” - Freistil 31 Germany

“Smartly dressed anarchy, lots of subdued emotion and a high-spirited shuffle. Sometimes self-willed, but above all breathtakingly beautiful. Breath and soul. Breathe in and breathe out.” - Jazzmozaiek Belgium

“The horns from Artvark deliver colourful warm patterns and on top of that, they make up exciting musical stories”
- Het Parool

“Excellent combination, striking harmonies and shamelessly beautiful sound.” - Volkskrant on BusyBusyBusy

“All saxophone lovers should buy this CD. Every piece of this truly masterful CD is a prime example of the finest ensemble playing: 5 stars out of 5.” – Forte on ‘Sly Meets Callas’ with soprano Claron McFadden



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