

playground4 is an international quartet of top-class musicians from Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Active as band leaders and composers in numerous independent projects, the two Viennese musicians Gina Schwarz and Ingrid Oberkanins, Stephanie Wagner (GER) and Esther Bächlin (CH) joined together to form a ‘composers collective’ in 2017.

The result of this fruitful collaboration can now be heard on their debut album “**hit the ground running**”, released by JazzHausMusik. The meaning of the CD’s title – “hit the ground running” – is programmatic.

Their music surprises with carefully orchestrated extraordinary sounds and playing techniques, with colourful harmonies, gripping grooves and filigree melodies. Sometimes aesthetic, sometimes lively, the musical playground offers space for an intelligent collective interplay and contrasting solo passages.

The four jazz musicians and award winners thus create a rich ‘melting pot’ of sounds and rhythms – a music that makes you feel the pull of the creative moment!

Stephanie Wagner is one of the few rare jazz-flutists around the world.

She studied classical and jazz-flute at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and received a scholarship at Berklee College of Music/Boston. Between 1995 and 2003 she worked as a professor for classical- and jazz flute at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. In 2011 she was awarded the jazz-prize of the city of Worms for being an outstanding soloist. A few years later her practice book „Play Jazz Flute - now!“ was published by Schott Music. In 2016 the quintet „Stephanie Wagners Quinsch“ recorded the album „Shapes & Colours“ which was highly praised by the press.

The composer and instrumental artist Stephanie Wagner is a master of modern techniques, electronic effects and unknown sounds on the flute. She published several CDs with different ensembles and plays worldwide.

www.stephaniewagner-jazzflute.com

The Lucerne pianist **Esther Bächlin** distinguishes herself by her playful and compositional versatility. For her project between classical music and jazz (with Lauren Newton, among others) she received a financial award from the canton of Lucerne in 2006. 2016 she won the 1st prize in the international improvisation competition in Aarau. In addition to various jazz related projects, she has increasingly performed in connection with painting and literature in recent years. She toured several times with a special project of the Vienna Art Orchestra: Fe&Males. Since 1996 she teaches at the jazz department of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

www.estherbaechlin.com

Gina Schwarz, bassplayer and composer and Hans Koller Jazz Award winner from Vienna, studied at the Conservatory Vienna, the University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Mag.art) and at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

She is known for her projects as a leader: Pannonica (Porgy & Bess Stageband 2017/18), Woodclock – Unit feat. Jim Black, Jazzista, Airbass and SchwarzMarkt and as a Co-leader: In the Zone feat. George Garzone, Trillium with Gerard Guse & Ramon Lopez, Doublebass Sextet Bass Instinct, winner of „Best performances of the year” in „All about Jazz-New York Best of 2007”. Musical Collaborations in Jazz, Latin and Worldmusic amongst others with: Jim Black, Marilyn Mazur, Ingrid Jensen, Sylvie Courvoisier, George Garzone, Angelika Niescier, Julia Hülsmann, Karin Hammar, Camila Meza, Muriel Grossmann, Mino Cinelu, Dave Taylor, Andy Middleton, Jeff Boudreaux, Diego Pinera, Marianne Mendt, Harri Stojka, Richard Oesterreicher, Jose Feliciano & Erwin Schrott.

Since 2011 she has been teaching at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

www.ginaschwarz.com

Ingrid Oberkanins, multi-percussionist and Hans Koller Jazz Award winner from Vienna, distinguishes herself by her enormous stylistic diversity. She can be heard in jazz as well as world music ensembles as well as in projects with “Neue Musik”, performance, theatre, free improvisation and literature. She played and plays with renowned ensembles and musicians such as the Vienna Art Orchestra, the HR-Bigband Frankfurt, Lia Pale, Wolfgang Puschnig, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Krzystof Dobrek, Doretta Carter and has performed at various international jazz festivals in London, Paris, Montreux, Vancouver, San Sebastian, Krakow and Vienna. Since 2004 she has been teaching at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

www.ingridoberkanins.com