

FOCUS Duo Laia Genc / Stephan Mattner

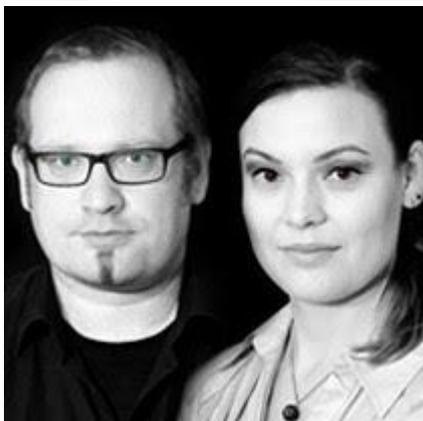
Focussing on the essential is an intention often declared in modern jazz. Cologne-based, German-Turkish pianist **Laia Genc** and Cologne-based saxophonist **Stephan Mattner** take this claim to the next level by creating minimalist, deeply atmospheric music. This outstanding duo would **be an excellent addition to your schedule in early 2015**.

Laia Genc and Stephan Mattner have captured their sublime musical aesthetic on their first album, aptly entitled **FOCUS** (released in 2014 on Berlin-based label KONNEX). The repertoire on this CD makes for a formidable, full-length performance.

Here is a short introduction to this *duo impressionante*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-enk4O0r9oc>

When Stephan Mattner's vibrantly lyrical saxophone meets Laia Genc's spellbinding piano playing, the result is more than just two voices intertwining. The creative, unconventional approach to exploring and extending the instruments' respective timbres as well as the multi-dimensional phrasing is what truly characterizes the duo's sound. Masterfully oscillating between fiery expressiveness and subtle, laid-back playing, the two individual musicians' creative impulses melt into an energetic, homogenous unit.



Press reviews:

Jazzpodium, May 2014
By Thorsten Meyer

Focus - a fitting title. "Focus" is the perfect depiction of what defines pianist Laia Genc and saxophonist Stephan Mattner as a duo. Mattner's imaginative ideas (the album contains one of Genc's compositions) are mostly backed by a spare piano, gradually developing an increasingly multifarious duo sound. Mattner dubbed the first four tracks "Sketches", which is exactly what they are: concise motives brought together and gracefully interwoven without compromising the singularity of the piece. Some soundscapes are minimalist, dreamy and weightless before picking up speed without a warning. The solos come about naturally and organically from the two musicians' joint creative ideas. Despite the tight interaction, the sound remains smooth and relaxed. The emphasis lies on the great effect caused by a small impulse. In almost 45 minutes, Genc and Mattner display genuine art as a duo.

Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung, April 7, 2014
By Christian Wurm

Laia Genc's (piano) and Stephan Mattner's (tenor and soprano saxophone) performance on Saturday at the Birdland jazz club was truly something for musical connoisseurs. Mattner's original compositions, conclusively titled "Sketches", are brief and fascinating tales, somewhere between classical music, jazz and theater music.

Piano and saxophone harmonize so perfectly that they seem completely interlaced in their dialogue, while the players occasionally coax onomatopoeic sounds out of their instruments (using the piano's strings, the saxophone's key-cups). Saturday evening's performance found the inclined listener embraced by the sensual and poetic atmosphere of this music.

The concert was recorded by the *Bayerische Rundfunk* and will be broadcasted as part of the "Jazztime" series on June 27 at 23:05 (CET) on *BR-Klassik*. You can listen to it online in the subsequent week.