



OKABE FAMILY

BY
GENZO OKABE

PRESS KIT

Okabe Family by Genzo Okabe

Okabe Family formed as a group in 2009 in The Netherlands, which is considered to be one of Europe's leading countries in regards to arts and culture. The group has been playing regularly around The Netherlands since its inception. The formation of the band is that of a traditional acoustic jazz quartet, however, the group has made a goal out of pushing the boundaries of what such a group can accomplish in terms of sound and complexity of texture. In February 2013 Okabe Family released their first album on Dutch label O.A.P. Records. Following a CD release tour in the Netherlands, Okabe Family played a larger, seventeen-day tour of Japan in October and November of 2013. Okabe Family recorded their second album, also on the O.A.P. Records, in July 2014, with an expected release date in October 2014 and tours in the Netherlands, Spain, Canada and Japan planned for the 2014/2015 season.



*Produced by O.A.P. Records (The Hague, NL)
©Recorded/mixed/mastered by Barry Olthof at the O.A.P. Studio
in July 2014*

Second Line (2014)

Tracks:

1. Cat Ride
2. Second Line
3. Funeral March
4. Black Jelly
5. 21st Century Boy
6. Climb
7. Glorious Losers
8. Furusato

*All songs by Genzo Okabe except track 8
"Furusato" by Teiichi Okano.*

Genzo Okabe - composition, alto saxophone
Miguel Rodríguez – piano
Steven Willem Zwanink – bass
Francesco De Rubeis - drums

Second Line is the culmination of two years of research on early jazz by Genzo Okabe. By exploring the African-American music that flourished in New Orleans at the beginning of the 20th century, Genzo incorporated the essence of its melodies, harmonies, and rhythm into his own compositions. The first half of the album is a tribute to early jazz music, introducing stride piano, second line rhythm, and the funeral march which is deeply rooted in the traditions of New Orleans. Slowly the album begins to demonstrate Genzo's individual manner of reconstruction and integration of these source materials, fusing them more freely with his interpretation of contemporary polyrhythm and reharmonization. Composed as an homage to the origins of jazz music, the album shows the rediscovery of the richness, effectiveness, and modernity of the early jazz, as well as the fundamental affinity with contemporary jazz music.



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Okabe Family (2013)

1. Scaramouche
2. Black Pope
3. Atheist
4. Amedas
5. Broken
6. Yellow&Red Jackets
7. Can't Stand Ya
8. Aka Tombo

All songs by Genzo Okabe except track 8
“Aka Tombo” by Kosaku Yamada

Genzo Okabe - composition, alto sax
Miguel Rodriguez – piano
Steven Willem Zwanink - bass
Francesco De Rubeis - drums

Produced by O.A.P. Records
Recorded/mixed/masterd by Barry Olthof
at the O.A.P. Studio in October 2012

Genzo Okabe

Born in Tokyo, Genzo moved to Italy at the age of twenty, where he studied classical saxophone at the Conservatorio di Musica di Perugia and jazz saxophone at the Conservatorio di Musica “Santa Cecilia” di Roma. Moving to the Netherlands, he founded the Okabe Family in 2009. In his first album as a leader, Okabe Family (O.A.P. Records, 2013), he demonstrated his insights in composition and arrangements as well as unique sense of creativity. His polished skill of performance was presented both in the Netherlands and through the Band’s first Japan tour. Having accomplished his master’s degree in Jazz Saxophone at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague in 2014, Genzo re-interpreted and incorporated the essence of old pre-jazz music into new contemporary sound in his second album, Second Line.

Genzo plays a Gottsu Sepia Tone VI mouthpiece.

Reviews

“From the first track until the last, you can hear Okabe’s strong will, pure passion and genuine appeal as an artist, all the while maintaining his artistic integrity without seeming overly concerned with pleasing his audience. Listening to the album one is able to hear the confidence shared by the individual members not only as musicians, but also as people, and this contributes greatly the overall sound of the quartet. I highly recommend keeping an eye on Genzo Okabe and Okabe Family because the future for them looks brilliant.”

(Summary of review by Masahiko Yu, Jazz Tokyo - www.jazztokyo.com)

“Genzo Okabe’s debut album as a leader “Okabe Family” is not bad. Actually it is one of the most outstanding albums I’ve listened to recently. In the Japanese jazz scene, where female artists seem to be more successful, I’m relieved to see that finally a Japanese man of spirit has arrived. Okabe’s compositions are excellent and characteristic in terms of open-mindedness to unusual metre or harmony. It doesn’t sound tricky at all and a multi national quartet brilliantly displays their musical talent, most likely due to the fact they’ve been playing together more than four years.”

(by Kenny Inaoka, Jazz Japan vol.34 - www.jazzjapan.co.jp)

“The entire album is full of sophisticated pieces with fresh arrangements and colourful sounds. Okabe’s alto is filled with jazz spirit and his thick sound and convincing improvisations are very attractive in spite of the fact that he comes from “school”. On the tracks Scaramouche and Atheist, Okabe’s powerful performance is reminiscent of Phil Woods and makes us aware of his exceptional skill. On the up-tempo piece, Can’t Stand Ya, we are thrilled not only by Okabe’s playing, but also by Miguel Rodriguez who reminds of Herbie Hancock. The trading with drummer Francesco De Rubeis is full of variety and just overwhelming. The transformation of a Japanese traditional song Aka Tombo into a jazz arrangement is excellent. Finally a Japanese saxophonist who can appeal to the world has shown up. Masterpiece.”

(Jazz Page - www.jazzpage.net)

“Lord, save us from promotional nonsense! ‘Okabe Family’ is “a traditional acoustic jazz quartet, but aims to stretch the boundaries of such a line-up in sound and textural complexities”... Sometimes descriptions with such general typifications can become so vague, that they lose their meaning: what to think of Ornette Coleman, Coltrane and Aylor, Steve Coleman and John Zorn (to name a few saxophonist predecessors) in terms of “boundaries [...] in sound and textural complexities”? However, all this marketing talk doesn’t necessarily have a negative impact on the music: with ‘Okabe Family’, alto saxophonist Genzo Okabe has delivered a powerful and solid debut. Almost all the material is Okabe’s, and can be described as energetic post-bop that has been updated mostly in a rhythmical sense - with heavy backbeats and complex patterns sounding in the rhythm section: challenging material, impeccably performed. Okabe plays with virtuosity, and has a clear-cutting and, in the higher register, somewhat intrusive sound; drummer Francesco De Rubeis has a very strong presence. This makes for the record to be somewhat full-on

Press Kit – Okabe Family

and dark, and a little fatiguing: the only bright song is 'Broken', which features a nice solo by pianist Miguel Rodriguez. There's no room for blues or sentimentality: the only ballad on the record is to be found on the very last track, which is then transformed, in an almost brutal way, in the second half of the track. 'Okabe Family' definitely is an intriguing experience, but for a living room setting. I feel the cd as a whole is a bit out of balance - like a heavy meal. Having said that, it is clear that these are musicians to keep an eye on."

(by Arne Van Coillie, Jazz Flits)

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Other social networks:

Youtube

youtube.com/stogenzo

Facebook

facebook.com/okabefamily

Flickr

flickr.com/photos/genzookabe

Twitter

twitter.com/genzookabe

Technical Information OKABE FAMILY

Please note that this is the optimal situation and is a suggestion for the technical director Okabe Family perform in many different types of settings and can adapt if need be. Please always feel free to discuss limitations or specific needs pertaining to your venue.

Backline

1. Piano:

1 acoustic grand piano with piano bench.

The piano should be in position and tuned to A=440 on the day of the performance.

1 pair of panoramic microphones for piano (preferable brands Neumann, DPA, Schoeps)

1 Monitor

2. Jazz Drum Kit:

Preferable brands DW (Drumworkshop), Yamaha, Pearl or Sonor.

18" Bass drum with good working bass pedal

10" Tom and 14" Floor tom

2 Cymbal stands

1 Hi-hat stand with hi-hat clutch in good working order

1 Drum stool in good working order

1 Drum microphone set (preferable brands AKG, Sennheiser, Beyerdynamic)

1 Monitor

1 Music stand

3. Double Bass:

1 Gallien Kruger or Acoustic Image Amp 100 watts or over.

1 Condenser microphone (preferable brands DPA, Neumann, AKG)
with microphone stand

1 Monitor

1 Music stand

4. Saxophone

1 Condenser microphone (preferable brands DPA, Neumann, AKG)

1 Microphone for talk-back

1 Monitor

