

Stephan Abel, saxophone player (also flute, bass clarinet)

born 1964, studied music at the Jazz School Munich and the "Musikhochschule" in Cologne, Germany.

Already at the early age of 19 years, Stephan Abel became a steady member in the band around bandleader, singer and trombonist Gene "Mighty Flea" Conners. In this formation Abel and Conners had worked closely and intensely together for a period of about seven years. But also later they kept on playing together every now and then - up to the time when the "Mighty Flea" passed away in 2010.

The time in Conners' band proved to be crucial for Stephan's development of his own style of playing and his understanding of live music. Meeting and learning from many African-American jazz and rhythm'n'blues musicians of Gene Conners' musical environment, Stephan's unique saxophone sound could and still can best be described as gripping and direct, attributes which show a more American than typical European orientation. Throughout his career, Abel has had the chance to play in various formations and thereby learning from older musicians such as Lionel Hampton, Jimmy Woode, Benny Bailey and Dr. Lonnie Smith who shared their knowledge and experiences with the youngster from Europe with pleasure.

In 2005 Stephan Abel recorded the much-noticed duo album "My Kind Of World" with Jimmy Woode, which at its core is an acknowledgement to their deep friendship.

But Stephan would not view himself as a pure jazz musician only. As his endeavours in the past have shown, he has no fear of contact concerning other ranges of music stylistics. Especially when it comes down to rhythm and blues. But also pop and rock music are no forbidden genres for him. He gave concerts and went on tour with musicians such as Randy Crawford, The Temptations, Inga Rumpf, Angela Brown and Roger Cicero, in whose band he was a steady member for four years and is heard on nearly all CDs.

Most recently, Stephan put his time and effort in many different projects with his congenial partner Lutz Krajenski (hammond, piano and arrangement) and Rolf Zielke (piano, composing; CD: "Rolf Zielke - Handel Jazz"). To mention a few projects developed by Abel and Krajenski: "After Hours" (CD: "There I Go", feat. Roger Cicero), "Salt" (CD: "La Solution"). And Stephan can be heard in several of Rolf Zielke's formations not only playing saxophone but also the flute and bass clarinet.

Abel's latest work - "The Windmills Of Your Mind" - is actually a little dream coming true for him. When he became 50 years old, he recorded this album which consists of jazz ballads only. It is a very personal double album for Stephan where all musicians taking part bring forward the deep rooted intimacy of the songs through an uncompromising candour in their playing. At the moment, Stephan is on tour with exactly those musicians. Namely Buggy Braune (piano), Olaf Casimir (bass), Heinz Lichius (drums) and as a guest Ken Norris (vocals) (CD/double Vinyl: Stephan Abel, "The Windmills Of Your Mind", agogo-records; release 30th March 2015).