

ROOT AREA

Change your opinions, but remain true to your principles;
change your leaves, but keep your roots.
(Victor Hugo)



**Christoph Grab ts/ss, Nicole Johäntgen as/ss,
Marcel Thomi Hammond, Elmar Frey drums**

The extremely stage experienced trio TOUGH TENOR (Christoph Grab ts, Marcel Thomi Hammond, Elmar Frey dr) is very popular as a band in the jazz field and has played countless concerts in Switzerland and Germany with its BASICS program ("Big Band in pocket format - The Music Of Count Basie").

With ROOT AREA they launch their new, self-composed program and expand the band with a second wonderful saxophone voice: The great German musician Nicole Johäntgen! She ideally complements the soul jazz of ROOT AREA with her energy and her unmistakable groove.

Already in the BASICS program the band reached for their musical roots and transferred their findings into the present. In their new compositions for the ROOT AREA program, this musical search for roots becomes a principle: whether it's a slow blues piece, New Orleans funk, a gospel ballad or a Swiss folk song in African garb - the new pieces have deep roots

and connect the band to them. This short-circuiting of the now with these roots creates a phenomenal energy in the music of ROOT AREA, breaks boundaries and provides unique and delightful moments to the band (and the audience).



With the program name ROOT AREA they tie in with the earthiness of BASICS. Musically, too, the groove emphasis, the fat arrangements, the energy and wildness of BASICS remain a trademark of the new program. Also the use of the orchestral possibilities of the Saxophone-Hammond-Drums instrumentation remains important and the polyphony with the second saxophone voices give the music even more tonal color.



Website: <https://www.christophgrab.com/de/bands/root-area>
Booking: info@christophgrab.com

Line-up:

Christoph Grab - tenor and soprano saxophone



Jazz critic Tom Gsteiger says of Christoph Grab: "In his tenor sax solos he evoked memories of swing tenorists like Ben Webster and Paul Gonsalves oscillating between lascivious laconism and snorting ecstasy, without merely imitating them. Grab is not a retro nostalgist, but a tradition-conscious modernist." His teachers and mentors have included Andy Scherrer, Sal Nistico, Jerry Bergonzi, Joe Lovano and Dave Liebman. He leads his own projects BLOSSOM and REFLECTIONS, works as a freelancer in the Swiss jazz scene and plays in many permanent formations such as Christoph Steiner's Escape Argot, Reto Anneler STILLE POST, Baumann/Grab/Haemmerli/Rebold, Zurich

Composers Collective, ELLINGTONALITY, Axel Fischbacher Oktett, Raphael Jost & Lots of Horns, Spittin' Horns, Elmar Frey Septet, Herbie Kopf Quartet. Former formations were RAW VISION, SCIENCE FICTION THEATER, Zurich Jazz Orchestra, Neuromodulator, KOJ/Nadelöhr, Kurt Weil Vibes Revisited, ContempArabic Jazz Ensemble, Marion Denzler Group etc. Christoph Grab is professor for saxophone and improvisation at the Zurich University of the Arts.

Nicole Johäntgen - alto and soprano saxophone



Nicole Johäntgen has played with stars such as Daniel Powter (Bad day), Roger Cicero, Eric Harland, Aaron Parks, Nils Landgren, Piet Klocke, Cæcilie Norby. She has recorded and released 17 albums so far in the jazz genre with influences from classical music, film music and funk. She tours with her bands throughout Europe and is invited internationally as a soloist. After successfully completing her studies in jazz and popular music at the University of Applied Sciences in Mannheim and the Masters Class in Stroudsburg, USA, under the direction of Dave Liebman, she is now deepening her knowledge in the field of musicology at the University of Zurich.

She is also currently training in beatbox saxophone technique. Nicole Johäntgen leads the music business workshop SOFIA for female musicians and gives online and on-site workshops for children and adults with and without previous musical knowledge. She is currently working on two new albums that will be released on her label Selmabird Records in 2021. Nicole Johäntgen has won seven international awards and lives with her family in Zurich.

Marcel Thomi - hammond organ



Marcel Thomi began playing his father's organ at the age of four. At the age of 16, he won the national selection of the Technics Organ Festival and then played as the Swiss representative at the World Music Festival in Vancouver. In 2004 he was awarded the Young Lions Award "Best Soloist" as a pianist at the Montreux Jazz Festival and received the Werner and Berti Alter Prize 2004. He completed his jazz piano studies (with distinction) in 2004 at the Zurich Jazz School. Marcel Thomi is lecturer for Piano/Organ Jazz&Pop at the Zurich University of the Arts. Performances with various bands and recordings of jazz productions including: LSD-3, ORGAN-X, Nils Wogram Nostalgia, Convergencia, Christoph Grab's Science Fiction Theatre, El Zorro y su Clan, Pius Baschnagel's Latinworld, Mark Hauser B3 Quartett.

Elmar Frey - drums



Has been working as a drummer in the Swiss jazz scene for over 20 years. Stylistically starting from hardbop and soul jazz, he has developed into an independent musical personality. In his own projects he also appears as a composer and arranger. As a sideman he has played in the bands of James Carter, Daniel Schenker, Christoph Grab, Danilo Moccia, Alessandro d'Episcopo, Stefan Stahel, Roberto Bossard, Patrick Tompert, Vince Benedetti, Chris Wiesendanger, Jochen Baldes, Christian Münchinger, Marianne Racine, Regula Schneider, in the Black Forest Jazz Orchestra and in the Zurich Jazz Orchestra.