



## 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 released their second album, *Second Line* (O.A.P. Records), in July 2014, which was based on Okabe's research about reinterpreting 'good and old jazz' and incorporating it into new contemporary music during his master degree at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. In 2017 Okabe Family released its third album, *Disoriental* (Challenge Records International), after being selected to take part of the Young VIP's Tour, which awards rising artists in original jazz music and performed at the most renowned venues in Holland such as Bimhuis, LantarenVenster, TivoliVredenburg (Transition Festival) etc. After achieving great responses during Japan tour in October of the same year (Pit-inn, Body & Soul, Motion Blue Yokohama, Mister Kelly's and so on), the band will tour also in Italy and Germany in the first half of 2018.

## Personnel

### Genzo Okabe - sax, composition

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 obtained bachelor’s degree in jazz saxophone at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague. During this period he founded his own group Okabe Family and released his first album as a leader, Okabe Family (O.A.P. Records, 2013), in which he demonstrated his insights in composition and arrangements as well as unique sense of creativity. Having accomplished his master’s degree in Jazz Saxophone at the above-mentioned conservatory in 2014, Genzo re-interpreted and incorporated the essence of old pre-jazz music into new contemporary sound in his second album, Second Line. The feedback of Second Line was extremely positive and in 2016, his project was selected for the Young VIP’s Tour. In this occasion, Genzo released his third album “Disoriental” from Challenge Records International receiving once again great responses from audience and critics.

### Miguel Rodríguez - piano

Spanish pianist Miguel Rodríguez, originally from Madrid, is one of the most active pianists in the Netherlands. As a leader, he released two albums “Miguel Rodríguez” (2013) and “ContraSentido” (2015) both produced by Dox Records and in 2014 he was selected for the Young VIP’s Tour. As a sideman he has worked with some of finest artists in Holland such as Ferdinand Povel, Ruud Jacobs, Eric Ineke, Sjoerd Dijkhuizen, Simon Rigter, John Ruocco, Jasper Blom, Martijn van Iterson, Martijn Vink, Joost van Schaik, etc. as well as international artists such as Branford Marsalis, Donald Harrison, Willie Jones III, Terell Stafford and Deborah Brown.

Since 2016, he’s been teaching jazz piano at the Rotterdam Conservatory (Codards).

### Steven Willem Zwanink – bass

Canadian jazz bassist Steven Willem Zwanink comes from Vancouver, British Columbia. Before he obtained his Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance at McGill University in Montreal in 2007, Steven took a brief hiatus from his studies to take lessons from virtuoso Norwegian bassist Steinar Raknes at the Trondheim Conservatory of the Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology. In 2008 he moved to The Netherlands where he studied with Frans van der Hoeven and Hein van de Geyn, Clemens van der Feen, Janos Bruneel and Roelof Meijer at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, receiving his Master degree in 2014. Steven currently works as a sideman on the bebop scene has performed with some of the finest musicians on the Dutch jazz scene, including Peter Beets, Benjamin Herman, John Ruocco, Eric Ineke, Philip Harper, Martijn van Iterson, Jasper Blom, Joris Roelofs, Ben van Gelder, Reinier Baas, Aak van Rooyen, as well as visiting international artists such as Joe Farnsworth, Harold Mabern, Larry Coryell, John Marshall, Bokani Dyer, Joe Cohn, Dick Oatts and David Glasser. Joe Cohn, Dick Oatts, Harold Mabern, Larry Coryell, Joe Farnsworth.

## Francesco De Rubeis – drums

Over 15 years of professional musical experience at the highest level, Francesco regularly performs in prestigious festivals and venues in Europe and United States. Francesco played, toured and recorded with projects such as Indaco, Capolinea, La Vague, Italian Tango 4et, THEO Orchestra, Anne Boccato, Manao, Miguel Rodriguez.

He also played with Bob Franceschini, Mike Stern, John Patitucci, Roy Mor, Gianni Gagliardi, Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, Paul Jones, Tom Chang, Peter Beets, Dwiki Dharmawan and many others. Francesco have an extensive experience as musician for modern and contemporary dance and collaborates with some of the most important institutions for dance in the world, such as The Juilliard Dance Division (NYC), Tisch School at New York University (NYC), Martha Graham Dance Company (NYC), Merce Cunningham Trust (NYC), American Musical and Dramatical Academy (NYC), Peridance Capezio Center (NYC), National Dance Academy in Italy.



## Discography



*Produced by Challenge Records International (NL)*  
 ©Recorded/mixed/mastered by Udo Pannekeet at the WedgeView  
 Studios in Dec 2016

### Disoriental (2017)

Tracks:

1. Opening
2. Castroni
3. Stepped on the Sheet
4. Go Sleep
5. Ningyo
6. SMS
7. Still Blues
8. Disoriental

*All songs by Genzo Okabe*

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

Disoriental is a musical exploration and expression of the complexity of identity. As an expatriate artist who has been living as a minority in different places for most of his lifetime, Okabe attempts to critically approach the versatility and universality of jazz, a genre that absorbs all kinds of external elements to form its shape anew.

Since its birth in the United States with black music at its heart, jazz has been incorporated into music education all over the world. This institutionalization has certainly helped spread musical knowledge and techniques, making many people familiar with jazz and contributing to the development of jazz performances and productions. On the other hand, since a sort of structure and control are an inevitable part of institutionalization, the more systematic the curriculum, the more our thinking process necessarily suffers from standardization. As a result, artists start to de-emphasize musical creativity and only become excited at opportunities to show off their virtuosity in performance, not the expression of their own unique, personal identity.

The universal dissemination and worldwide popularity of jazz music can largely be explained by its versatility. Indeed, in contrast to representational music, which requires accurate interpretation and expression of pieces elaborately constructed by great composers of the past, what jazz took as its major subjects from its dawning to its heyday in the 1950s were contemporary hit songs, the so-called American standards that people could memorize easily and sing together. This familiarity, this approachability, is the signature versatility of jazz, and it opened a space for exploration where artists could develop and translate their own improvisations and arrangements into various new artistic forms. This musical freedom makes it possible for artists from all over the world to pursue their own identity in the nation of immigrants, and it is how jazz fused with countless other types of music—from folk traditions including Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, Gypsy,

Flamenco, and Klezmer music to rock, electronic, and, of course, Western classical music—to produce new musical shapes, one after another.

One of the clearest characteristics of *Disoriental* is the use of suspended chords. Conventionally, suspension is either major or minor in Western counterpoint. However, in most folk music traditions around the world, five sounds can be found, and their universality actually has a very deep relationship with the versatility of jazz. Starting from this premise, Okabe pursues the possibility of a pentatonic “scale” unique to Japanese traditional music—consisting of 1, b9, 4, 5, 7—in an attempt to reproduce the five notes in a way that does not correspond to the conventional heptatonic scale in the well temperament system. Through this process of seeking musical originality, Asian identity is mixed with jazz and Western music to produce a unique, unfamiliar, “Disoriental” music.



*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)

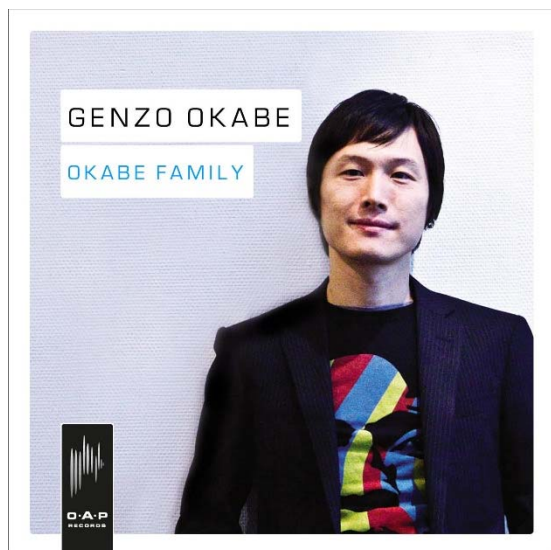
Tracks:

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.



*Produced by O.A.P. Records (The Hague, NL)  
©Recorded/mixed/mastered by Barry Olthof at the O.A.P. Studio  
in 2012*

## 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/mastered by Barry Olthof  
at the O.A.P. Studio in October 2012



## Reviews

### *Disoriental (2017)*

*Jazzism (4 Star ½) - "The quartet plays stylistically a rigid form of post-bop that has been arranged with great attention to detail."*

*Rootstime – "The four musicians move technically at a very high level. The alto play of Genzo Okabe is formidable, its reach is enormous and the power of command very convincing, this is really great. This album is an absolute delight."*

*JazzFlits – "Genzo Okabe is an alto saxophonist with a refined expression, lyrical play and a nicely balanced quartet."*

*Jazz Tokyo (cross review) – "Every instrument expresses the momentum of the sound intensely and being exposed to their sound reminds me of the tape era."*

*"In today's era where music is considered as a form of ubiquitous entertainment with highly refined sound and images, the family revives songs of the era that passed away"*

*"Through hard practicing Okabe has refined his stable way of playing that contains both intellect and state of nature. You can see their matureness of its fruit from the performance on this new album."*

### *Second Line (2014)*

*Jazzism (4 Star) – "The band sounds like a solid unit, but it is mainly the individual characteristics of Okabe and Rodriguez, which make the album worth listening."*

*JazzFlits – "Okabe is creating a new universe through integrating the early harmonies and rhythms into a modern form. The result is a fascinating story."*

### *Okabe Family (2013)*

*Jazz Tokyo – "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."*

*Jazz Japan – "Okabe's compositions are excellent and characteristic in terms of open-mindedness to unusual meter or harmony."*

*Jazz Page – "The entire album is full of sophisticated pieces with fresh arrangements and colorful 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". Masterpiece."*

*JazzFlits – "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."*

## Contact

For Booking

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## 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

