

Marilyn Mazur



© Christian Braad Thomsen: MARILYN MAZUR – QUEEN OF PERCUSSION

Marilyn Mazur

Born in New York in 1955. Percussionist, drummer, vocalist, composer, bandleader.

Marilyn Mazur's background is as multi-cultural as her music. Her Polish mother was expelled from her bourgeois family, when she married an Afro-American. As mixed couples were widely regarded as 'personae non gratae' in these days, the family eventually settled in Denmark when Marilyn was six. As a child and teenager she played classical piano and danced ballet. She studied percussion and musicology at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, but is largely self-taught on many of her instruments, inspired by music from all over the world.

She started her career as a dancer with Creative Dance Theatre in 1971. As composer/pianist she formed her first band 'Zirenes' in 1973. From 1975 she worked as percussionist, drummer and singer with various groups, and became a household-name on the Danish musicscene as percussionist/composer of the group 'Six Winds' she had formed with drummer Alex Riel. In 1982 Marilyn Mazur created her first all-women-music-theatre-group, 'Primi Band' (and has led her own groups ever since).

She received the Ben Webster Award in 1983, and the same year started a jazz quartet with saxophonist Uffe Markussen. She continued to develop her very personal forms of musical communication with various - mostly European - artists.

In the beginning of 1985 she participated in the recording of Palle Mikkelborg's 'Aura' with Miles Davis, who a few months later hired her for his band, with which she toured for long periods in most of the world. She also toured with the Gil Evans Orchestra in 1986. The year 1987 was dedicated to a world-tour with Wayne Shorter Quintet. In 1988 she was back with Miles Davis. In 1989 Marilyn Mazur decided to leave



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the Miles Davis-band in order to concentrate on creating concepts, music and the 7-piece international orchestra ´Future Song´, which is still one of her main groups. This group does many special projects, i.e. with dancers and choir.

Some of the many other musicians she has been working with through the years are: Bobo Stenson/Rena Rama, John Tchicai, PierreDörge/NewJungle Orchestra, Thomas Clausen, Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Jon Balke, Palle Mikkelborg, Dino Saluzzi, Kenneth Knudsen, Irène Schweizer, Lindsay Cooper, Peter Kowald, Arild Andersen, Andreas Vollenweider, Christy Doran, Charlie Mariano, Jasper van't Hof, Rita Marcotulli, Lena Willemark, Maria João, Don Alias, Marilyn Crispell, Eliane Elias and Marc Johnsson.



As a composer MM has a lifetime grant from the Danish National Art Foundation.

She also received prizes and grants from various other organisations. In 1990 her most important activity was giving birth to her son, Fabian.

In 1991 she joined the ´Jan Garbarek Group´ with whom she still tours extensively. Besides this group and ´Future Song´, she is very active with composing and doing own projects, including writing and conducting an hour-long suite ´City-Dance´ for a 40-piece mixed orchestra (1989); ´Pulse Unit´, a 9-piece ensemble put together for the Jazzpar-prize concerts 1994; ´Sofia´s Stemmer´, a church-concert for 3 voices, children´s choir, percussion and organ (1996); conducting her new music at an international music workshop in 1996/97, of which the suite ´A Story of Multiplicity´ was nominated for the Nordic Council´s Music Prize 1998; the concept ´Magic Concerts´ for children. This project is in Danish, and has been playing for schoolchildren all over Denmark. In 1999 she played at the first ´Biennale de Percussions´ in Conakry, Guinea with members of the Guinea Ballet Joliba. The same year she composed ´Den Kuglerunde Jord´, a suite which was performed by about 200 children and herself at a cultural-friendship-festival in Denmark.

In 2000 she appeared at the Expo in Hannover, performing solo and with her new group ´Percussion Paradise´, collaborated with the Nordic song-project ´Stemmernes skygge´ at festivals in Molde and Oslo, and was artist in residence in Bologna 2000, composing for various projects.

In 2001 she received the Jazzparprize and started to collaborate with the Norwegian bigband ´Norske Store´. In 2002 the American Down Beat magazine had her selected (for the 6th time) in their critics poll. In 2004 Marilyn received the renowned ´Editon Wilhelm Hansens Komponistpris´, a prize normally handed out to classical composers only.

2005 she recorded a solo-album for ECM with Jan Garbarek as guestartist. The Danish film director Christian Braad Thomsen realized a documentary film about Marilyn Mazur and her music. Also she did a lot of touring with her groups, including a new trio with Per Jørgensen and Anders Jormin. Recently she wrote the music for the play ´Tigger Operaen´ which she performed live with her ensemble.

Marilyn Mazur likes music to be telepathic, surprising, emotional, warm and alive, to reach from the softest lyrical touch and mysterious grooves to powerful wild energy.

<http://www.marilynmazur.com>



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Recordings (selection):

- 2009 HIDE AND SEEK** (Makiko Hirabayashi Trio)
FLIP FLAP (music composed by MM and recorded for children age 2 -4)
- 2008 ELIXIR** (solo-album, recorded in 2005 with Jan Garbarek as guestartist)
CONTEMPLATION (Benjamin Koppel, Paul Bley, Thommy Andersson, Marilyn Mazur, Peter Nilsson)
- 2005 MILES DAVIS: MUNICH CONCERT** (3 CD´s)
- 2003 GIL EVANS/LAURENT CUGNY BIG BAND LUMIERE: RHYTHM A NING** (reissue)
GIL EVANS/LAURENT CUGNY BIG BAND LUMIERE: GOLDEN HAIR (reissue)
- 2004 DAILIGHT STORIES** (Marilyn Mazur´s ´Future Song´)
- 2002 TRYLLEMUSIK** (magic music for and with children)
- 2001 LOTTE ANKER / MARILYN CRISPELL / MARILYN MAZUR**
- 2000 JORDSANGE** (Marilyn Mazur/Ars Nova/Copenhagen Art Ensemble)
- 1998 A STORY OF MULTIPLICITY** (BIMWO Orchestra Plays Marilyn Mazur)
JAN GARBAREK: RITES
- 1997 SMALL LABYRINTHS** (Marilyn Mazur´s ´Future Song´)
LLL MENTAL COLORS (John Lee/Chuck Loe/W. Lackerschmid/Marilyn Mazur)
- 1996 MILES DAVIS: LIVE AROUND THE WORLD** (Recorded in 1986 during Miles Davis´ final concert tour.)
JAN GARBAREK: VISIBLE WORLD
- 1995 CIRCULA CHANT** (Marilyn Mazur & ´Pulse Unit´)
PALLE MIKKELBORG: SOUNDSCAPE-FREDSSKULTUR 1995
- 1993 MILES DAVIS: UNISSUED ´85 LIVE IN COPENHAGEN 22-10-1985** (2 CD)
- 1992 FUTURE SONG** (Marilyn Mazur´s ´Future Song´)
NIELS- HENNING ØRSTED PEDERSEN: UNCHARTED LAND
- 1991 INNUENDO** (Charlie Mariano/Jasper van´t Hof feat. Marilyn Mazur)
LINDSAY COOPER: OH MOSCOW
PIERREDØRGE/NEWJUNGLE ORCHESTRA (several records on Steeplechase)
- 1989 AURA** (A concept album by Miles Davis, produced by Palle Mikkelborg, recorded in 1985. All compositions and arrangements are by Danish composer/trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg, who created the suite in tribute to Miles Davis when Davis received the Léonie Sonning Music Prize in December 1984. Scored for an extended jazz big band (the Danish Radio's Big Band, featuring Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Thomas Clausen and Marilyn Mazur. Guests: John McLaughlin and Vince Wilburn. Winner of the Grammy Award in 1990 for Best Jazz Instrumental performance.)
- 1988 PETER KOWALD: DUOS EUROPA**
CANAILLE (International Women´s Festival of Improvised Music)
- 1988 GIL EVANS/LAURENT CUGNY BIG BAND LUMIERE: RHYTHM A NING** (recorded 1986)
EJE THELIN / E.T PROJECT: LIVE AT NEFERTITI
GIL EVANS/LAURENT CUGNY BIG BAND LUMIERE: GOLDEN HAIR
- 1985 EVEN THE MOON IS DANCING** (Pierre Dørge & New Jungle Orchestra)
- 1984 BRIKAMA** (Pierre Dørge & New Jungle Orchestra)
PRIMI (Marilyn Mazur´s ´Primi Band´)
MM4 (Mazur/Markussen Quartet)
- 1983 LINDSAY COOPER: THE GOLDDIGGERS**
- 1982 PIERRE DØRGE & NEW JUNGLE ORCHESTRA**
SIX WINDS

Prizes, Awards, Grants:

- 2008 Artist in residence at the Molde International Jazz Festival**
- 2007 Telenor´s Culture Award**
- 2006 Django D´Or - Legend of Jazz**
- 2004 Editon Wilhelm Hansens komponistpris** (A prize normally given out to classical composers)
- 2002 Down Beat Magazine critics poll** (as in 1998, 1997, 1995, 1990, 1989)
- 2001 Jazzpar Prize** (the world´s largest jazz award)
- 2000 Artist in residence in Bologna**
- 1998 Nominated for the Nordic Council´s Music Prize** (for her suite ´A Story of Multiplicity´)
- 1989 Jasa Prize** (Prize of the Danish jazz journalists organisation)
- 1983 Ben Webster Prize** (Ben Webster Foundation)
- As a composer Marilyn Mazur has a lifetime grant from the Danish National Art Foundation.

