

Young pianist/composer Jef Neve (1977) has become a prominent figure in his homeland Belgium and his reputation is rapidly spreading to the rest of the world.

He studied at the Lemmensinstituut in Leuven and graduated in 2000 with Master of Music degrees in Jazz and classical piano, both with great distinction. In 2001 he specialized in Chamber Music and was rewarded 'cum laude'.

Next to his musical education, Jef started to play in local bands at the age of fourteen. During that period he composed a wide variety of pieces for the most divergent ensembles (from piano solo to symphonic orchestra). At seventeen he played with various jazz bands, classical ensembles, pop bands (f.ex. 'Get Ready', the famous Belgian boys band), theatre productions, and solo performances with the Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Michel Tilkin

In 2002 he worked as pianist/composer for the Contemporary Dance Company 'Dathe' in London.

The first album of the Jef Neve Trio, '**Blue Saga**' (Contour, 2003), was immediately a bestseller.

The second "**It's Gone**" (Contour, Nov 2004) was #1 jazz album in Belgium. It received the prestigious Radio Klara prize for 'Best International Jazz Album 2005' and unanimous acclaim in the international press (for ex.: "From Belgium comes Jef Neve, an explosively gifted young pianist whose second album, It's Gone, is without question one of the best I've heard in 2005." AllAboutJazz.com/Marc Meyers, 9/05).

Jef Neve signed with Universal Music Belgium, and the third album, "**Nobody is Illegal**" (2006) was again best selling jazz album in Belgium and reviews superlative.

"On his major label debut 'Nobody Is Illegal' his highly personal approach to the piano trio announces the arrival of a young musician of enormous promise who has the potential to become a major voice on the European jazz scene" - Stuart Nicholson, 12/06).

Universal Music companies world wide reacted equally enthusiastic and the CD was released in 20 countries. In FRANCE the album received the "CHOC" in the magazine 'Jazzman'. In DENMARK it received 5-stars in 'Politiken' by Boris Rabinowitsch: "*Klaverfænomen.*" In the UK the 'Guardian Monthly' ranked it among "5 best new albums", the cd received 4-stars in 'Times2' and in the 'Evening Standard'.

'The Observer' wrote : "*His concerts are almost like a religious experience, riveting audiences by the sheer power and imagination of his playing.*" In GERMANY the magazine 'MusikAnSich.de' gave the highest quote "20" : "*Nobody Is Illegal belongs to the best that you can find in the European Jazz. For jazz, classical or simply music lovers : this album is a must from beginning to end.*" In ITALY the critic Roberto de Vitris wrote in 'Altrisuoni': "*Jef Neve è l'uomo nuovo del piano jazz internazionale*". In IRELAND the 'Irish Times' wrote : "*Jef Neve is leading a new wave of European Jazz.*"

The fourth album "**Soul In a Picture**" was released in May 2008 on Universal Music Belgium followed by world wide release in 24 countries. The trio's concerts were sold out at all the main belgian venues, and the CD and international concerts received great reviews in the press all over the world.

-JazzMan magazine : « *Spectacular. His previous album had enchanted the critics and was crowned with a 'Choc' Jazzman. "Soul in a Picture" hits the nail right on the head and confirms all our expectations.* »

-Times Online : « *If Neve had been born somewhere jazzily iconic such as Chicago or New Orleans he would already have been fêted as the hottest new pianist on the block.* »

Jef Neve recorded his new trio-album with his long time companion Teun Verbruggen on drums and a new young bass player, Ruben Samama, from Dutch origin living in NY. The album "**Imaginary Road**" was released on 21st September 2010 (Emarcy/ Universal) and worldwide the following months The five release-concerts in Belgium's foremost venues, in Amsterdam 'Bimhuis' and in Luxemburg received standing ovations from sold-out halls, as well as in Australia, Canada, France and Germany.

The Trio performed at major festivals like *Paris Jazz, North Sea jazz, Vienna Jazz, Montreal Jazz Festival, Vancouver Jazz, Veneto Jazz, London Jazz Festival, Vitoria-Gasteiz Jazz Festival, Münster 'Jazz Inbetween', Lille Festival, Audi Jazz, Blue Note Gent, Madrid, Barcelona, Toulouse, Mexico, Berlin, Athens, Middelheim, Rabat.* In 2008 the trio had great success at Bremen JazzAhead and their first shows in Japan, where they also recorded a piece with great artist TOKU for the Japanese release of the new album. The trio played their first concert in Hungary and were invited for a second tour in Mexico, where they played in Monterrey at the two main theatres and in Mexico city festival with standing ovations, as well as in England, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland. In 2009/2010 they performed at the prestigious Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and toured in Spain, Norway, Denmark, Germany, the UK, Poland, Czech Republic, France..

The outstanding musicianship combined with fine-tuned interactivity and visible joy while playing is very communicative and makes an event of each concert. After the Trio's concert at Bremen JazzAhead

Jazz.com wrote : « *But it was Jef Neve from Belgium who took Jazzahead! by storm. It earned the loudest ovation of the whole event as everyone sensed the arrival of a major talent.* »

In Downbeat Magazine James Hale wrote about the *Vitoria-Gasteiz Festival* : « *young Belgian pianist Jef Neve's enthusiastic performance with his trio in the Teatro Principal was a festival standout.* »

Collaborations :

The duo album with vibraphone player Pascal Schumacher's « **Face to Face** » was released January 2010 on Enja records, followed by a 'Rising Star' tour through a dozen European classical venues from Salzburg and Vienna to Barcelona .

Jef Neve met with American singer José James end 2008 when he was invited to his live radio-show and the duo decided on the spot to record some standards together one free afternoon. The recording resulted to be magical, and the album « **For All We Know** » was released on Impulse!/Verve in May 2010. José's band and Jef also gave some exceptional concerts with the project « *Facing East - The Music of John Coltrane* » in Brussels, Amsterdam, London and Paris. Jef & José made a very succesful tour of the US and Canada in June and European summer festivals in July 2010.

With the band '*Groove Thing*', with Nicolas Kummert on sax, Nic Thys on bass and Lieven Venken on drums, Jef goes back to his first love, the Hammond organ. The band recorded a live-album at two sold-out concerts in Brussels' Ancienne Belgique : « **The Love Album** » (Prova Records, May 2010)

After the successful tour they did together in 2008, singer-songwriter Gabriel Rios has invited Jef Neve to work together on the music for his new album « **The Dangerous Return** » which was released end 2010.

Classical :

Parallel to his fast growing activity as jazz artist, Jef Neve stays active in the classical scene:

He prepared the Goldberg Variations by J.S. Bach during 2005, which he performed several times the next season. In 2008 he gave several recitals with Belgian tenor Koen Vereertbrugghen, and since a few years he regularly performs in Duo with oboist Piet Van Bockstal.

His first Piano Concerto, which was comisioned by the Bijloke Muziekcentrum, was be premiered in May 2009 in Brussels and Ghent, together with the Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Michel Tabachnik, for sold-out venues and received standing ovations.

He was invited by the Flanders Philharmonic to play a Gershwin program in 2007 and again in May 2009 for two concerts conducted by Takuo Yuasa at the Queen Elisabeth Hall and De Roma in Antwerp.

The Brussels Philharmonic comisioned a piece for choir, piano and orchestra, for a series of ten concerts in Jan/Feb 2010 , and clarinettist Walter Boeykens asked Jef Neve to compose a piece for clarinet, piano and strings which was performed August 2010.

Jef Neve is currently composing his second Piano Concerto, which will be premiered on 13, 14 and 15 October 2012 in Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent, with the Brussels Philharmonic.

Sound tracks :

Jef Neve wrote the sound track for the film '*Dagen Zonder Lief*' (2007) by Belgian film director Felix Van Groeningen. Critics mentioned the sound track as being one of the strong points of the movie, and Jef was invited to perform extracts from the score at the "World Soundtrack Awards 2008".

He composed the sound track for the new film '*The Misfortunates*' by Van Groeningen, which was awarded at film festivals in Cannes ,Toronto, and received 3 awards at 'The Hamptons International Film Festival' in New York.

A CD of the sound-tracks was released on Universal Music Belgium in November 2009.

Radio program :

Jef Neve was asked by the National Belgian Radio VRT-Klara to do a weekly jazz program. Between January 2008 and August 2010 the program "Neve", recorded live, was broadcast every Friday night and became the radio's most popular program.

Awards :

Jef Neve was nominated for several prizes: the ZAMU Awards 2004 and 2005 in the category 'best artist'; the 'Cultuurprijzen Vlaanderen 2005' in the category 'music' (next to Tom Barman/DeUs and Capilla Flamenca), and the 'Octaves de la Musique 2005'. In 2007 he received the ZAMU Award Jazz.

At the Music Industry Awards he was elected three years in a row: award 'best musician' both in 2008 and 2009 and the award 'best composer' in 2010.