

AGA ZARYAN



A FEAST FOR THE EARS OF A SENSITIVE LISTENER
NOT ONLY FOR JAZZ FANS



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PROFILE & HIGHLIGHT REVIEWS

Gifted vocalist Aga Zaryan conveys the finest of the history of jazz to today's audiences, continuing the traditions of great artists like Shirley Horn, Carmen McRae and Joni Mitchell. Aga Zaryan is a producer and lyricist but first and foremost, a highly charismatic artist and personality.

She has been successful in integrating ambitious artistic goals with popular appeal, recording five albums to date, all of which have earned gold, platinum or multi-platinum status in Poland. In 2008 she was honored with the Polish music industry's most prestigious prize - the Fryderyk Chopin Award.

She was nominated for the title of Woman of The Year 2008 by Gazeta Wyborcza-Wysokie Obcasy, one of Poland's most influential and widely circulated newspapers. Aga was also named Jazz Vocalist of The Year in the European Jazz Forum Magazine's yearly Jazz Top readers' poll in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

She has appeared in clubs and at festivals in Poland, England, the USA, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Israel, the Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria, Portugal, Russia and Iceland.

In 2010 Aga was named an honorary cultural ambassador for the capitol city of Warsaw. Her latest album "Looking Walking Being" was released with a prestigious Blue Note Records label.

NEWSWEEK

This recording by arguably Poland's most interesting jazz vocalist of the younger generation is truly moving.

L.A. WEEKLY

A singer out of Poland who has apparently been knocking them out in Europe.

PLAYBOY

The album "Picking Up The Pieces" rendered her the First Lady of Polish Jazz.

POLITYKA

A feast for the ears of sensitive listener, not only a jazz fan.

GAZETA WYBORCZA

She showed a brilliant piece of vocal craft and musical art on the stage.

RZECZPOSPOLITA

"Picking Up the Pieces" is an album of captivating warmth, and one we'll surely reach for often



* Polityka, Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza are most influential papers on Polish media market



PROFILE & HIGHLIGHT REVIEWS

CONCERT PROGRAMME 2010



Aga Zaryan Duet

Aga enjoys the intimate setting when she can interpret her wide repertoire accompanied only by piano or guitar.

Aga Zaryan Jazz Trio or Quartet

Aga's repertoire has a different sound when you can hear it with her amazing band consisting of three or four musicians playing piano, guitar, double bass and drums/percussion.

On her latest album which was released in spring 2010 you will enjoy the quartets original compositions and lyrics written by Aga Zaryan and an American poet Denise Levertov.

Aga Zaryan "Beauty is Dying" with string ensemble

"Beauty is Dying" is a lyrical project especially composed and recorded as a tribute to the heroes of the Warsaw Uprising. Aga sings Polish poetry written by women during World War II. She shows a different aspect of life in tragic times. Zaryan performs Beauty is Dying with her trio and a string ensemble or string orchestra. For this album she was honored with the Polish music industry's most prestigious prize - The Fryderyk Chopin Award.

BIOGRAPHY

Aga Zaryan born January 17, 1976 - is an internationally recognized jazz vocalist of the new generation.

She is known for her distinctive style, class and intimate approach to singing, with a characteristic lightness of phrasing and warm, slightly matte-toned voice.

EARLY LIFE:

Aga was born in Warsaw, Poland. Her father being a classical pianist, and her mother an English language educator and author, she travelled widely throughout Europe with her parents early on, spending part of her childhood and attending primary school in Manchester, UK.

In addition to classical works, both of Aga's parents shared a passion for the music of Stevie Wonder, Weather Report, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, The Beatles, and various other popular artists. This provided Aga with exposure to wide range of contemporary music, starting at an early age.

After returning to Poland from the UK she became involved in playing tennis competitively, and went on to win the Warsaw Tennis Championship at the age of 14.

MUSICAL BEGINNINGS

While still in her teens, she also developed a passion for music and theatre. After hearing the music of **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Miles Davis**, Aga decided to become a jazz vocalist.

She studied voice at the **Fryderyk Chopin Public Secondary School of Music**, and attended the Post-Secondary Jazz Studies Program there, graduating with honors.

Aga was awarded scholarships to attend international Jazz workshops on two occasions: the Stanford Jazz Workshop and Jazz Camp West, both in the United States, where she was able to further develop her vocal skills.

SOLO CAREER

In 2002, Aga's debut album **"My Lullaby"** – recorded with a group that included Tomasz Szukalski, Darek Oles, Michał Tokaj and Łukasz Żyta - was released.

This collection of jazz standards, sung with the backing of a jazz quartet in original and personal interpretations, brought her critical acclaim as one of Poland's premier vocal talents. Album was nominated for Jazz Record of the Year.

In 2006, Aga performed at the JVC Jazz Festival in Warsaw, opening for Branford Marsalis, an occasion which enabled her to introduce herself to a wider audience as a great performer and sophisticated jazz vocalist.

Since that time, Aga has appeared in clubs and at festivals in Poland, England, the USA, Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Turkey, Portugal, Russia and Iceland.

In 2006 the premiere of **"Picking Up the Pieces"** took place – an album recorded in Los Angeles with a first-rate international line-up of musicians: Larry Koonse (guitar), Munyungo Jackson (percussion), Nolan Shaheed (cornet) and Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz (double-bass).

"Picking Up the Pieces" is comprised of a set of eleven songs that tell the stories of women, illustrating their life, emotional and spiritual situations.

Thanks to its exceptionally intimate feel, the album was very well-received critically and enjoyed great commercial success, becoming a Bestseller which achieved **double platinum status**.

With the release of "Picking Up The Pieces", Aga Zaryan established herself not only as one of Poland's premiere jazz vocalists, but as an artist of international standing.

In early 2007, Aga travelled to the United States for a series of concerts with her American line-up, appearing in prestigious jazz venues such as Joe's Pub in New York City and Blues Alley in Washington D.C. The concerts were enthusiastically received by the public, with critics across the ocean taking notice of Aga's talent as well.

"Beauty is Dying", recorded in the summer of 2007, is Aga Zaryan's first album on which she sings in Polish. On it she is backed by a jazz piano trio, enhanced by a 17-piece string section with harp and oboe. The album contains nine works by Polish poets, depicting scenes of Warsaw at the time of the '44 Uprising, selected and sung by Aga to original music composed and arranged by pianist Michał Tokaj. It has been described as lyrical and pulsing with emotion, the delicate string section and laid-back jazz trio melding perfectly with Zaryan's singing.

A RIVER OF PEOPLE - A SEA OF LISTENERS.

On August 4th of that year, a one-of-a-kind concert took place at the Warsaw Uprising Museum in Liberty Park, where Aga performed the material from "Beauty is Dying" with the full lineup of musicians who took part in its recording. The concert was broadcast live on Polish Public TV and Radio, and attendance was so high that traffic in the immediate vicinity of the venue was gridlocked for hours, as a vast and steady river of people converged on the park. The culmination of the event saw over seven thousand people listening to Zaryan's performance in concentrated silence.

The concert went down in history as somewhat of a sociological phenomenon, in that the audience spanned four generations, with first-hand witnesses to the events it honored in attendance, as well as their great-grandchildren.

"Beauty is Dying" was followed with appearances in prestigious concert halls and venues throughout Europe.

Later in 2008, Zaryan was accorded the Polish recording industry's highest honors - **The Fryderyk Chopin Award - for "Beauty is Dying", as the year's the Best Poetic Album.**

"LIVE AT PALLADIUM"

This double-CD/DVD album is a recording of one of the concerts that took place at Warsaw's Palladium Club during Aga Zaryan's 2008 concert tour, on which she was joined by musicians who flew in from Los Angeles for the occasion. Aga opted for a somewhat atypical and rather delicate-sounding combination of instruments for the project: guitar, double bass, and percussion. The personnel were guitarist Larry Koonse, bassist Darek Oleszkiewicz, and Darryl Jackson on various percussion instruments.

The main body of the repertoire was comprised of songs from the albums "Picking Up the Pieces" and "My Lullaby", some of them with completely new arrangements that took shape over the course of the tour. The recording is recognized as having truly captured the exceptional mood of these concerts, and highlights Aga's fluid ease in performance. Several of the pieces are sung as duets, to the accompaniment of just double bass.

Album was welcomed as pure jazz, the essence of it.

It was commercial success as well earning multi platinum status!

“LOOKING WALKING BEING”

Aga Zaryan's latest album was released by Blue Note Records. For the first time in its history, this legendary record label has recognized the talent of a vocalist from Poland, which will place this artist among the ranks of such eminent personages as John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Bobby McFerrin, Nina Simone and Norah Jones, among others. This is an exceptional distinction and honor.

NOT JUST FOR JAZZ FANS!

“Looking Walking Being” is an original album, on which the songs include lyrics written by Aga Zaryan, as well as poems by the American poet **Denise Levertov**. This is contemporary music which draws on the rich traditions of jazz, but not only. There were twelve pieces recorded, in which one can hear the influence of bossa nova, samba, African rhythms, and even jazz-rock! The compositions are striking in their freshness, and Aga Zaryan sounds great! Once again, this artist has reaffirmed her world-class caliber, and what we have here is a vocalist and songwriter of fully evolved talents and abilities.

The music was composed by **Michał Tokaj, Larry Koonse, David Dorużka** and **Zbigniew Wegehaupt**.

Stylistically speaking, the material on the new album differs from the artist's previous projects, although it remains within the genre of music generally regarded as contemporary jazz.

Lyrical, mood-filled ballads combined with Aga Zaryan's lyrics, and the philosophical poems of Denise Levertov, create a thoroughly unique atmosphere.

Aga Zaryan's writing comprises stories which draw on the artist's own experiences, conveying her perspective on life. Aga's lyrics lend a very personal quality to the compositions (such as “My Name”, “Cherry Tree Avenue” or “Temptation Game”).

This is the artist's second English-language concept album, following 2007's best-selling **“Picking Up The Pieces”**.

The title track, “Looking, Walking, Being” is a call to become immersed in the world, as opposed to observing it from the sidelines - to experience it with every sense one possesses.

The album's motto:

The world is not something to look at, it is something to be in it.

The common theme to all of the compositions is that of experiencing reality.

The album was recorded in Warsaw and Los Angeles, with top-league musicians participating in all of the sessions. Aga's band has a new sound here, one of the reasons being the expansion of its line-up:

Michał Tokaj - piano, **Michał**

Barański - acoustic bass, **Łukasz Żyła** -

drums, **David Dorużka** - guitars, and the world-renowned American percussionist

Munyungo Jackson (known for his work with Miles Davis, Joe Zawinul, Sting, Stevie Wonder)

“Looking, Walking, Being” was released in the form of an exclusive digipack which - with a 24-page booklet containing the lyrics, as well as photographs by Mateusz Stankiewicz made up an elegantly crafted whole.



Track listing:

1. Cherry Tree Avenue
2. Looking Walking Being
3. Let Me
4. For The New Year
5. The Stars Are As Lonely As Us
6. Seeking My Love
7. February Evening in New York
8. My Name
9. Temptation Game
10. Wanting The Moon
11. What is This Thing Called Happiness
12. The Thread

Aga Zaryan European and US Band

Aga Zaryan has a honor to work with top notch jazz musicians. She is supported by two bands which accompany her in the studio and on stage.

Her European Band is a jazz trio or quartet which consists of piano, double-bass, drums and guitar.

Aga's US Band is a trio with guitar, double-bass and percussion.

For programme "Umiera piękno/ Beauty is Dying" strings ensemble is required.



US JAZZ TRIO

Darryl Munyungo Jackson (percussion)

Munyungo hails from a family with deep musical traditions, and plays a wide variety of percussion instruments. Artists he has performed and recorded with include Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, Dianne Reeves, Sting, as well as groups like the Joe Zawinul Syndicate, The Temptations, and The Supremes.

Larry Koonse (guitar)

Artists he has worked with include Diane Krall, Natalie Cole, Billy Childs, Mel Torme, Terry Gibbs, David Friesen, Lee Konitz, Ray Brown, Toots Thielemans, Rod Stewart, Charlie Haden and many others. Larry was a founding member of the L.A. Quartet, with whom he recorded several albums, and also performs as a soloist with various orchestras, including the L.A Philharmonic and Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

Darek 'Oles' Oleszkiewicz (double-bass)

"Oles", as he's known in the States, has performed and recorded with some of the most highly esteemed musicians in jazz, such as: Brad Mehldau, Billy Higgins, Pat Metheny, Joe Lovano, Eddie Henderson, Charles Lloyd, John Abercrombie, Bennie Maupin, Lee Konitz, Peter Erskine, Alan Pasqua, Bennie Wallece, Victor Lewis, Harvey Mason, Dave Grusin, Art Farmer, Horace Silver, Alice Coltrane, Ravi Coltrane, James Newton, Bill Stuart, Chris Potter, Billy Childs, Bob Sheppard and the Los Angeles Quartet. With these, as well as many other artists.

Darek has recorded over 80 albums - some of which have received Grammy nominations - and appeared in hundreds of concerts throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia.

EUROPEAN JAZZ QUARTET

Michał Tokaj

The pianist has performed in the USA, Israel, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine and Lithuania. The year 2002 saw the pianist receiving a nomination for a Fryderyk Award (the Polish equivalent of a Grammy™) in the Jazz Musician of the Year category, while vocalist Aga Zaryan CD „My Lullaby”, which he arranged and co-produced, was nominated for Jazz Record of the Year. In September of 2004, the pianist’s own CD, „Bird Alone”, a trio effort recorded with bassist Darek Oles and drummer Łukasz Żyta. The album won the Fryderyk Award for the Best Jazz Album of the Year 2004.

Well known American saxophonist and bass clarinetist Bennie Maupin invited Michał Tokaj Trio for cooperation. They recorded CD called “Early Reflections”. It was released in spring 2008.

David Dorůžka (guitar)

Was born on January 25, 1980 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic). After graduating from Berklee, Dorůžka lived in New York City in 2002 and 2003.

Dorůžka has performed in the USA, Canada, Israel, Morocco and in most European countries (Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary). The list of musicians he has worked with includes names such as Jorge Rossy, Chris Cheek, George Mraz, Django Bates, Perico Sambeat, Albert Sanz, Rodney Green, Nils Berg, Jon Fält, Aga Zaryan as well as Iva Bittová, Ida Kelarová, Jaroslav Dušek, Martin Zbrožek and many others.

Lukasz Zyta (drums)

He has performed, toured and/or recorded with a wide range of musicians, including a number of internationally renowned artists, many of whom he continues to work with on a regular basis. His experience in accompanying vocalists is extensive, having worked with a range of singers that represents several generations of Poland's vocal jazz scene – Ewa Bem, Urszula Dudziak, Grazyna Auguscik, Iza Zajac, and currently with Aga Zaryan. Some of the other artists he has worked with are: Lee Konitz, Bennie Maupin, Ishmael Wadada, Leo Smith, Dino Saluzzi, David Murray, David Friedman, Bobby Watson, Brad Terry, Tuna Otenel, William Galison, Steve Logan, Josefina Lindstrand, and others.

Michał Baranski (double-bass)

Graduated from Music Academy in Katowice(Poland)-Jazz Department in 2007. Prizes received - GRAND PRIX (1st Prize) in the Groups category at the 40th "JAZZ ON THE ODER" Festival in Wrocław, Poland. -GRAND PRIX distinction, along with the "Jazz Angel 2005" statuette, at the "Bielska Zadymka Jazzowa" competition in Bielsko-Biala, Poland. -"Swingujący Kruk"award for best instrumentalist at Hot Jazz Spring Contest 2004 in Częstochowa,PL -Joint fourth place in International Competition for Jazz Groups in Brussels, Belgium. - Fryderyk prize 2007 for the best jazz album of the year"Assymetry"with Zbigniew Namysłowski Quintet -Jazz Oscar 2006 for the best album of the year"Live"with KBD trio. Performed in such places as Knitting Factory-New York, Jazz Bakery-Los Angeles, Berklee Performance Center-Boston, Vail Jazz Festival-Colorado.

PLANS FOR SEASON 2011



Aga has finished promotion of her fifth album in Poland.

"Looking Walking Being" has reached gold status in day of its premiere, after four weeks it is platinum !

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Aga's talent as a producer allows her to create albums with interesting themes, that have a unique atmosphere.

On her bestselling "Picking Up The Pieces", Aga presented a set of portrayals of women who tell about their emotional lives.

The new album "**Looking Walking Being**" - which includes original compositions - continues in this vein, being a concept album as well.

The unifying theme to all of the compositions this time: experiencing the world, participating in and being a part of it. Aga expresses her artistic standpoint by touching on relevant themes in a personal way.

The artist will be available for international touring and promotion from November 2010.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further information.