

Panu Savolainen

Vibraphonist Panu Savolainen (b. 1990) ranks among the top prospects in the Finnish jazz scene. Despite his young age, Savolainen has already gained attention especially with his own combo Herd, which won the first prize of the European Jazz Competition presented by Rotterdam's North Sea Jazz Festival in 2011. After that, Herd and vocalist Aili Ikonen toured in over 40 festivals, clubs and concert hall with a repertoire of all-time favorite evergreens of the Finnish jazz. In 2015 he honoured the 100th anniversary year of a late Finnish composer Toivo Kärki by performing with his jazztrio as a soloist of 5 symphony orchestras with conductor Jaakko Kuusisto.

Along with his own bands and projects, he has hosted HERD and Panurama clubs with different guest musicians each month in Helsinki since 2012. He is the artistic director of Kalkkiranta Jazz Festival following pianist Iiro Rantala.

Another noteworthy early accolade for Savolainen was the "Artist of the Year" selection by Finland's premiere jazz fest Pori Jazz Festival in 2010.

Savolainen's mentors include David Friedman, Rob Waring, Jukkis Uotila, Tim Hagans and Dave Samuels, and collaborations the likes of Bobby Hutcherson, Cedar Walton and Peter Erskine. He has studied at the Jazz Institute Berlin in Germany and graduated from the Jazz Department of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. What makes Savolainen a unique jazz player is his background as a classical percussionist. That being said, his playing is a fresh combination of no-nonsense swing and technical finesse, always serving the music at hand.

Panu Savolainen has quickly secured a steady foothold in the active jazz circles thanks to his knack at effortlessly inserting his personal style of playing and ability to bring out a wide palette of colors from his instrument in order to paint a sonic picture into the given setting. Remarkable for any artist, let alone for one with most of his memorable playing still ahead.