

**NYConnection  
Urban Griot****Storytelling the jazz way**

Good jazz is like a good story. All the great jazz soloists of the past had been great storytellers, capturing their audience with melodies, rhythmic elements and dynamic turns.

NYConnection, a new outfit from Finland, have understood the principle of storytelling in jazz and have made it their own. They called their debut album „Urban Griot“, a reference to the griots of West Africa. These storytellers wander from town to town, always coming up with new stories by mixing traditional material and recent events. In a way they improvise like a jazz musician playing a solo over an old standard.

Finnish drummer Jaska Lukarinnen also had some years of travel before he formed NYConnection. For a while he spend half of his time in New York and the other half in Finland, playing in various bands and becoming one of the most sought after jazz drummers in Scandinavia. He already played in a trio with saxophonist Jussi Kannaste and bass player Antti Lötjönen but needed a pianist for his new ideas, so he convinced Roy Assaf from Israel, whom he met in New York, to join the project.

The concept of NYConnection is to question the traditional jazz song structure based on theme and solos, thereby putting an emphasis on the storytelling. During solo parts, the accompanying musicians are not just following the soloist, they are complementing him, even contradicting him. Thrilling dialogues between saxophone and bass, piano and drums, everyone and anyone are the result. It's thanks to the musical feeling of Lukkarinen, Assaf, Kannaste and Lötjönen and their perfection that it never sounds chaotic or random. Quite on the contrary all musicians sensitively respond to each other and together develop a rather broad spectrum of emotions, tempi and intensities. Sometimes they are agitated and energetic, sometimes melodic and melancholic and often all of these things in one song.

NYConnection oscillate between bebop, modern jazz, folk and avant-garde, thus creating complex jazz stories. In printed form „Urban Griot“ could be up for a best seller.