



SAMUEL BLASER & PIERRE FAVRE (CH)

Samuel Blaser (trombone)
Pierre Favre (drums)

Samuel Blaser presents here another vibrant project with swiss drummer Pierre Favre that will probably stand out from the majority of projects available on the music market. The unusual combination of instruments, trombone and drums, and the marriage of their talents will allow yourself to discover a new ensemble that should provide some near and long term gratification. And as All About Jazz stated "...if a trombone ever flourished in a free jazz vein, it's here!" This bass-less combination performs some improvised material mixed with some original compositions stretching the sound barriers from the extreme avant-garde to grooves that continue to build into endless melodies.

This project is also a very special meeting between two generations, Blaser and Favre, both originally from little neighboring cities in the Canton of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, Le Locle and La Chaux-de-Fonds. They have been traveling around the world to perform their arts, telling stories and playing music. Today they will meet, share their experiences and exchange their knowledges to finally capture the listeners in their own lyric and melodic universe!

"The world of music fascinates me to no end, and I'm determined to take one journey after another with my instrument and work," says Blaser. "It's all about discovery and communicating new ideas. Believe me, I'm proof that a shiny trombone can send a message right to your heart and change your life." Thomas Staudter

Pierre Favre was born in Le Locle in the Swiss canton of Jura. He first performed as a professional musician at the age of 17 following self-taught percussion play since the age of 15. Although his initial contact with jazz music was Be-Bop, he later played in various older styles such as New-Orleans and Dixieland. Towards the end of the 60s, Pierre Favre developed a new melodious concept for percussion. Based on the conventional percussion unit, he began to change his instrument. It became an independent and standalone sound source actually producing orchestral sound qualities during solo concerts. In the early 70s, Pierre Favre followed a new path that was to make him famous for his originality. Without being particularly aware of it, Pierre Favre's play adapted more and more to that of an orchestral whole. The critics were convinced by the exceptional quality of his solo performances from the very beginning. Favre's solos have nothing in common with the ostentatious virtuosity executed by the great percussionists to demonstrate their brilliant style and skills in accompaniment. Favre, on the contrary, has a personal musical vision: it is the vision of a percussive sound and additionally of an orchestral percussion – to be understood in the same sense as a piano sonata. The Chinese, looking back on a culture of continuity of several thousand years, were very distinct when they said: "You play like our old masters". He has performed in solo concerts all over the world and played together with musicians from Africa, India, China, Korea and Brazil. And still Favre remained in very close contact with the European music. Pierre Favre is also devoted to composition. He has written for his own projects, symphony orchestras and modern music ensembles, as well as for theaters and dancers. He holds courses in rhythm.

Jazz trombonist and composer **Samuel Blaser**, who has earned serious attention and enthusiastic praise over the last few years for his daring virtuosity and engaging improvisations, advances his artistry to even greater heights on his new CD, *7th Heaven*, just released on the Between the Lines/Double Moon label in Germany. A prolific talent with a truly collaborative spirit, Blaser brings together guitarist Scott Dubois, bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Gerald Cleaver to create seven separate songs that explore the territory between hard bop and free jazz, all of which confirm that a new trombone star has risen in the realm of the Improviser's Art. In listening to Blaser's spectral trombone playing you hear tradition, finesse and questing innovation. His strong, colorful tone allows him to express his musical ideas in a straightforward manner, so each nuance of his phrasing stands complete and purposeful. With an astute command of rhythm and an impeccable ear for melody and harmony, Blaser fashions entertaining original compositions that emphasize his versatile playing and deep commitment to the jazz aesthetic. Blaser was born and raised in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, located in the Neuchâtel canton and center of the country's famed watch-making industry. It is also a vibrant jazz metropolis, and once was home to a pair of expatriate American jazz legends—pioneering saxophone and clarinetist Sidney Bechet and bebop drummer Kenny "Klook" Clarke—as well as the famed Swiss jazz trombonist Raymond Droz. The middle of three brothers, Blaser was inspired to play trombone at an early age after seeing a marching band perform at a local parade. "I guess I like how the big, showy slide of the trombone was used," he says. There was always a lot of musical enjoyment in Blaser's family: his father, a book manufacturer, was interested in Swiss folk music, while his mother, a machinist in a watch factory, loved American R&B and jazz.

At 9 years old, Blaser started lessons on the trombone and quickly developed, thanks to the support of his parents. While he kept up an interest in Egyptology in his youth, Blaser became a truly devoted musical student, entering the local conservatory at 14 and graduating seven years later in 2002. During this time he won numerous awards for both his classical and jazz performances, including the Benny Golson Prize in 2000, and was able to work in various big bands featuring guest luminaries like Phil Woods, Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, Buddy DeFranco and Jim McNeely. After ending his formal education, Blaser studied privately for three years and maintained a steady schedule of bandstand appointments. He worked with the prestigious Vienna Art Orchestra, and then represented Switzerland in the European Radio Big Band "Tribute to Oscar Peterson" tour in 2005. A Fulbright scholarship to study in the United States at Conservatory of Music at Purchase College in New York followed, and in the next year he won the

J. J. Johnson Prize while also copping the “Public Prize” and “Jury’s Favorite Player” at the Fribourg Jazz Festival. With his growing reputation as a young artist worth checking out, Blaser then landed a spot with his own band in the concert series at the Zagreb Jazz Festival. Blaser began leading his own groups early on, and his working quartet these days features guitarist Todd Neufeld, bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Tyshawn Storey. Dividing his time between New York City and Berlin, Blaser continues to work with a number of other groups as well, such as the new Braff Blaser duo, Malcolm Braff & TNT, Animal Forum, Peter van Huffel & Sophie Tassignon, and the Ravitz / Blaser Duo. Recent sidework has found the trombonist sharing the stage with Renee Rosnes, Hal Galper and David Taylor, among others, leading Rene Laanen of *USA Trombone Online* to state, “Samuel Blaser is one of today’s finest trombonists.” Perpetual motion and continued industry seem to be Blaser’s abiding principles. Although *7th Heaven* has barely hit the streets, the trombonist is getting ready to release a virtual plethora of new recordings: two more CDs with the Samuel Blaser Quartet on Clean Feed Records; a brazen solo CD that journeys to the limits of the avant-garde, to be released on SLAM Productions in the UK; and the debut Braff Blaser album, *YaY*, on Fresh Sound New Talent.