

BLASER MUSIC

# HELVETICUS

DANIEL

HUMAIR

(drums)

HEIRI

KÄNZIG

(bass)

SAMUEL

BLASER

(trombone)



## NEW ALBUM

Release Date: **May 24, 2024**

*(Blaser Music & Music Connection)*

Four years after «1291,» here is the second album from the Swiss trio **Helveticus**, composed of three exceptional musicians from three different generations and regions of Switzerland. While the first album was recorded in a hurry right after the formation of the trio, the group had the opportunity to tour extensively and perform throughout Europe for four years. This experience allowed them to develop a strong sonic identity based on mutual musical understanding through improvisation and remarkable interaction.

The trio was formed on the initiative of **Daniel Humair** after a concert at the Lyon Opera for his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018, where he first invited **Samuel Blaser**. The following year, there was a concert in Lausanne where the trio played together for the first time, albeit in a quartet format with Louis Sclavis! Trombonist **Samuel Blaser**, the youngest member of the group (*with 24 years separating him from bassist Heiri Käzigi and 43 years from drummer Daniel Humair*), had the excellent idea to produce and realize this second album showcasing a trio at its peak, playing fluid and organic music that is particularly emotional and impactful.



The trio's music, devoid of harmonic instruments, features Blaser's rich and varied trombone playing highlighted against a solid yet flexible rhythmic backdrop. The playful rhythm section takes risks but always lands on its feet, offering constantly reinvented musical propositions that give wings and an impressive dynamic to Samuel Blaser's dazzling trombone playing.

The trio understood that recording an album in a studio today is different from performing live, which is why they mostly present short tracks (between three and four minutes) where musical development is present but restrained compared to live performances. The album's repertoire spans various directions including personal compositions by Blaser (*Root Beer Rag*, *Hook*) or Humair (*IRA*, *Genevamalgame*), collective improvisations (*Heiri's Idea*, *Warming Up*), Swiss traditional tunes (*Mazurka*, *Chara Lingua Della Mara*), and covers of famous jazz pieces.

Despite these diverse influences, there is a great musical coherence throughout the album where Swiss soul and sensitivity echo the grand history of Afro-American jazz from dixieland (*Tiger Rag*) to Monk (*Jackie Ing and Bemsha Swing*), passing through Ellington (*Creole Love Call*). Because «**Our Way**,» meaning «our way of playing,» defines the journey of three Swiss jazzmen who refer to the history and struggles of African Americans expressed through blues and jazz aesthetics that carry great beauty.

Most tracks are imbued with nostalgia and lyricism played at slow tempos conveying blues' cries and laments (*except for Samuel Blaser's Hook which shows the trio's vigor!*). Despite this emotional depth, this album maintains a humorous dimension as the trio playfully disrupts and deconstructs standards. It represents European jazz that is both playful and sophisticated with our three Swiss musicians infusing it with soulful feeling. They possess deep knowledge of jazz history from last century which adds sincerity and truth to each track without any pretense or deceit.

This album offers a playground filled with surprises, poetry, lyricism where jazz is treated with love, respect, humor while showcasing their eternal childlike joy despite their age differences.

Lionel Eskenazi

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