



Hochschule für Musik  
FRANZ LISZT Weimar

 Sparkasse  
Mittelthüringen

Press Release

## 1st ACHAVA Jazz Award

***First prize winner was announced in Erfurt.***

***The winner is the Brazilian-Armenian duo "FRACTAL LIMIT" with Tatiana Parra and Vardan Ovsepien.***

***The international and transcultural jazz prize is endowed with 10.000 €.***

Weimar/Erfurt, 5 May 2017; The 1st ACHAVA Jazz Award distinguishes an artistically outstanding band project that focuses its work on the transcultural character of jazz on a very high artistic level by blending folk music, popular music or European art music, etc. into the improvisational or compositional characteristics of jazz.

From the very beginning, jazz has always been transcultural. More than one hundred years ago it was born of the encounter between Afro-Americans and European immigrants in the southern USA. Since then, musicians throughout the world have adopted this means of expression and have continued to develop it – and, during the past 50 years, they have done so increasingly independently of the jazz history in the USA. Using their own individual artistic expression, interaction and improvisation, today's jazz musicians work against musical borders and cartographies, even against the idea of a nationally limited culture. Moreover, they emphasise the musical values that transcend countries, cultures and traditions.

The Brazilian singer Tatiana Parra and the armenian-born pianist Vardan Ovsepien have been working together since 2013 and have already released two albums "Lighthouse" and "Hand in Hand". Nine finalists were selected from 42 submissions, of which the duo "Fractal Limit" was unanimously selected by the jury.

Tatiana Parra and Vardan Ovsepien convinced the jury by their completely independent concept, innovative compositions with Brazilian influences, in which the fascinating, highly virtuoso voice is embedded in polyphonic piano textures and is partly instrumental in character. A wonderful duo full of magic and depth, - pure goose bumps.

On the occasion of the conferment of the 1st ACHAVA Jazz Award "Fractal Limit" will perform for the first time in Germany, so that this unique award can be presented with a unique new discovery for the European scene.

*"With this first ACHAVA Jazz Award, the ACHAVA Festspiele Thüringen is opening up yet another facet of intercultural exchange. Music works without language – that is why it is a perfect method of communication for international understanding. We thank Prof. Bründl for giving us the idea for this prize and for putting together this excellent jury – and of course we thank our main sponsor, the Sparkasse Mittelthüringen, without whom this prize would not have been possible!", as Martin Kranz, director of the ACHAVA Festspiele Thuringia describes the new project.*

The artistic director of the ACHAVA Jazz Award, Manfred Bründl, is happy that his idea will now be realised: *“For me, as an artist and teacher, the ACHAVA Jazz Award is a valuable source of inspiration because of its novel transcultural character: Cultures encounter each other and blend together; borders between the most diverse music styles are identified and sounded out; tradition and modernism fertilise each other and foster new growth. The creativity and diversity of these musical contributions that display a strong affinity to jazz is simply amazing, in spite – or perhaps because – of their transcultural nature.”*

Katharine Höhne, who heads the department of executive board staff at the Sparkasse Mittelthüringen, supports the ACHAVA Festspiele Thüringen altogether, and specifically the first ACHAVA Jazz Award: *“On a walk through the old town of Erfurt, you become aware of the moving history of Jewish life in the Thuringian capital. By choosing these venues, the ACHAVA Festival impressively reflects the history of Christian and Jewish coexistence. Its themes give us insights into what is important today and in the future: brotherhood and mutual understanding. The spirit of “ACHAVA” becomes especially evident in jazz music, where the different musicians interact and improvise with each other in order to play together and connect to form one musical piece of art. Our Sparkasse supports culture and mutual exchange as important values for society – and accordingly, we gladly support the ACHAVA Festival and the ACHAVA Jazz Award.”*

## **Jury**

The highly qualified jury consists of 15 members altogether; of them, five specialists make up the so-called main jury, and ten belong to the extended jury. The international jury members represent different musical areas such as jazz, world music, and popular or European art music. Because of the stylistic and international diversity of the jury, there is an extremely broad selection of participants on a highly creative level.

### **Main Jury**

**Omer Klein** (curator 2017, Warner Recording Artist und Steinway Artist)

**Prof. Manfred Bründl** (artistic director of the ACHAVA Jazz Awards, University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar)

**Peter Schulze** (artistic director of jazzahead and Sendesaal Bremen)

**Ralf Dombrowski** (free-lance journalist, Süddeutsche Zeitung)

**Prof. Dr. Martin Pfeleiderer** (University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar).

### **Extended Jury**

**Avishai Cohen** (double bass, Israel)

**Marilyn Mazur** (drums/percussion, Denmark)

**Ferenc Snétberger** (guitar, Hungary)

**Iiro Rantala** (piano, Finland)

**Wu Wei** (multi-instrumentalist/ including mouth organ, Sheng, China)

**Marc Copland** (piano, USA)

**Mike Herting** (piano, Germany)

**Majid Bekkas** (oud/guimbri/vocals, Morocco)

**Riccardo M. Sahiti** (conductor of Roma-und-Sinti-Philharmoniker Frankfurt, Kosovo)

**Nguyên Lê** (guitar, France).

## **Selection Procedure**

Each jury member nominated three ensembles on the basis of their transcultural characteristics. Of these 45 bands, an expert team consisting of professors from the Institute of New Music and Jazz of the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar and the curator compiled a short list of the ten favourites. In a special meeting led by the curator, the main jury selected the prizewinning ensemble and a German newcomer band that will also perform on the evening of the award ceremony.

## **Award Ceremony on 9 September 2017**

The prize will be awarded for the first time during the *ACHAVA Festspiele* during a festive ceremony at the Heizwerk Erfurt. The award includes prize money of 10.000 €.

The prizewinning ensemble and a German newcomer band selected by the jury will perform during this final event.

The ACHAVA Jazz Award is a coproduction of the ACHAVA Festspiele Thüringen and the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar supported by the Sparkasse Mittelthüringen.

**Achava**, Hebrew: Brotherhood, stands for intercultural dialogue and respect for others. The *ACHAVA Festspiele* have taken place every year since 2015 in the Thuringian capital city of Erfurt.

More information about the programme of the ACHAVA Festspiele Thüringen and current press releases and photos can be downloaded here:

**[www.achava-festspiele.de](http://www.achava-festspiele.de)**

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