

Trio Töykeät

Trio Töykeät was formed in 1988 by pianist Iiro Rantala and drummer Rami Eskelinen, who were then 18 and 20 years of age. After teaming up with a highly professional bass player, Eerik Siikasaari, their career took off. They were awarded the first prize at the Hoilaart International Jazz Contest 1988 in Belgium. In Finland where jazz has a strong following and its musicians are respected, their first recording in 1990 Päivää on the Sonet label featuring the American tenor sax player Rick Margitza became the best selling jazz album of the year. The same album supplemented with a couple of new tracks, including the Trio's version of Giant Steps was released internationally in 1993 with the new title G'Day on the Verve/Emarcy label.

The second Trio Töykeät CD called Jazzlantis was released internationally on the Verve/Emarcy label. The CD features five compositions by Iiro Rantala plus covers of Stu Goldberg, Charlie Parker and Tania Maria tunes. In Finland the CD made history by staying two months in the Top 40 of the pop charts.

Like many things, ideas and individuals in Finland, the music of Trio Töykeät is inspired and informed by the country's landscape, lakes and serenity. Important too, Finland's folk music and love of the waltz and tango have provided a basis for the integration of Latin rhythms into the Trio's Nordic compositions.

The Trio Töykeät's musical dynamism and virtuosity have attracted wide acclaim from diverse audiences around the world: the Mexico International Jazz Festival in 1989. Havana, Paris and Switzerland in 1991. At the July 1993 Perugia Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy. In 1994 the Trio played a five-week Australian tour covering seven capital cities and three major festivals, and performed in England, France, Italy, Germany, Singapore and Estonia. In 1995 Trio Töykeät played April Jazz and Pori Jazz in Finland and in the Autumn they performed in Germany and China. In February - March 1996 the band toured in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Indonesia for 5 weeks. 1997 the trio toured in Japan, Hong Kong, Belgium, Italy and Sweden.

The new album called Sisu was released in November 1997. The album also features two internationally regarded Finnish violinists, Pekka and Jaakko Kuusisto. The repertoire includes a comprehensive variety of different styles including ragtime, jazz ballads, tango, pop-tunes and Iiro Rantala's beautiful arrangements of Jean Sibelius' Christmas song En etsi valtaa, Ioistoa and a beloved Finnish song-hit classic Vanhojapoikia viiksekkäitä.

After the release Sisu immediately zoomed to the Top of the Finnish charts, peaking at #12, the highest chart position ever for a jazz album in Finland. Sisu seems to be destined to become the all time best selling Finnish jazz album.