



# Jam Sessions with the Ventspils Big Band

## invites you to cross borders

On 14 April at 19:00, the second concert entitled Crossing Borders of the concert series Jam Sessions with the Ventspils Big Band will be taking place in the Small Hall of the Concert Hall Latvija, featuring the Ventspils Big Band and its former members who are currently studying abroad, such as Denisa Dārzniece (vocal), Karlīna Priedēna (vocal), Kristers Lauriņš (saxophone), Kristis Daubaris (trombone), and Ģirts Celmiņš (guitar).

Renārs Lācis, the artistic director of the Ventspils Big Band, explains that the title of the second concert in the Jam Sessions with the Ventspils Big Band concert series, Crossing Borders, should be viewed both literally and philosophically: 'The soloists are former members of the Ventspils Big Band who are currently studying music abroad. The concert features both original compositions and arrangements by the guests and arrangements by the current members of the Big Band. The energy, rhythm, harmony, and melody of the music create a special atmosphere that synthesizes African American and Western European cultures.'

Ģirts Celmiņš is a guitarist, composer, and arranger. He studied in the Popular and Jazz Music Department of Ventspils Music School. After graduating from Ventspils Music School, he continued his studies in jazz guitar performance at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. He has also worked as a guitar teacher and ensemble leader at Ventspils Music School. As a musician, Celmiņš has performed with various well-known artists in Latvia and around the world, both as a member of the Ventspils Big Band and the Ventspils Chamber Orchestra, as well as in other musical projects. Together with saxophonist and Ventspils Big Band leader Renārs Lācis, he has also performed in other bands, playing his original music, such as 5 Man Band + Strings Included, Jauns Kvartets, Ventspils Blues Band, and others. Currently, the guitarist lives in Maastricht, the Netherlands, where he actively composes and improves jazz guitar performance at the Maastricht Conservatory, under the guidance of guitar professor Joachim Schönecker. Celmiņš writes original music for quartets, quintets, big bands, and chamber orchestras, as well as arrangements for smaller and larger musical ensembles in various styles and genres.

Kristis Daubaris is a long-standing member of the trombone section of the Ventspils Big Band and a graduate of the Ventspils Music School and the Amsterdam Conservatory. In the concert, he will perform big band arrangements that highlight the versatility and role of the trombone in both past and contemporary music. In addition to the other members of the big band, Kristis' current students – the outstanding trombone section of the Ventspils Music School – will also perform shoulder to shoulder.

Karlīna Priedēna is a representative of the new generation of Latvian jazz – a singer, flutist, saxophonist, and composer. Her musical roots can be traced back to Ventspils – the pop music studio Jūras akmentiņi and Ventspils Music School, where she studied flute under teacher Aina Lodziņa and simultaneously learned jazz saxophone under Renārs Lācis while playing in the Ventspils Big Band. 2019. In 2019, when she began studying in the Jazz Department of the Riga Cathedral Choir School under Inga Bērziņa, new doors opened in the world of music for her. Since then, she has not only performed in projects with Latvian jazz and pop music masters but also got to know herself and developed her musical identity by composing.

Saxophonist, composer, and arranger Kristers Lauriņš is currently studying in the Jazz Department of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. He has studied under such pedagogues as Raul Sööt, Jaak Sooaar, Aleksandr Pal, Michael Moore, and others. The concert will feature Kristers' original compositions, which have been performed in various instrumentations but are now rearranged for the big band for the first time. The music is influenced by Wayne Shorter, Maria Schneider, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Kenny Wheeler, Charles Ives, and many other musicians and composers.

Denisa Dārzniece is a jazz vocalist and composer with a deep love and passion for music and a personal approach to composition, arrangement, and performance. She studied at the Ventspils Music School under the teacher Evija Vēbere. She has performed multiple times with the Ventspils Big Band and various other ensembles at international level. Denisa is currently studying at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre under the vocal coach Kadri Voorand. 'Every musician is capable of giving meaning to the music. We infuse our emotions and stories into it, which gives listeners a chance to resonate. We give the pieces of music reasons and goals,' says Denisa.

The concert is organized by Kurzemes filharmonija with the financial support of the Municipality of the State City of Ventspils. Tickets are available for purchase at the ticket sales network Bīlešu paradīze and also at the box offices of the Theatre House Jūras vārti and the Concert Hall Latvija.

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