

LELLO SCASSA - Artistic profile

"I was about fifteen years old when I heard a Coleman Hawkins disc and was absolutely knocked out by it; the splendid sound of his sax struck me as the absolute essence of music"....

"I've always had a preference for the sound of musicians endowed with great natural instinct, like Sonny Rollins, Roland Kirk and Gato Barbieri. "....

"His serene and joyous tenorism fascinates me, and in my way of playing and of being a musician I try to use his stylistic features instinctively- the extreme musicality of the passages, an instinctive approach uniting strength and aggressiveness so that, as a player, you exploit every technical possibility of the tenor sax "....

"I am convinced that in music as in any other aspect of life, the key is always sincerity, as opposed to mystification, or originality at any cost."

These excerpts, taken from an interview given by Lello Scassa to Dario Beretta on "Ritmo" in May 1993, capture the human and artistic personality of Lello, saxophonist, composer and teacher.

After his first musical experiences in his native city, Pescara, Lello moved to Rome in 1983. There he began his professional career studying with the teacher Romano Liberatore and playing for two years with the Luigi Toth ensemble alongside Virgilio Fraternali trombone, Mario Puglielli alto sax, Massimo Picari piano, Massimo Moriconi contrabass and Alberto Botta drums. Subsequently Lello worked with other groups - Roma Jazz Studio, the Jazz Workshop Sextet, Duke's Blues Band and the Impro Jazz Trio with the bass player Piero Loreti.

In 1985 Lello studied in Los Angeles with J. Harlington at the Berklee College of Music. From 1985-1989 he led a quintet with Luciano Lettieri guitar, Valerio Serangeli bass, Roberto Altamura drums and Salvatore Summa congas. The group played in the 1985 Pescara jazz festival and at Potenza '85. In 1990 Lello formed another quintet with Gabriel Oscar Rosati trumpet, Giancarlo Ciminelli trumpet, Antonio Flinta piano, Roberto Bucci bass and Claudio Gioannini drums. This group took part in the festivals Potenza '90 and '91, l'Aquila '93 and Pescara jazz 92.

"My dear fellow sax-man, thank you for the CD. I'll listen to it soon as I get a chance. Thanks. Good luck and keep blowing." signed Sonny Rollins. An extract from the letter that Rollins sent to Lello Scassa on receiving a copy of the CD "My favorite Sonny" made by Lello in 1991. This debut recording was followed by the CD "Lello Scassa plays himself" with Lello's own compositions, among which was the ballad "Tim pal" dedicated to his friend Tim Hauser leader of the Manhattan Transfer.

In 1998 Lello began a long association with Leo Cancellieri, pianist of Nunzio Rotondo's mythical 1960's quintet, and of the quartet of Romano Liberatore. With Cancellieri, refined companion and expert in the language of bebop, Lello devoted himself to the rediscovery of the old American standards repertoire. From this collaboration, as well as his intense performing activity (Pescara jazz festival 2000 and 2003 etc.) six CDs were created: the first one in 1999 "The art of the ballad" with a quartet; "Standards" was a live CD recorded with a quintet at the 2000 Jazz in blues festival; in 2002 "The Sinatra songbook" a duo recording based on the Frank Sinatra's repertoire ; a quintet recording in 2008 with "Old flames"; another duo recording "Prisoner of love" in 2008; the 2009 quintet recording " I should care " and in 2010 with " One for Newk."

In addition to performing and recording, Lello Scassa has devoted himself to private teaching, running courses and seminars in schools, public institutes and universities both in Italy and abroad. In 1981 the TV program "Jazz returns home" was broadcast in five episodes by RAI 3.

In 1993 Lello guested on Radiouno Jazz with Adriano Mazzoletti. In 1998 he made the first video-sax "Learn how to play the sax in a short time" for Newk Videomusic. During Lello's career he has collaborated with Chet Baker, Ray Briant, Harry Edison, Lee Konitz, Irio de Paola and Bryan Cayolle performing in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Brazil, USA - and Mexico, where he recorded two CDs: "Live at Trio" in 1997 with a quartet and in 2001 "Tales from Mexico" in duo with the pianist Carlos de la Torre at the Eurojazz festival of Mexico city.

Since 1996 Scassa has divided his time between Italy, USA and Mexico.

Lello Scassa equipement: Selmer Mark VI - Berg Larsen 130/2 M - Rico jazz 2M

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Lello Scassa Quintet - "My favorite Sonny"
1992 L.S. Productions, Inc. LSCD-5114-9

Lello Scassa Sextet - "Plays himself"
1994 M.A.P. Musical Editions L.T. CD 0104

Lello Scassa Quartet - "Live at Trio "
1998 L.S. Productions, Inc. LSCD-5114-9 recorded live at Trio café P.Vallarta Mexico

Lello Scassa Quartet - "The art of the ballad"
1999 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-2

Lello Scassa Quintet - "Standards"
2000 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-3

Lello Scassa Duo - "Tales from Mexico "
2001 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-4 recorded live at Euro jazz festival Mexico city

Lello Scassa Duo - "The Sinatra songbook"
2002 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-5

Lello Scassa Quintet - "Old flames"
2008 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-6

Lello Scassa Duo - "Prisoner of love"
2008 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-7

Lello Scassa Quartet - "I should care"
2009 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-8

Lello Scassa Quartet - "One for Newk"
2010 Newk Sound Productions, Inc. NSCD-9

