

PRESS RELEASE

Artist: Maciek Schejbal

Album: Afro-Polka

Label: Afro-Polka Productions

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Maciek Schejbal (pronounced MAH-chek SHAY-bal) is world-class drummer based in New York City. In addition to gigging and touring with jazz bands and afro-pop groups, Maciek is an instructor at the Drummers Collective in Manhattan. The Drummers Collective is generally thought of as the drumming equivalent of Los Angeles' Guitar Institute of Technology.

Afro-Polka is Maciek's brand and a nascent genre of

music. It's the soundtrack of one musician's voyage from Eastern Europe through South Africa to the USA. He has traveled, listened, learned and amalgamated a huge amount of styles, traditions and art forms into a strong, singular and original musical voice. From Cracow, to Johannesburg and Cape Town, and then onto New York City, Maciek has formed crack rhythm sections with some of the best bass players in the world.

Afro-Polka is Maciek's first album consisting entirely of his compositions. The tunes are performed here with many great musicians he has collaborated with in his journeys. Don't be scared by the polka, these fresh sounding tracks are very afro-pop and jazz focused. The polka is the added seasoning that makes it unique.

Every player on this record is a virtuoso and has played in bands with or on albums of some very well known musical artists and they are all deserving of recognition. Due to space constraints and the emphasis on the Maciek's partnerships with bass players, here are some notable connections of the bass players on this album: Fred Doumbe (Manu Dibango, Les Nubians); Bakithi Kumalo (Paul Simon's Graceland); Leo Traversa (Angelique Kidjo, Don Byron); Gregory Jones (Astrid Gilberto, Savion Glover); Essiet Okon Essiet (Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard); John Patitucci (Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea).

This is not a typical drummer's solo record. On *Afro-Polka*, Maciek lays down an amazing array of grooves and melodies and musical worlds reminiscent of Hermeto Pascoal, Joe Zawinul, and even of Frank Zappa. He has a strong command of a wide range of colors and ideas and he makes them his own, not being held back by convention or by the business of making music. He takes the listener on a very personal journey that could only be an expression of his own travels and discoveries. After listening to this recording one has a pretty good idea of how, where and when Maciek has lived, loved, traveled and played throughout his life, with dedication, reverence, love and an open mind.

– Sean Conly 2018



Maciek Schejbal - Biography



Photo by Bahar Behbahani

Maciek Schejbal grew up in Cracow, Poland where he earned a Masters Degree in classical percussion from the Academy of Music. He honed his craft in the jazz, fusion, classical, and avant-garde scenes of Cracow and taught at local music schools. He had the great fortune to share the stage with legends of Polish song, Ewa Demarczyk and Marek Grechuta, from whom he learned the art of performance.

After performances with the Cracow Radio Symphony Orchestra in England (which included the world premiere of Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*), he decided to stay behind in London and after several months emigrated to South Africa.

Maciek's decade in South Africa allowed him to continue to develop his wide-ranging musical interests. He performed with the Johannesburg and Cape Town symphony orchestras, jazz and African music artists including Winston Mankunku, Robbie Jansen, Basil 'Mannenberg' Coetzee, and many others; theater and dance groups as well as teaching drums at many centers around the country, including Mega Music in Johannesburg, 1820 Foundation in Grahamstown, Cape Town's Musical Action for People's Progress, The Jazz Workshop and the University of Cape Town.

Schejbal's extensive involvement with the progressive theater circles of the Market Theater in Johannesburg allowed him to compose and perform his own music for several theater productions, which received both popular and critical acclaim. Collaboration with actor Andrew Buckland brought *No Easy Walk*, an award-winning mime and music piece and *Thing?*, a play for three actors and three musicians.

Since his arrival in New York in 1993 Maciek has worked mostly with African performers, including a nearly 15-year collaboration with Cameroonian singer Kaïssa. He produced her first album, *Looking There*, and directed her various ensembles in venues across the globe. He also worked extensively with South African multi-instrumentalist Tony Cedras in various ensembles.

Maciek has been a faculty member of the Drummers Collective music school in Manhattan since 1998. He co-wrote *Afro-Caribbean & Brazilian Rhythms for the Drumset* and authored *Afropop Play-Along For Drummers*.

Visit afropolka.com for more info.

A Field Guide to the Afro-Polka Recordings:

1. *Crack Off* As with most of the titles on this album, it's a double meaning with a satiric twist. Crack Off means saying goodbye to Cracow, sadly signing off. Quoting the region's folk tune "I'm leaving Cracow into far and foreign places". Trumpeter's take on a famous Cracow bugle call.
Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey-guitars; Dan Brantigan-trumpet; Kaïssa Doumbè-vocals;
Fred Doumbè-bass; Maciek Schejbal-drums, programming.
2. *Bike With Me* A story of a bike ride along Hudson river upstate New York, easy start slowly morphing into an uphill battle...
Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey-guitars; Dan Brantigan-trumpet, flugelhorn; John Patitucci-bass;
Maciek Schejbal-drums.
3. *Sick Amore* Based on a Cracow folk tune about a girl rejecting forceful advances of kings and paupers, everything happens under the sycamore (Sick Amore:) tree.
Sean Wayland-synthesizers, programming; Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey-guitars; Bakithi Kumalo-bass;
Maciek Schejbal-drums, synthesizers.
4. *I Wander* Based on a folk song about Gypsies, the original wanderers, their customs and leisure times with Phillippa's personal take on this in her poem and Kaïssa's French version of it.
Phillippa Yaa De Villiers-lyrics; Kaïssa Doumbè-voice; Jerome Harris-electric guitar;
Sheryl Bailey-acoustic guitar; Dan Brantigan-trumpet; Leo Traversa-bass; Maciek Schejbal-drums.
5. *Morning People* A nod to early risers who get things done, strong South African music elements akin to Soul Brothers and township groove.
Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey, Gregg Fine-guitars; Brian Charette-organ; Dan Brantigan-trumpet;
Gregory Jones-bass; Maciek Schejbal-drums.
6. *The Race Of Tad* Quoting a phrase from a folk song "A bird arriving to Cracow musing on topsy-turvy houses on the market square eventually joining the party and singing 'tada rasa' (the race of Tad)", a reference to Maciek's impressions of changes taking place in his home town.
Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey-guitars; John Patitucci-acoustic and electric basses; Maciek Schejbal-drums.
7. *Martino's Basement* . A tribute to late Martino Atangana and his soukous guitar lines along the Polish Highlanders folk music groove.
Jerome Harris, Sheryl Bailey-guitars; Brian Charette-organ; Dan Brantigan-trumpet; Fred Doumbè,
Gregory Jones-basses; Maciek Schejbal-drums; The Highlanders Afro-Polka Ensemble: John Patitucci,
Essiet Okon Essiet-double basses; Sachi Patitucci-cello.
8. *Wonder Bro* For all our wonderful brothers.
Sheryl Bailey-acoustic and electric guitars; Sean Wayland-synthesizer; Leo Traversa-fretless bass;
Maciek Schejbal-drums, synthesizer