

BIO SHAI MAESTRO

"The Dream Thief is the best album of (Keith)Jarrett for a long time, not by himself, but so consistent in continuing an aesthetic of the underhand moment that it catapults Shai Maestro far forward into the first league of piano poets" - JazzThing

"Hearing Shai Maestro is like awakening to a new world." – All About Jazz

Shai Maestro (1987) is one of the most promising and talented pianists of his generation. Since his debut with his own trio in 2011, Shai has shaped a strong and unique personal identity and has portrayed an incredible musical fluidity, making Shai and his trio one of the most powerful and harmonious groups in the jazz today.

Shai's fifth album and first album for the famous label ECM, "The Dream Thief", features the gifted pianist fronting his superlative trio with young and fellow Israeli Ofri Nehemya on drums and Peruvian bassist Jorge Roeder, and also playing alone. Maestro portrays characteristically thoughtful originals, each one with a story to tell. His differentiated touch is special, able to convey a range of fleeting emotions in a single phrase. The album was recorded at Lugano's Auditorio Stelio Molo RSI in April 2018 and is produced by Manfred Eicher.

Shai Maestro began playing classical piano at age five and graduated with honors from the Thelma Yellin High School of Performing Arts in Givataim, Israel. After winning the National Jazz Ensembles Competition "Jazz Signs" in 2002 and 2003 and receiving excellency scholarships 2004-2010 from the America-Israel Cultural Fund for jazz piano, Maestro attended Berklee College of Music's Five-Week Summer Performance Program in Boston, where he was awarded a full scholarship to attend Berklee full-time—an offer Maestro ultimately declined.

Maestro's intuitions proved right: just a few weeks later, he received a phone call from bassist Avishai Cohen, known for his long-time collaboration with Chick Corea as well as for his successful band-leading career. The bassist called to invite Maestro to join the Avishai Cohen Trio with drummer Mark Guiliana. Maestro recorded four albums with the Avishai Cohen Trio, including two on Blue Note Records: *Gently Disturbed* (2008), *Sensitive Hours* (2008), *Aurora* (2009), and *Seven Seas* (2011). The trio toured the world and played at some of the world's most renowned venues and festivals.

In July 2010, Maestro formed his own trio and just a few months later, recorded their well-received first album, 'Shai Maestro Trio', for the French label Laborie Jazz. The trio began an intense schedule of touring the world, playing up to 80 concerts a year and sharing stages with groups led by Chick Corea, Tigran Hamasyan, Esperanza Spalding, and Diana Krall. In 2012, the trio released their second album for Laborie Jazz, entitled 'The Road to Ithaca', making an even more personal and intimate statement, going back to the essence of their being: unedited and raw.

Following that line of thought, the Shai released recent albums 'Untold Stories' and 'The Stone Skipper' in October 2014 and November 2016. Listeners and the media outlets alike, including DownBeat Magazine, NPR, BBC, JazzFM, TSF, and WBGO's The Checkout, received the albums with critical acclaim. With these albums, Maestro entered a new phase in his

artistry: taking time, fearing less, daring more, and allowing the music to unfold organically, more than ever. Especially live, the natural developments made the trio one of the most powerful and harmonious groups in the jazz today. The past few years, the trio has performed at the most renowned stages, venues and festivals worldwide.

Besides his trio, Maestro recorded on vocalist Theo Bleckmann's. Maestro has also received critical acclaim appearing on Mark Guiliana's Jazz Quartet's debut album 'Family First' (2015).

2018 marked an important year for Shai, signing with major jazz label ECM and recording his first album "The Dream Thief" there, featuring his trio, but also him as a solo-pianist. Introspective, lyrical, virtuosic and differentiated. The fall of 2018 will see Shai perform in more than 15 countries worldwide, including most of Europe, Japan and the USA.

"Expressions of joy, introspective thoughts and heightened intensity all come to the fore" – Downbeat Magazine

"...Maestro's shimmering chords and dynamic build highlighted the pianist's impassioned, emotionally rich compositions" – Jazzwise Magazine

"...Shai Maestro, obsessed with pacing, offers us dynamic music. The notes scroll in a continuous burst, his dialogue with his drummer is explosive, going from a ballad to offensive punk. Carefully avoiding engaging a riot of immature virtuosity, aptly-named Maestro imposes his style on this thin line, sometimes romantic, but never in excess" – Louis Michaud, Les Inrockuptibles