

Colin Vallon - Biography



« ... Vallon's playing and pieces are tonally dense and rhythmically adept. They have something magic that holds the listener captive»
-Reiner Kobe, Jazzpodium

After studying classical music for 2 years Colin Vallon (born November 17, 1980 in Lausanne) took classes with jazz pianist Marc Ueter at the age of fourteen. He enrolled at the Swiss Jazz School when he was 18 and studied with Silvano Bazan, William Evans, Manuel Bärtsch and Bert Joris.

In 1999, he founds the Colin Vallon trio with Lorenz Beyeler on double-bass and Raphaël Pedroli on drums; in 2004 it released his debut-album « Les Ombres ». At that time, he starts to use and develop his own prepared piano techniques. In January 2005, the trio opens the Swiss Diagonales Festival with New-York guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel.

2005, he forms a new trio with Patrice Moret on double-bass and Samuel Rohrer on drums and records «Ailleurs» published in 2007 by HatHut Records. «Rruga» the third recording of the trio is released in 2011 on the prestigious international Label ECM Records. In 2012 drummer Julian Sartorius replaces Rohrer in the trio. In 2014 the trio releases «Le Vent» followed in 2017 by «Danse» both albums are released on ECM Records.

The trio is very active on the international jazz scene. Numerous concerts at international festivals (Wilisau, Paris, Vienne, Rome, London, Portland, Montreal, Jarasum...) and tours in Europe, Canada, USA, Japan, China, South Corea, ...

Apart from the trio, since 2020, he leads another group composed of two of the most prominent musicians of the European Jazz scene, trumpet player Matthieu Michel and drummer Jorge Rossy.

He is also active as a solo performer and plays acoustic piano recitals.

In 2022, he starts a new piano solo and electronics project «ITCH»

And in 2023, he and French Cello player Vincent Courtois collaborate on a new duet called «Sonata»

Colin Vallon is also active as a composer. 2014, he

writes the music of «Hallo» a the choreographical piece by Martin Zimmermann. The same year, he takes part to the creation of the documentary Film «Gossenreiter». In 2015, he writes «Fauna», a composition for cellos, harps, saxophones and drums, inspired by the strangeness of the animal world.

2017 he creates the music of Martin Zimmermann's piece «Eins, Zwei, Drei» where he performs live on stage on piano, electronics and drums. The piece tours from 2017 to 2021 across all Europe and in 2021 he composes the soundtrack to Zimmermann's new piece «Danse Macabre».

In 2022, he composes a Suite for 9 musicians called «HOWL» exclusively with texts from critically endangered languages.

Colin Vallon won the Fridli-Wald Foundation Prize and 3rd Prize in the Montreux International Jazz Piano Solo Competition. In 2008 he won the Nico Kaufmann Foundation prize and in 2009 the SUISA foundation prize. 2009 the Colin Vallon trio won the Pro Helvetia high priority jazz promotion. He is nominated for the 2016 Swiss Music Prize and in 2017 he receives the «Prix de la Relève du Canton de Vaud».

Since 2009 he is teaching at the Bern University of the Arts.

He is also playing with Nicolas Masson, Wolfgang Muthspiel Chamber Trio.

In 2023 Colin Vallon Trio releasd their 3rd ECM Album «Samarès» and 2024 Duo with Vincent Courtois «A Spimple Fall».

He played with Tom Harrell, Larry Grenadier, Jeff Ballard, Andy Scherrer, Ambrose Akinmusire, Tyshawn Sorey, Nils Wogram, Kenny Wheeler..

Press Clippings



"The Swiss pianist Colin Vallon has a gleaming new ECM debut, "Rruga," that reflects his interest in folklike melody and rippling harmonic suspension. ...his approach to pianism suggest both classical training and a fondness for crescendo-driven art-rock, and the hovering way he drives this group can evoke the original, pre-millennial Brad Mehldau Trio. But the thrust of the material and the searching quality of the playing point in other directions. You can only hope for a trio of this promise that one of those directions is forward."

Nate Chinen, New York Times

"In contrast to most new young piano trios located anywhere between Oslo, New York and Tel Aviv, Colin Vallon emphasizes neither virtuosity nor power play although he dominates both. His specialty are the intermediate sounds, which—be they lyrical or growling, catchy or difficult—originate out of his curiosity for stylistic variety and drive to reach emotional depth. ... Vallon introduces surprising ideas into his music again and again, which makes his trio one of the currently most innovative anywhere."

Frank von Niederhäusern, Radiomagazin

„...the strength and reserved power of this threesome is evident...“ John Fordham, The Guardian

„...Pianist Colin Vallon, double bassist Patrice Moret and drummer Julian Sartorius, collectively contemplate before moving mountains. Their energy rises from a quiet centerbreathy percussion, shaded pulse, Vallon's many interpretations of major and minor conversations—and gives this moving collection a tidal quality. Gentle yet thunderous, hypnotic, expansive and heart-paced...“

Mike Jurkovic, Elmore Magazine

„...the music tends to go from a kind of morning fog just above the ground to something more elevated, seemingly weightless as it heads skyward. The players—with Vallon's more methodical, chordal approach, Moret's subtle, insistent bottom and Sartorius's alternately snappy and subdued percussion-blend particularly well together.“

John Ephland, Downbeat

„...Vallon's playing and pieces are tonally dense and rhythmically adept. They have something magic that holds the listener captive“

Reiner Kobe, Jazzpodium

„...this album from the young, Swiss-born pianist advances a longtime legacy of European jazz with empathetic ensemble playing and a rich variety of textured, evocative twists that sidestep convention.“

Chris Barton, Los Angeles Times

„This is highly original music... Vallon's project has something to do with how we perceive time in music—and music in time. It's fascinating and accrues more and more interest with repeated listening.“

Paul De Barros, Downbeat

„...an album rich in subtly unfolding dynamics and tempered yet potent drama, with what sound like occasional prepared piano effects integrated beautifully into the evolving poetic whole.“

Michael Tucker, Jazz Journal

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Label

ECM Records

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