

augmented reality

Augmented Reality is an intimate troupe of three gifted musicians whose roots trace back to opposite corners of the globe, only to converge in New York for an instrumental collaboration that fuses East, West, North, and South.

Frequent collaborators Roy Assaf (piano) and drummer Ronen Itzik have a musical synergy which sparked the creation of a new direction in jazz. With the addition of Peruvian bassist Jorge Roeder the trio forms Augmented Reality, a group whose jazzy improvisations and syncopations layer in melodies of world appeal. Their varied cultural and social backgrounds bring Middle Eastern, Latin, and European influences to the music, blending them harmoniously in subtly provocative but accessible instrumentation that introduces a fresh dimension to jazz.

Through these multicultural interpretations, Assaf, Itzik, and Roeder elevate simple themes with melodies that instantly have listeners singing along. They embolden these themes with the spontaneity and dynamism of improvisation and with a contrast between percussion and melody that creates a remarkable time elasticity in a tune's progression. The result is an unforgettable journey for pedestrian listeners and jazz aficionados alike.

Roy Assaf

A pianist with dazzling technique and a composer who expertly weaves jazz harmonies, Roy Assaf was named the ASCAP Foundation's Young Jazz Composer in 2008. He made his New York Blue Note debut with the Dizzy Gillespie All Star Big Band in 2007, followed by a European tour consisting of 13 cities.

Over the past five years, Roy has been touring intensively in Latin America, Japan, Canada, and Europe and has performed with Roy Hargrove, Lewis Nash, Ron Carter, Randy Brecker, Buster Williams, Wallace Roney, Antonio Hart, Eric Alexander, Dr. Billy Taylor, T.S. Monk, Steve Davis, Claudio Roditi, Trilok Gortu, John Lee, in addition to such Jazz legends as Jimmy Heath, James Moody and Slide Hampton. In the summer of 2009, Roy performed his first solo piano tour which included the prestigious Augsburg Jazz Festival in Germany and was an artist in residence at the Imatra Jazz Festival in Finland.

Roy has received the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute Award, the 30th & 31st Downbeat Student Music Award, the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Prize, First Prize in the International Red Sea Jazz Festival's Jazz Groups Competition, and Second Prize in the Charlie Palmieri Memorial piano Competition.

Roy appears on more than 20 CDs as a sideman and co-leader.

Ronen Itzik

Ronen Itzik is a multi-talented performer and composer. Audiences worldwide are captivated by his virtuosity, profound musicality and the passion he brings to performances. He has performed and recorded with such jazz greats as Kenny Werner, Roy Hargrove, Hiromi Uehara, Marcus Roberts, and Arnie Lawrence among many others. Since his arrival in the United States in December 2000 he has performed throughout the country, as well as in Europe and Israel, with a wide array of musicians.

A native of Jerusalem, Israel, Ronen has collaborated with well-known Israeli musicians and has had the opportunity to play with guest artists from around the world, giving him a true international sensibility. In 1998 he received a scholarship to Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in Ramat Hasharon, Israel and in 2003, Ronen received his Bachelor of Music degree from the renowned Berklee College of Music, which he attended on scholarship as well. Ronen's teachers include Ian Froman, Jamey Hadad, Joe Hunt, John Hazilla, and Hal Crook.

Jorge Roeder

Jorge Roeder was born in Lima, Peru. At the age of 16, he was invited to study cello at the Rimsky Korsakov Conservatory in St. Petersburg, Russia. After taking up the double bass, Jorge became assistant principal bassist of the Lima Philharmonic and Opera orchestras for the 2001 and 2002 seasons. In 1999, Jorge became part of the New Music Youth Orchestra, which is dedicated to the development of jazz in Peru. In 2001, Jorge toured with the orchestra throughout the eastern U.S. and played at the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) annual conference in New York.

Jorge studied at the New England Conservatory of Music with Cecil McBee, John Lockwood, Danilo Perez, Oscar Stagnaro, Jerry Bergonzi, Bob Moses and Dominique Eade. Jorge is currently member of the Julian Lage Group, which received a 2009 Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Jazz Album; he is also artistic director of Argentine singer Sofia Rei Koutsovitis group, which performs South American influenced compositions; also he is a member of Avantrio, dedicated to performing Peruvian music with a different setting.

Jorge has performed with jazz greats such as Alex Acuna, Bob Brookmeyer, Roy Haynes, Steve Lacy, Harvey Mason, Bob Moses, George Russell, Maria Schneider, Gunther Schuller, Steve Turre, Bill Watrous, Kenny Werner, Matt Wilson and Kenny Wheeler.



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Tabacon (Roy Assaf)

In the Winter of 2010, I took a few days off from the stormy weather of New York City and landed in Tabacon, Costa Rica. It is a beautiful hot spring resort located in the Arenal Volcano. The Arenal Volcano and the surrounding Tropical Rain Forest provided me the perfect setting for a unique place unparalleled in the World. From the very first moment I knew exactly what and how I want my composition to sound like.

Budva (Roy Assaf)

In December 2008, I was on tour in Serbia with a great Alma Micic. The last show took place in Budva, Montenegro. It is 2,500 years old, which makes it one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic coast. But what was fascinating to me was the Mediterranean architecture, which reminded a rare combination of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where I grew up in Israel.

Ohel Israel (Roy Assaf)

Growing up as a kid in Israel, I always enjoyed spending the holiday at the synagogue. It happened to be that my grandfather whom I never met, was the founder of the synagogue by my house, called - Ohel Israel. There was a special spirit there every year in each and every holiday. I had the privilege of sitting next to my grandfather's friends and hear stories about how everything started, about the life when they were in my age, and all of that together made Ohel Israel a magical place during my childhood.

Sepharadic (Roy Assaf)

Being surrounded by Sepharadic people your entire life, you learn to love the culture and tradition. Jews from Morocco, Egypt, Iran and other north African countries sometime have a high temper, intensity and big heart all at once. I was trying to capture those feelings and create a song/journey that reflects this culture.

Morning of Sorrow (Roy Assaf)

My grandmother - Rachel Cohen was a very special person and a role model to me. She was always there to talk and teach me about life. She was the one who taught me one of the most valuable lessons, which is also my motto in music, not to be afraid. She told me to be myself, learn as much as I can from everyone around me, but then always to be true to myself, take risks and try new things, because that's how I keep life fresh. This song was about the morning my mom received a phone call from the hospital that at the age of 87, my grandmother left us.

Leaving (Roy Assaf)

When I was in high school, I was fortunate to travel with my high school Big Band to New York City, play a few concerts and also take a lesson with the legendary pianist Richie Beirach. At the end of the lesson he gave me a book with all his compositions. I was very excited to go back home and play them all. When I played Leaving, I knew that this is the one for me and that I have to record it some day because I just loved the melody. During the recording session, I was trying to connect with the song and at the same time, try to remember the time I left Israel and relocated to the US, which was a big transition in my life.

Only Trust Your Heart (Roy Assaf)

I always loved the radio show, Marian Mcpartland - Piano Jazz. One day I was listening and Dr. Billy Taylor was the guest, whom I admire and always looked up to. Together they played this beautiful song by Benny Carter called Only Trust Your Heart. They did it as a beautiful Bossa Nova. I decided to bring it to the trio, swing it and try to pay a homage to their beautiful touch and sound on the piano that always inspired me.

Alfonsina Y El Mar (Roy Assaf)

My first exposure to the song was when I heard Danilo Perez Trio in Israel many years ago. I fell in love with it right away, how can you not? Years after I came across the original version of Mercedes Sosa, I translated the lyrics from Spanish to English and was trying to create a new arrangement based on the beautiful story.

Sphere (Ronen Itzik)

"Sphere" offers a surprising musical form and a lively melody which is influenced by Brazilian music. The addition of percussion and melodic to the piano trio gives this piece a folk like feeling. Its percussive syncopated rhythms combined with an interesting harmonic motion propels the composition and tells a story which keeps developing throughout.

Stone and Sun (Ronen Itzik)

This piece was influenced by my childhood memories. The somber mood of the piece represents the longing and yearning for childhood innocence. The name of the piece was influenced by my home town of Jerusalem, Israel in which the hot sun of summer shines brightly upon the houses which are all made out of stone.

Dry Tear (Ronen Itzik)

This composition is influenced by the optimism that follows hardship. While sad moments are a part of life, tears dry up and better times are usually right around the corner. The form and melody of this piece represent the simplicity in life which we tend to forget, while the development of the performance is like the journey from fragility to strength and confidence.

Un- (Ronen Itzik)

The slow back beat groove on this piece which is underlined by a changing harmonic rhythm and a sparse melody bring out my intention of combining the familiar with the unfamiliar. The composition is trying to cope with the subject of acceptance of questions that cannot be answered — how to learn to let go of false solutions to problems that cannot be solved.



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Stop and listen.