

# Amina Figarova Sextet

*“... this is a band that built its reputation playing original repertoire, each musician a powerful soloist in his or her own right; yet it is their signature interplay that moves the Amina Figarova Sextet above and beyond the vast majority of large chamber ensembles in modern jazz and places the pianist among the top echelon of composer/bandleaders....” - Andrea Canter for jazzpolice.com*

*Figarova's sextet "produces a group sound that is unique and identifiable...highly nuanced, delicately calibrated, buoyed by a resiliently nimble rhythm team and tonally homogenous blend of flute with sax and trumpet that often creates an impression of a mellifluous ensemble section rather than three disparate instruments" - George Kanzler, NYC Jazz Record*

*The band's repertoire consists primarily of Amina's original compositions that cover the spectrum from **urbane bluesiness to the more avant-garde**. Her arranging is spectacular with the band's signature sound created by the front line harmony of Platteau's flutes, fiery trumpeter Ernie Hammes from Luxembourg, and premier Dutch saxophonist Mark Mommaas. – Southfloridajazz.org*



Amina Figarova	Bart Platteau	Ernie Hammes	Marc Mommaas	Philippe Lemm	Stefan Lievestro

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**Amina Figarova** is a New York based pianist, composer and bandleader.

Azerbaijan-born, globe-trotting composer and pianist Amina Figarova introduces **ten colorful, compelling new compositions performed by her touring sextet plus guests on *Blue Whisper*, her 13th album** since her 1994 debut *Attraction*.

Figarova's deeply personal, highly evocative responses to social turmoil, distinctive personalities she's encountered and universal transitions of life inform the music on *Blue Whisper*. Moods range from the haunting beauty of the titular track "Blue Whisper," as well as "Moonrise" and "Hewa" (featuring lyrics in Swahili by Sarah Elizabeth Charles) to the straight-ahead momentum of "Moving Forward," "The Hustler" and "The Traveler," to the sophisticated playfulness of "Pictures," "Marians" and "Juno."



Throughout all tracks, Amina's classically-founded touch, her lilting melodies, luminous harmonies, often understated yet always propulsive rhythms and star soloists come together with immaculate sophistication.

Amina Figarova was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, and as a child studied to be a classical concert pianist. In the late 1980s she entered Rotterdam Conservatory to pursue jazz, coming to the United State in 1989 to complete her formal education at Boston's Berklee College of Music (where she met Platteau, a fellow student from Belgium). In 1998 they were invited to the Thelonious Monk Institute's summer jazz colony in Aspen, and after more than a decade of bookings in major U.S. jazz clubs, concert halls and festivals, the couple gained legal immigrant status in 2011. They currently live in Manhattan, and tour constantly.

Having collaborated with musicians residing in both the U.S. and Europe and having built up a circuit of welcoming venues by taking it one gig at a time, **the Amina Figarova Sextet has triumphed at the main stage of the Newport Jazz Festival, been invited repeatedly to New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, won critical and audience acclaim in Chicago, Detroit, Paris, Amsterdam — and of course New York.**

*"A skilled and imaginative composer... Figarova brings a remarkably broad range of influences to her works, which may help explain their appeal. You can hear the influence of her classical training in the care she brings to her scoring. Yet the mercurial, unpredictable nature of her musical themes — and the intriguing way she develops them — points to a composer enraptured with the creative possibilities of jazz."* — Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune*

*"Figarova is among the most important composers to come into jazz in the new millennium..."* — Thomas Conrad, *JazzTimes*

*"... Figarova's style cannot be classified neatly in any traditional genre because she has forged an individual character. Her work is neither post-bop nor hard-bop—nor anything else, for that matter; it is simply Figarova. Rare are the musicians about whom this can be said..."* - — Hrayr Attarian, All about Jazz

For more information, please visit <http://www.aminafigarova.com>

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## Bart Platteau



*".....flautist Bart Platteau is an especially vivid soloist--one of the most vibrant flute players since Joe Farrell played with Chick Corea in the 1970s...." by John Kelman for [www.allaboutjazz.com](http://www.allaboutjazz.com)*

Born in Brussels in 1965, studied at the Brussels Conservatory where he got the First Price for Classical Percussion, Chambermusic and Solfegio.

Worked for several classical Philharmonic orkestraal as the Orchestre National de Belgique, Brussels National Opera Orchestra, and different chambermusic ensembles.

Studied jazz in Belgium with John Ruocco, Nathan Davis, Joe Lovano at the jazzworkshops in Dworp.

Graduated Jazz flute performance studied at the Rotterdam Conservatory in 1993, and studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston with George Garzone and Matt Marvuglio.

Recorded his first CD "Attraction" together with his wife Amina Figarova in 1995, and since then released more then 10 CDs with the Amina Figarova Group.

Mainteacher Jazz Flute at the Rotterdam Conservatory since 1998.

Nowadays living in New York, and performing and traveling around the world with the Amina Figarova Sextet.

Performed in the USA, Canada, Brazilie, Mexico, Dutch Antilles, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, UK, Greece, Italië, Tunesië, UAE, France, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Croatia, Malaysia, South Africa, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, etc....

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## Ernie Hammes

**Date/Place of birth:** 18.08.68, Esch/Alzette (Luxembourg)

**Studies:** Conservatory Esch/Alzette (L), Conservatory Metz (F), Manhattan School of Music, New York (USA)

**Teachers:** Lew SOLOFF, Claudio RODITI, Joël SAND...

**Festivals & Clubs:** Jazz in Europe Now Festival. Brussels (B), 2007, Portland Jazz Festival, Portland (USA) 2007, Winterruption Festival, Vancouver (CAN) 2007, Guimaraes Jazz Festival, Porto (P) 2006, Jazz im Goethe Garten, Lisbon (P) 2006, Brosella Jazz Festival, Brussels, (B) 2006, Hildener Jazztage, Hilden (D) 2006, 18th international BODENSEEFESTIVAL, Tetttau, (D) 2006, European Jazz Festival Vietnam, Hanoi, Saigon (VT) 2005, Leverkusener Jazztage, Leverkusen (D) 2005, Rendez-Vous de l'Erdre, Nantes (F) 2005, Dean Benedetti Jazz Festival, Pisa (I) 2005, Intern. Music Festival, Cesky Krumlov (CZ) 2005, Jazz & Klassik an der Donau, Straubing (D) 2003, Caspian Jazz & Blues Festival, Baku (AZ) 2003, Klaipėda Jazz Festival, Klaipėda (LT) 2003, Vicenza Jazz Festival, Vicenza (I) 2003, Cool Desert Jazz Fest, Phoenix (USA) 2002, Jazz à Vienne, Vienne (F) 2002



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Pescara Jazz, Pescara (I) 2002, Salerno Jazz, Salerno (I) 2002, Teano Jazz Festival, Teano (I) 2002, Downtown Jazz Festival, Toronto (CAN) 2002, Kennedy Center , Washington D.C. (USA) 2000 and 2001, Euro-Jazz Awards “Django d’Or”, Brussels (B) 2000 Festival de Wiltz, Wiltz (L) 2002, Printemps Musical, Luxembourg (L) 07, 06, 03, 00, 98, 97, 95, 93, Int. Chet Atkins Music Festival, Nashville (USA) 1998 and 2000, North Sea Jazz Festival, Den Haag (NL) 1997 and 2002, Montreux Jazz Festival, Montreux (CH) 1997, 2007 Umbria Jazz , Perugia (I) 1997 and 2002, Festival de Jazz, Brignoles (F) 1996, Festival de Jazz, La Seyne-sur-Mer (F) 1996, New York Brass Conference, New York (USA) 1997 Oktoberpalast, Kiev (UKR) 2003 ,Cultural Center Belém, Lisbon (P) 2002, Moods Jazz Club, Zürich (CH), 2007, Treibhaus, Innsbruck (A) 2003, Reigen Jazzclub, Vienna (A) 2003 Generations, Saint Louis (USA) 2002, Point Breeze, Worcester (USA) 2002 Riviera, Las Vegas (USA) 2002, Camel Rock Casino, Santa Fe (USA) 2002 Shooting Star Casino, Mahanomen (USA) 2002, Music Village Jazz Club, Brussels (B) 2004 and 2006, The New Morning, Paris (F) 2002, Ryle’s Jazz Club, Boston (USA) 2002 Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club, London (GB) 2003 and 2005, The Basement, Sydney (AUS) 2002 Birdland, New York (USA) 1997,Blue Note, New York (USA) 1997

**Performances: with** Paul ANKA, Youssou N’DOUR, Chaka KHAN, The SUPREMES, Diane SCHUUR, Maynard FERGUSON & Big Bop Nouveau, The DIZZY GILLESPIE ALL STARS, The Duke ELLINGTON Orchestra, Carla BLEY & Steve SWALLOW Big Band, BRUSSELS JAZZ ORCHESTRA, Slide HAMPTON, James MOODY, Randy BRECKER, Lew SOLOFF, Claudio RODITI, Bob MINTZER, Dave LIEBMAN, Amina FIGAROVA, Idris MUHAMMAD, Claude BOLLING, BLECHSCHADEN, Joe ROCCISANO NONET, Frank NIMSGERN (Musicals PARADISE OF PAIN & SNOWWHITE), EUROPOOL JAZZ ORCHESTRA, MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC JAZZ ORCHESTRA, Ernie HAMMES GROUP, (Fall 2000, STEPWISE-TOUR to the U.S. & CANADA, Winter 2002 European-tour feat. Bob MINTZER, Winter 2005, Vietnam-tour to Hanoi and Saigon for the „European Jazz Festival“...)

#### Quotations:

*“...Ernie is one of the few young musicians of today’s music scene that are very unique because of their versatility. He has great ideas for his jazz playing and on top of that is a wonderful classical soloist. I truly love having Ernie in my band and I believe that he will have a great career on his own...”* Maynard FERGUSON, May 2002

*“...Ernie Hammes is a very creative jazz musician and a superb classical soloist...”* Lew SOLOFF, January 2000

*“...Ernie is a first rate trumpet player who covers an awful lot of ground with his playing and writing. Working with him was always a rewarding and highly musical experience. Keep your eyes on this musician...”*Bob MINTZER, January 2000

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## MARC MOMMAAS - TENOR SAXOPHONE & COMPOSER

Mommaas (1969, NL) made NYC his home base in 1997 and has since developed a strong reputation as a tenor saxophonist, composer and leader of his group ‘Global Motion’. Mommaas comes from an artistic background. His mother is an opera singer/pianist and his father a well known painter in the Dutch art scene. During Marc’s study in the Netherlands he managed to combine his musical development with a university education (Masters in Comm.Science/Business). After receiving two **grants** (Stichting Podium Kunsten, Prins Bernard Fonds & Anjer Fondsen) he moved to New York City.

Marc received a full scholarship from the Manhattan School of Music where he pursued his Masters in Jazz Performance and upon graduating was awarded the **‘William H. Borden Award’**. He also participated in the Lake Placid Seminar and the Aspen Snowmass Jazz Sessions for which he



received full scholarships. He frequently tours Europe, the US and Canada with different formations and tours with three groups of his own: “**Global Motion**”, “**Mommaas/Moreno/Nadley**” trio and “**Balance**” (duo). The first release as a leader “**Global Motion Trio**” includes pianist Nikolaj Hess from Copenhagen, bassist John Hebert from New Orleans and the renowned percussionist Tony Moreno from New York City. The second recording “**Global Motion**” released by Sunny Side records (2003) earned critical praise in Downbeat, Jazztimes, Jazzimprov and All About Jazz. All the music is written and arranged by Marc Mommaas. The new Sunny Side Duo Release “**Balance**” with Nikolaj Hess by Sunny Side records (2006) has also been well received. Mommaas can also be heard on recordings of Bill Gerhardt (Steeplechase Rec.), Rez Abassi (Soho Rec.), Armen Donelian (Sunny Side Records), and more...

In 2008 a new recording will be released featuring compositions from long time collaborator Nikolaj Hess with special guests Jeff Ballard and Ben Monder. The trio will be making a new record, Global Motion will be touring the festivals in the summer and the Duo will be touring Europe and Scandinavia in the fall.

*“...Balance is just one more fact in Mommaas’ resume that builds to the conclusion that he should be one of the current generation’s leading musicians...” (Jazzimprov) After the highly acclaimed release “Global Motion” Dutch tenor saxophonist Marc Mommaas brings out “Balance”, a duo recording including his longtime Danish collaborator Nikolaj Hess.*

*“Even though Mommaas has pared down his group to a duo for Balance, his aesthetic of mixing meters—even within the confines of a single composition or within the length of several measures—and of writing unconventional modulations continues” (Jazzimprov) “...Mommaas is a gifted tenor saxophonist, and a writer of intricate and pleasingly unpredictable tunes... The music has its own nearly classical beauty.” (Jazztimes)*

*“Wonderful compositions, great concept and a beautiful tone on the horns, Marc and his group have made some delightful, intimate music that is first class. You are in store for a pleasant listening experience.” --David Liebman 2000*

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**Philippe Lemm** is one of the most in-demand jazz drummers in The Netherlands. Born 1985 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands he started his musical journey at the age of 16. At the age of 19 he was admitted at The Amsterdam Conservatory. In his second year at the conservatory Philippe started touring internationally with jazz trumpeter Saskia Laroo as well as leading his own group Wazabe. At the end of his studies in Amsterdam Philippe was extensively playing with renown Dutch jazz musicians like; Karel Boehlee (Toots Thielemans), Jorg Kaaij (Jazz Orchestra of the Concert Gebouw) and Peter Tiehuis (Metropole Orchestra).

In 2009 he started his second group as a leader: Philippe Lemm Group where he released 2 records with and toured extensively with in Europe.

In 2011 he was a recipient of one of the most prestigious scholarships in The Netherlands; Huygens Scholarship, which allowed him to continue his studies at Manhattan School of Music with John Riley. Philippe graduates in 2013 and receives his Masters Degree from this prestigious institute. Philippe becomes the first Dutch drummer that earns his Masters Degree for Jazz Drums from the Manhattan School of Music.

Philippe Lemm performs on drum set and percussion alike, covering a broad range of styles reflecting his wide interest in everything music and his natural feel for groove and texture regardless of genre.

Renowned stages Mr. Lemm performed on include Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center DC, Concert Gebouw, Bimhuis and North Sea Jazz



Festival. He appears on over 50 cd's as a side man and released 6 records with groups that he leads or co-leads.

After graduating from Manhattan School of Music Philippe was invited by India's leading school for contemporary music, True School of Music in Mumbai, to be an Artist in Residence and Head of the Drum Department for 4 months. In india he started to collaborate with Bollywood superstar Shilpa Rao and accompanied her in her "Hard Rock Café India Tour 2013"

In 2015 the Philippe Lemm Trio won the 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the B-Jazz International Competition in Leuven, Belgium which led to numerous performances throughout Europe and the United States.

Currently Philippe Lemm is working with the New York based group Life Size, Samir Zarif Trio, Michael Blume, Sharik Hasan New York Quartet, Samantha Ware, and vocalist Andrea Wood to name a few.

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**Stefan Lievestro** takes his first piano lessons at an early age. Playing the guitar and electric bass eventually points him in the direction of the double bass at the age of 18.

In 1989 he gets a first at the Hilversum conservatoire. He obtains a grant and goes to New York to study with Marc Johnson. In 1991 he wins the soloist prize at the Karlovy Vary Jazz Festival in the Czech Republic. He plays with famous jazz greats like Nat Adderley, Bob Berg, Deedee Bridgewater, Philip Catherine, Pat Metheny, Freddie Hubbard and Art Porter, amongst others. Stefan also regularly plays with top pianists Michiel Borstlap and Harmen Fraanje, and teaches at the conservatoires of Gent and Rotterdam. He forms his own quintet in 2004, consisting of Jesse van Ruller (guitar), Harmen Fraanje (piano), Stefan Lievestro (bass) and Pascal Vermeer (drums).

In 2005 he wins the prestigious Deloitte Jazz Award at the Amsterdam Bimhuis. In our W.E.R.F. catalogue he can be found playing with pianist Ernst Vranckx.



**Sources:**

<http://photos.allaboutjazz.com>

<http://www.erniehammes.com>

<http://www.mommaas.com>

<http://www.aminafigarova.com/>

<http://www.bartplatteau.com/>

<http://www.draaiomjeoren.com>