

Luboš Soukup Quartet's latest release, *Země*, features guitar and vocals from Lionel Loueke

Luboš Soukup Quartet has released their third studio album, titled *Země* (The Earth). The jazz album features guest appearances from guitarist Lionel Loueke, who brings a slightly African touch. As with the band's earlier releases, all music and arrangements are composed exclusively by the Czech saxophonist Luboš Soukup, and it is the first of the quartet's offerings to feature vocal arrangements.

Compared to their previous release, *Through the Mirror*, which was recorded with an ensemble of 14 musicians, *Země* is more intimate and personal. The quartet's essence stays the same, but new musical interactions are presented. The instruments featured on the recording (saxophone, guitar, piano, double bass, and drums) are reminiscent of the quartet's debut album *Beyond the Borders*, which featured a guest appearance from guitarist David Dorůžka. However, Soukup introduces a new instrument to this project, which has not previously been typical of his music — the voice.

The saxophonist again joins forces with Danish drummer **Morten Hæsum**, one of the quartet's founding members, and German pianist **Christian Pabst**, who featured on the quartet's previous album. They are joined by Danish bassist **Morten Haxholm**, who has been with the band since 2016, and New York-based, Benin-raised guitarist, **Lionel Loueke**, who accompanies the band for six tracks, including providing vocals for some of them.

Luboš Soukup, recipient of the Danish Music Talent Award 2017, first met Lionel Loueke at a Summer jazz workshop for professional musicians in Vallekilde, Denmark, three years ago. At the beginning of 2017, Soukup invited Loueke to join his quartet for a European tour, during which the five musicians performed at Jazz Festival Brno, the Czech Republic, and in Copenhagen, Denmark, amongst others, and finished the tour in Danish studio, The Village Recordings, where they recorded the music for *Země*.

Music that celebrates the Earth

The CD begins with title track *Země* (The Earth), which was inspired by Loueke's music. *"I wrote this composition with Lionel in mind,"* says Soukup, *"we live in interesting times and our planet faces many issues. My wish is that people strive to be more environmentally-friendly and sustainable, and that we are in closer contact with nature. I think future lifestyles will have to be simpler, which is a rather difficult task in today's world with all the incredible possibilities we have."*

This optimistic song is followed by rather darker ballad, **Dark Shark**. The track description from the CD insert reads: "A dark shark is floating around your head, waiting for your good thoughts to eat." Continuing with the marine imagery, following track **The Red Sea** — inspired by the picture of Moses stretching out his hand over the sea and God parting the waters — is one of the most rhythmically complex pieces on the album.



Album info

Artist: Luboš Soukup Quartet feat. Lionel Loueke

Title: *Země*

Catalogue Number: ANI 064-2

Format: CD

Label: Animal Music

Barcode: 8 594155 991303

Style: file under Jazz

Country of origin: Czech Republic

Release Date: Nov 12th 2017

Sound

Recorded by Bjørn Gjessing (The Village Recordings, Vanløse, Denmark)

Mixed by August Wanngren (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Mastered by Thomas Eberger (Stockholm Mastering, Sweden)

Tracks

1. <i>Země</i> (The Earth)	6:12
2. Dark Shark	6:05
3. The Red Sea	4:12
4. Shikara	6:51
5. White Horse	4:01
6. C	7:03
7. Falling Star	6:05
8. Smoke	7:06
9. Na Bílé hoře (On the White Mountain)	4:53
Total time:	53:05

All compositions by Luboš Soukup, except track 9 (Czech folk song arranged by Luboš Soukup).

Musicians/Personnel

Luboš Soukup – tenor and soprano saxophone, clarinet

Christian Pabst – piano

Morten Haxholm – acoustic bass

Morten Hæsum – drums

& Lionel Loueke – guitar and vocal

Soukup borrows the word '**Shikara**' from the Salman Rushdie classic, *Midnight's children*, as the title for a short poem about small colorful boats on Indian lakes, and the dialogue between piano and clarinet is the leitmotif of calm and dream-like composition, **White Horse**. The dreamy mood continues in the second part of **Smoke**, which is also one of the most technically sophisticated compositions. Soukup found inspiration for this tune in the eponymous movie directed by Paul Auster and Wayne Wang.

An interesting music development can be also heard in **C**. The piece opens with the collective improvisation of piano, guitar, and soprano saxophone, and features a main theme of Latin-American vibes, finally graduating in an exposed guitar solo. The only tune that bears any hallmarks of the classical jazz of the 1960s is **Falling star**, which captures the impression of a falling star freezing on the horizon. The final track on the album is a positive arrangement of the Czech folk song **Na Bílé Hoře (On the White Mountain)** which, thanks to Lionel Loueke's contribution, has a distinctly African feel.

Notes to editors

Luboš Soukup Quartet first formed in 2012 in Copenhagen, Denmark. During this time, the band has changed its lineup several times. The remaining original members of the project are Czech saxophonist and clarinetist Luboš Soukup, who is also the founder, band leader, and exclusive composer of all the band's music, and Danish drummer Morten Hæsum, who is renowned for his innovative, highly interactive way of playing. In the current line-up, the band also features German pianist Christian Pabst, who brings a fresh, lyrical style to Soukup's compositions, and Danish bassist Morten Haxholm, who ensures that the music's foundation is mature and solid.

Soukup studied at three European music schools, The Jazz Conservatory in Prague, Czechia, The Music Academy in Katowice, Poland, and The Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 2011, he became the first scholar of the benefit project Chocomusic, which was founded by the O2 Foundation alongside Strings of Autumn, one of the biggest Czech music festivals, and which contributes to foreign studies. During his studies abroad, Soukup fell in love with Scandinavian musical tradition and settled in Denmark.

In addition to the Luboš Soukup Quartet, he also leads the internationally successful quartet Points, and its expanded versions — Points Septet and Points-Rataj Quintet (a jazz quartet with live electronics). He is a member of the energetic Scandinavian band MAdHAs, the Czech-Polish quintet Inner Spaces, and the Czech big band, Concept Art Orchestra etc. In recent years, he has been very involved with composing music for his own bands, as well as other people's projects, and he teaches Saxophone and Ensemble at the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (HAMU) in Prague.

The Benin-raised jazz guitarist **Lionel Loueke** makes a guest appearance on *Země*. Thanks to his originality, outstanding rhythm and well-honed technical skill, he has become one of the most sought after jazz musicians in the world today. He has previously featured in the work of Herbie Hancock, Terence Blanchard, Dave Holland, Chris Potter and many more.



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