



ULF WAKENIUS

Ulf Wakenius has held what may be the most prestigious spot in jazz for a guitarist membership in the legendary Oscar Peterson Quartet since 1997. His predecessors have been such greats as Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis, and Joe Pass. He has performed at classic jazz venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, the Blue Notes, and recently played sold out shows with Oscar Peterson at the Royal Albert Hall, Chicago Symphony Hall, Palais des Congrès, Wiener Konzerthaus, Massey Hall, Teatro Colon-Buenos Aires, Stravinski Hall-Montreux and Tokyo International Forum Hall.

The last year he performed in a highly successful duo concert with Pat Metheny in Germany. The concert was also broadcasted on German TV. His latest release was "A Night In Vienna" recorded with Oscar Peterson at the Wiener Konzerthaus on Verve. He has played and recorded with pre-eminent jazz musicians such as Oscar Peterson, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, Ray Brown, Michael Brecker, Joe Henderson, Phil Woods, Clark Terry, Johnny Griffin, Toots Thielemans, Jack DeJohnette, Max Roach, Jim Hall, Art Farmer, Benny Golson, James Moody, Roy Hargrove and Michel Legrand. He has recorded two CDs, for Telarc with the great Ray Brown: "Seven Steps To Heaven" which reached number one in the U.S. jazz charts, and "Summertime" which was voted as one of the top ten albums of '98 in America. He has also toured with his own groups featuring Mike Brecker, Ray Brown and Joey Calderazzo a.o. Lately he has also been touring Europe with vocal star Viktoria Tolstoy.

Ulf Wakenius was born in Halmstad, Sweden on April 16, 1958. He began playing the guitar at the age of 11, inspired by other guitarists in the neighbourhood of his new hometown, Gothenburg. After picking up the guitar Ulf never looked back. In the beginning he was inspired by virtuoso electric blues guitar players but soon moved to more jazz-oriented music. John McLaughlin became Ulf's new guitar hero. (John later wrote liner notes for one of Ulf's soloalbums).

At the age of 17 Ulf was already established as a jazz musician playing with different Swedish groups. During the following years he toured all over Europe. At the beginning of the '80s Ulf founded the duo "Guitars Unlimited" together with Peter Almqvist. They toured in many parts of the world and appeared frequently on Swedish Television. The highlight in their career was a performance in the 1985 Melody Grand Prix, a historic event which was seen by 600 million viewers, (probably the largest audience a jazz-guitar duo has ever had).



In the mid-'80s Ulf also had the opportunity to record a solo album in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. He was fortunate to be able to gather together such fantastic musicians as Sivuca, Luizao, Paolo Braga (Elis Regina), Nico Assumpcao (Milton Nascimento) among others. The record became a hit in Sweden with considerable airplay. The "Brazil venture" was the beginning of a life-long love of the Brazilian culture. Later Ulf returned with Oscar Peterson and performed for 35,000 people in Sao Paolo.

In the late '80s Ulf began playing with the late great Danish bass giant Niels-Henning Ørstedt-Pedersen. Their collaboration was very fruitful, resulting in concerts all over the globe and several recordings, playing for the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, and numerous international TV-shows.

At the beginning of the '90s Ulf started to work in different projects together with American and European top musicians. The group Grafitti was formed with the rhythm section from the John Scofield group, the members being the phantom drummer Dennis Chambers (now with Santana), bassist Gary Grainger, Håkon Graf on keyboards and Ulf on guitar. They toured in the United States and Europe and recorded a CD which was very well received. He also started a project with the bass icon Ray Brown. Ulf has 10 solo albums to his name and has recorded several albums as a sideman together with many jazz legends.