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Saxophonist and composer Marcel Bárta releases his first solo album

Saxophonist, clarinettist, composer and visual artist **Marcel Bárta** releases his first solo album – a suite for jazz quintet and symphonic orchestra entitled „Episodes from the Spinning Ball".

As composer and arranger he has taken part in dozens of projects and recordings, many of which were released by Animal Music – Vertigo, Muff, Mamatohe, Dagmar Voňková to name a few.

While ***Episodes from the Spinning Ball*** is the first recording to feature Bárta's work exclusively, the eponymous piece is the first one he wrote for a large ensemble. Composed on a commission from the **Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra**, the work formally resembles a suite in three parts. It is performed, however, as a continuous flow of music. In the author's own words, the piece "*is an attempt to evoke a story that reflects my own planetary experience. Isn't that programme music? Yes, but only at somewhere and sometimes. And sometimes not at all.*"

The new album is a recording of a premiere concert performance featuring the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra and Bárta's jazz quintet, which took place as part of the jazz-symphonic crossover series New Horizons in February 2025 in the DOX+ Multifunction Hall in Prague. Combining composed music with improvisation, the piece bears traces of Bárta's original style that is rooted in jazz and contemporary classical music and unfolds like an elaborate story in which densely composed soundscapes interweave with delicate melodies and fine-grained instrumentation and where order coexists with improvisation and melancholy passages alternate with psychedelia and humour. The jazz band in the recording features, alongside Marcel Bárta himself, trombonist **Štěpán Janoušek**, keyboardist and synth player **Vojtěch Procházka**, double bassist **Miloš Klápště** and drummer **Jan Chalupa**. The whole jazz-symphonic ensemble is conducted by **Bastien Stil** who has had ample experience leading crossover projects.

Marcel Bárta entered the Czech jazz and improvisation scene while still a student and has since become one of its core members. He is a founding member of the electro-jazz quintet MUFF, the cult jazz sextet Vertigo and the duo DoMa Ensemble. Besides collaborating with many foremost artists from different genres on the home and international scene, he has been dedicating himself to composition, writing scenic music for the theatre company Farma v jeskyni (Farm in the Cave), among other projects. He is the recipient of multiple Czech Music Academy Awards in the jazz category, having also been nominated for the same award on a number of occasions.

He teaches improvisation and saxophone, leads ensembles and historical-aesthetic seminars at the KJJ College of Arts and Music and at the Jan Hanuš Art School. He is a self-taught visual artist. After initially creating drawings, pastels and various objects, he discovered the distinctive technique of illuminated collages. He has illustrated several poetry collections by David Růžička, a book of fairy tales, and designed and created countless covers for music albums. From 2020 to 2022, he was a mentor of the MenART Academy.

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The recording was made by Rostislav Supa and Adam Kowal, mixed by Milan Cimfe, Petr Ostrouchov and Marcel Bárta at the Sono Records studio, and mastered by Adam Karlík. The album cover design is by Jiří Veselka from Najbrt Studio. The album is part of the Animal Music 2025 Edition supported by the PPF Foundation and a grant from the City of Prague.

Episodes from the Spining Ball is being released on CD, LP and digitally, and will be available in the Animal Music e-shop, on all streaming platforms and in the Supraphon distribution network.

Animal Music: *info@animalmusic.cz*; *www.animalmusic.cz*
Press service in Czech Republic: 2media – Markéta Faustová: *marketa@2media.cz* , tel.: +420 722 119 091
International communication & PR: Natálie Ostrouchova – natalie@animalmusic.cz
Marcel Bárta: *https://www.marcel-barta.com*, *zudumu@seznam.cz*
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