

## Meet MJO

The story of MJO, in full Muze Jazz Orchestra, begins in 2010. Guitarist Marco Cirone and saxophone player Lieven Cambré join forces to assemble the cream of the Limburg jazz scene. The MUZE cultural centre in Heusden-Zolder turns out to be the perfect base: director Tom Michielsen being immediately won over by the idea. The Muze Jazz Orchestra is a fact.

## Musical laboratory

An elitist jazz club? Anything but. MJO goes for the warm approach and loves contact with the audience. Soon, jazz lovers beyond the provincial borders find their way to the MUZE in Heusden-Zolder. There, every first Sunday of the month, the cozy evenings 'MJO invites' take place. During these intimate occasional concerts, the band members drum up both their own connections and up-and-coming talent to give the best of themselves. These evenings often end with a sultry jam session, with young musicians eagerly seizing the opportunity to impress both the audience as well as their great musical examples.

## From Zappa to ... just about everything

2012 sees the launch of the first major project: 'MJO plays ZAPPA!'. With this, the ensemble effortlessly finds its way to various stages in Flanders and The Netherlands. Highlight is the passage at the Zappa Fest under the approving eye of Zappa veteran Napoleon Murphy. But MJO's oeuvre reaches much further. All variations within jazz are covered, as well as experimenting with countless other musical genres. The list of collaborations with renowned musicians grows longer and longer.

## Creative crossovers

Experimenting with other art forms? MJO has ears for that too. In 2017, they provide the musical framing of the photo exhibition for the 'Suite voor de Laatste Mijn' project, a catchy homage to Limburg's mining past. In 2021, in collaboration with video artist Jaak De Digitale, they create the total experience 'MJO 360°'. Meanwhile, this psychedelic trip back to the sixties and seventies – now named 'Have a Safe Trip' - finds its way from the Genk Cosmodrome to Canada, and from there is on its way to conquer the rest of the world!

## Releases

MJO releases three albums: Sweet Charity (2013), New Horizons (2018) and Times Change And So Must We (2020). MJO's tenth anniversary is celebrated in 2021 with the launch of an exclusive photo book: 'MJO 10'. This special publication, with beautiful impressions and memorable anecdotes from a decade of Muze Jazz Orchestra, now adorns the bookshelves of many a jazz lover.

The bar is high, but the threshold remains low

Today, the musical ensemble is as close and friendly as ever. The composition of the band has changed, but those whose path once crossed that of MJO carry the warm collaboration in their hearts. The door is wide open for the new batch of MJO musicians. Living proof of this are the successful collaborations with schools and conservatoires. Among others, the talented Lennert Baerts, who blazed an impressive trail under the wings of mentor Lieven Cambré, is, in his own words, "eternally grateful" to his musical family.

In short, this likeable nine-member gang is far from reaching its finale!