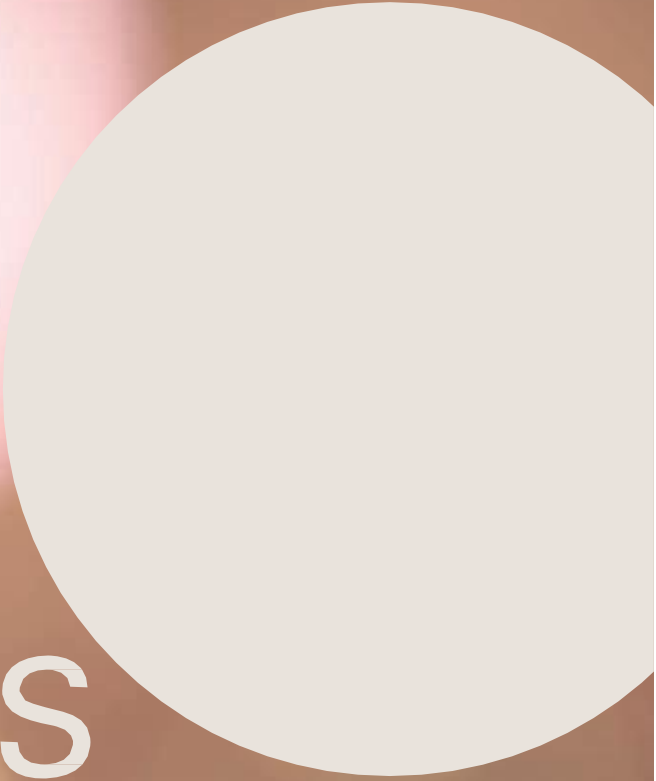




FACES AND PLACES

OF LONG JOURNEYS AND THE YEARNING TO DANCE.

What does money mean if you were born in one of the poorest countries in the world and now live in one of the richest?
Or should you seek true wealth somewhere else altogether?
How precious is it to experience a different place,
to experience a different existence?
What weight can you ascribe to that vocabulary you brought along
to a country like Austria?
And, above all, how does our society strike and shape artists
who didn't grow up here, how does their artistic career change,
how is the art they have to offer received?
Are they particularly treasured as mediators of culture?
Or simply as amusingly exotic?

THE PROJECT.

In the **FACES AND PLACES** production, 14 musicians from 5 nations recount the personal histories of four musicians from Burkina Faso, Venezuela, Syria and Cuba who, coming from various situations and following a variety of paths, have ended up in the musical country of Austria and here perform a juggling act with survival and art.

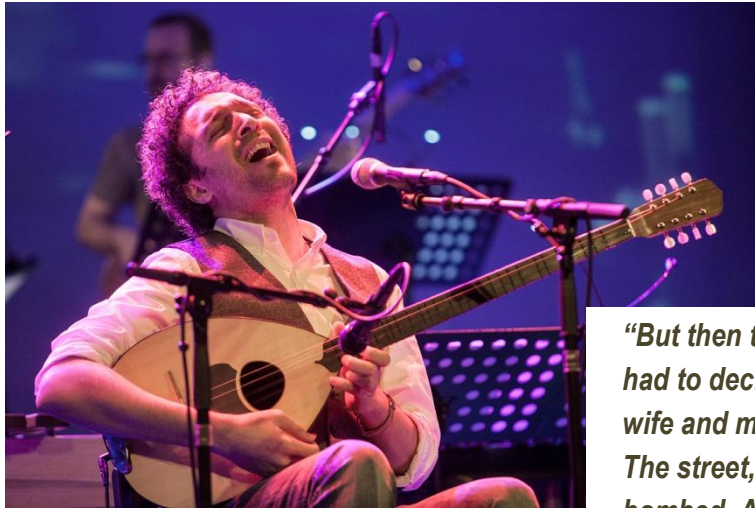
In their crossover-project embodying music, performance, film and theatre, people from , Syria, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Austria and Venezuela present their art and their lives, illustrate their paths to and through Austria, the tightrope.

An intimate and, at the same time, colourful stage show that was developed out of biographical documentary material. Personal histories, video projection, sound and image sculptures blend with the music to form an intoxicating musical and theatrical performance which, on the one hand, presents personalities and, on the other, puts into sharp focus the happenstances and cooperation arising from global humankind. The fact that so much trans-cultural fusion ultimately results in the breaching of the stage and auditorium is of course intentional.



They have one thing in common: their place of birth is far away (thousands of kilometres in many cases) from the city in which they live. And they have a job that is privileged (in this respect at least): whilst immigrants elsewhere are confronted by prejudice at their place of work too, in the music scene they are largely spared this.

In the interviews, the topic of living in two home countries was therefore kept well away from the much-discussed aspect of racism. The thread running from here to there and back is woven around everyday topics. What does the topic of “money” mean to someone born in one of the poorest countries and now living in one of the richest countries in the world? Or is the wealth somewhere else altogether? Is the vocabulary that was brought along perhaps worth more in a country like Austria, where the native people so determinedly stick to their monolingualism? How does our society shape their artistic careers, how do we receive the art they have to offer? What are they for us: something exotic, entertainers, mediators of culture?



"But then the revolution in Syria became a war and I had to decide: O.k., I can't stay here any longer. My wife and my son were in a very dangerous situation. The street, where we lived in Damaskus, was bombed. And suddenly we didn't have a flat any more."

Salah Ammo / Syrien



These questions and many others were addressed in an atmosphere of relaxed conversation. The interviews were conducted by Eva Reithofer-Haidacher who works as an editor at the MEGAPHON, a monthly magazine sold on the street since 1995. From this respectful, biographical documentary material emerged an intimate and, at the same time, colourful stage show. By way of artifice, the personal histories combined with portraiture through video projection are blended into sound and image sculptures. Using the working process of music, points of contact were sought out, discarded and defined anew.

In many areas the people collaborating on this production work with children, young people and adults. If only, through their collaborative work and presentation, progress can be made in terms of setting an example for human coexistence, an objective would be achieved. The production's energy derives from musical and visual elements.

The interviews were conducted in a variety of languages and will be subtitled in the local language of each place of performance.



"I got the musical gene from my mother, because the routine was that at 8pm, when the last person had eaten their fill, my mother would get the guitar out and sit down by our huge mango tree in the yard and play music."

Ismael Barrios Orozco / Venezuela





THE MUSIC.



With regard to musical composition, my approach was to provide the ensemble as a tool for the invited artists **Salah Ammo, Ismael Barrios, Silvio Gabriel** and **Louis Sanou**.

This potential was harnessed in very different ways, ranging from an open and highly experimental approach to collaborative exploration through to solo performances of commissions, with everything in between. At one of the first rehearsals, Louis showed us a few phrases and left us completely at a loss regarding what he wanted right till very late. Silvio was nervous because Louis did not give him any lyrics. Ismael opened up vistas of traditional Venezuelan music and, for himself, a return to his very first instrument, the cuatro. This created a very open workshop-like character which, via various routes, developed into the current overall format in which the cultural layers so wonderfully interleave. The ensemble's identity was expressed through a commission for a composition/arrangement by the Austrian violinist Tscho Theissing, whom I asked to write an overture like a >Deix image< (note: Manfred Deix, painter and caricaturist of the Austrian soul). Which he resolved in a fantastic way.

Günter Meinhart

FACES AND PLACES PROGRAM.

Tscho Theissing / AUSTRIA – 7 ANLÄUFE

Raphael Meinhart / AFRICA

Gery Weil / EL VIEJO PUENTE

Arrangement: Hugo Fernando Gonzalez for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

Salah Ammo / DARWESHE AVDI

Arrangement: Peter Gabis for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

Isaac Delgado / LA SANDUNGUITA

Arrangement: Hugo Fernando Gonzalez for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

Arsenico Rodriguez / DILE A CATALINA

Arrangement: Hugo Fernando Gonzalez for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

Louis Sanou / KOROLENKO

Roland Neffe / FACES & STORIES

Bernhard Richter / GROOVYTAS

Salah Ammo / SAZVANIM

Arrangement: Peter Gabis Reinhard Summerer for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

Traditional from Venezuela / PAJARILLO

Arrangement: Hugo Fernando Gonzalez

Raphael Meinhart / HUMAN DONG

JUAN Formell / GUARARE

Arrangement: Hugo Fernando Gonzalez for STUDIO PERCUSSION graz

PRESS.

FACES AND PLACES is a very strong-willed project animated above all by musical brilliance.

Michaela Reichart, Kronen Zeitung
1th August 2010

A JOURNEY THROUGH SOUND, BEAUTIFUL AND FURIOUS

Spectacular La Strada kick-off with Studio Percussion & guests.

GRAZ. What Günter Meinhart's Studio Percussion and his guests deliver in 2 hours is the most beautiful, exciting and indeed moving musical evening there's been for a long time. **"FACES AND PLACES"** is the title of the kick-off event conceived by Meinhart for this year's La Strada festival. One might also term it educational, given that it also helps the citizens of Graz by offering an occasion to experience their immigrants from a different and, at the same time, altogether personal perspective. The evening begins with a frantically beaten medley of Austrian standards, for which Tscho Theissing has drawn on everything from the Danube Walz through the Archduke Johann Yodel and Radetzky March to Live is Life, reaching deep into the Austrian soul. Then along come the guests, one after the other. Ismael Barrios from Venezuela, Mamadou Diabaté from Burkina Faso, Silvio Gabriel from Cuba, Edison da Silva from Brazil and others, all virtuosos on instruments such as the conga, balaphone, gjon, guiro and many other exotic names. Working with the Studio and, at times, another dozen percussionists, they concoct a journey through sound that, in terms of beauty and furore, could scarcely be beaten. Beforehand, Eva Reithofer-Haidacher has conducted interviews with all of them and these are now merged into the performance, providing information on the artists' origins and new home, offering a chance to experience wonderful comments and moments. Then, once again, exciting live images dominate the video wall. One yearns for an impresario who might send the whole band straight off on a tour of Europe.

Frido Hütter, Kleine Zeitung
1th August 2010

STUDIO PERCUSSION GRAZ

Founded in 1979 by Günter MEINHART, over the past 30 years STUDIO PERCUSSION graz has conjured up an impressive number and variety of productions on all kinds of stages, both at home and abroad. Exciting projects in the contemporary field, exploratory collaborations with musicians, composers and event organisers in the fields of jazz and classical music, special programmes for children and young people and a passion to create their own musical theatre productions, have consistently characterised the work by STUDIO PERCUSSION graz.

STUDIO PERCUSSION GRAZ

CONCERTS AND MUSICAL THEATRE PRODUCTIONS AT: Styriarte | Wiener Festwochen, | Salzburger Festspiele | Ars Electronica Linz | Seoul Drum Festival | Brucknerfest Linz | Steirischer Herbst | Festival mostly modern New York | Dubrovnik Festival | Biennale Zagreb | La Strada Graz | Musikverein Wien | Jazzfestival Izmir | Narodni Dom Maribor | Konzerthaus Wien | Berliner Festspiele-maerzmusik | Journees de la Percussion Paris | Festspielhaus St. Pölten | Osterfestival Innsbruck | Festival Psalm Graz | International Percussion Ensemble Week Bjelovar | Festival Bumfest Zalec | Porgy & Bess Wien | Pula Festival | Ankara | Istanbul | Musica Contemporanea Bolzano | Jazzfestival Burghausen | Flute Festival Pristina – Kosovo | Thessaloniki | Athen | Korfu | Budapest | Konzerthaus Berlin | Nomus Festival Novi Sad | Drumfest Polen | Journadas Internacionales de Percusion del Ribbarroja | Festival Sounding Jerusalem

PRODUCTIONS: Minimal Moving | Der deutsche Schlager am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts | La Ballade | Scherz, Spaß, Spott & Schrott | Virtuosen aus Fell und Dosen | WUMM ! | GRAVITAS | FACES & PLACES | TERMINALS | TIMBER

COLLABORATIONS WITH ORCHESTRAS AND SOLOISTS: OPUS | Pierre Sauvageot + ALLEGRO BARBARO | Jean Marie Maddeddu + LES PIETONS | Gilles Rhode + TRANSE EXPRESS | Ernst Kovacic | Christian + Wolfgang Muthspiel | Percussion Project Robyn Schulkowsky | Klaus Lang | Chet Doboie & Hip Pickles | Slowenische Nationalphilharmonie | Pierre Yves Artaud | Armin Pokorn | Karlheinz Essl | Lukas Ligeti | INSINGIZI | BELGRADE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA | Arnold Schönberg-Chor | Bobby Previte

STUDIO PERCUSSION graz has been collaborating for many years with the La STRADA international festival of street and puppet theatre in Graz. A collaboration with Jean-Marie Maddeddu (Compagnie les Piétons) arose in 2003, this being a street theatre performance conceived specifically for the setting of the city of Graz, entitled

„LA BALLADE“.



As part of the La STRADA festival in the summer of 2006 at the opera house of Graz came the premiere performance of **“WUMM!”**,

a percussion theatrical piece. Over the following years this production was the mainstay of international invited performance activities (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Spain, Poland and Hungary). La STRADA 2010 saw the premiere of the new productions **FACES AND PLACES**.

STUDIO PERCUSSION GRAZ



“My own personal, artistic work has been focussed for almost 30 years on my ensemble STUDIO PERCUSSION graz and I consider myself fortunate to be able to work regularly with this group and its contributing musicians, video artists, technicians and other creative people.

For me, STUDIO PERCUSSION graz is a gigantic paintbrush that offers me the possibility to paint what are sometimes exquisitely beautiful, sometimes brusque, often interesting, yet also cheerful acoustic pictures and leave them behind in spaces. For me that is a divine gift.”

Günter Meinhart

Günter Meinhart was born in Graz and there he studied percussion instruments at the University of Music and Performing Arts, where he has worked as a contract teacher since 1995. Meinhart runs workshops and seminars at home and abroad and stages numerous events with his group STUDIO PERCUSSION graz.

FACES AND PLACES ARTISTIC TEAM.

Günter Meinhart / idea, concept, direction, percussion

Ismael Barrios / conga, percussion

Louis Sanou / balaphone, djembe, composition

Silvio Gabriel / vocal, guiro

Salah Ammo / bouzouk, vocal

Leo Waltersdorfer / vibraphone

Raphael Meinhart / vibraphone, komposition

Grilli Pollheimer / xylophone, glockenspiel, percussion

Bernhard Richter / marimbaphone, composition

Thomas Stabler / drums

Thomas Wilding / bass

Meily Gonzalez / vocal

Endrina Rosalez / vocal

Mariano Leal / vocal, percussion

Herwig Baumgartner / video

Stefan Schmid / video

Jürgen Fehringer / sounddesign

Eugen Schöberl / lightdesign

FACES AND PLACES ARTISTIC TEAM.



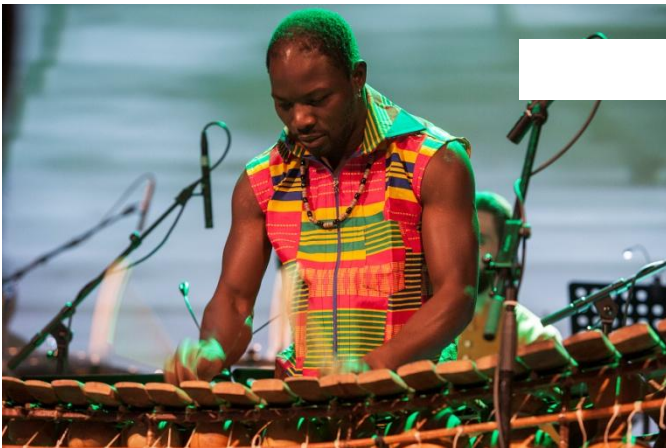
Salah Ammo

Salah Ammo was born into a Syrian Kurdish family in 1978 in Darbasiyah, a town northeast of Syria (Al Hassaka region, on the Syrian border with Iraq and Turkey). Growing up among the people of this region where Kurds, Arabs, Turks, Armenians and Assyrians used to live together for thousands of years and being involved in their cultural and musical traditions. He was influenced by the music of these people and their cultures, and gained a lot of experience in presenting it.



Silvio Gabriel

Silvio Gabriel is a native of Cuba. He graduated in Russia and then returned to his home town of Matanzas in order to work there as a marine engineer. Later on he worked as a musician and animator. During this he got to know his first wife. In 1998 he followed her to Schladming. In 2001 Gabriel founded the group "Cuba libre" and has since done performances all over Austria. In 2007 Gabriel was the first to pass the newly-introduced citizenship test.



Louis Sanou

The djembe and balafon player Louis Sanou from Burkina Faso was born in a West African Griot family, where storytelling and music with traditional instruments have always been practised as a family profession. In 2003, he came to Europe as a musician with Andre Heller's show AFRIKA, AFRIKA.



Ismael Barrios Orozco

Ismael Barrios Orozco comes from Venezuela. Most recently he studied classical guitar at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz before concentrating completely on his passion for percussion. Barrios has realised numerous theatrical and musical projects and has contributed to international TV productions. As the leader of the group "Ismael Barrios Salsa Orchestra" he is often on tour with star percussionist Martin Grubinger amongst others.

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FACES AND PLACES is a production of STUDIO PERCUSSION graz in cooperation with the Festival La Strada Graz.

www.lastrada.at