

Jere Laukkanen (b. 1963, Helsinki, Finland)

Composer, Arranger, Conductor, Music Instructor, Bass

BIOGRAPHY

Although **Jere Laukkanen** is probably best known for his work in combining modern jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms, he has a long history of various musical activities. As a youth he played flute and alto sax in **Oulunkylä Brass Bands**, studied drums, recorded as a singer, guitar player and bandleader, and then commenced professional studies on the bass at the **Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory**. Laukkanen later concentrated more and more on composing and arranging, with **Henrik Otto Donner** and **Kaj Backlund** as his teachers, ao. He also studied conducting with **Maria Schneider** ao. Laukkanen continued his studies at the **Sibelius Academy, Dept. of Jazz Music**, where he earned a Master of Music degree in Jazz Composition. He is also a graduate of **The Helia School of Vocational Teacher Education**, Helsinki, Finland. At present, he is writing a doctoral dissertation on jazz rhythm at the Sibelius Academy.

Jere Laukkanen works as Senior Lecturer at the **Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Department of Music**, teaching composition, arranging, ear-training, music theory, songwriting, and orchestras/ensembles. He was the Head of the Music Department in 2008-2016 and is now the Lecturer in Charge of the Music Writing and Production Major. Laukkanen is a much sought-after arranger, composer and conductor, and has written for all major Finnish television channels and numerous orchestras, including **European Jazz Orchestra, UMO Jazz Orchestra, Vantaa Pops Orchestra**, and **Lahti Symphony Orchestra**. Besides his own band, **Jere Laukkanen Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra**, for which he is the sole composer and arranger, he has conducted jazz orchestras like the **European Jazz Orchestra** (multinational), **UMO Jazz Orchestra** (Finland), **Berklee Jazz Composers' Big Band** (USA), **Radio Romania Big Band, Big Band Conservatori del Liceu** (Spain), and **Estonian Dream Big Band**, to name a few.

"This year's conductor and first composer, the sympathetic and exceptionally competent Finn Jere Laukkanen..."
--- Flemming Nordenhof, Herning Folkeblad

"Jere Laukkanen's Finnish Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra is an ensemble that clearly understands both the spirit and the content of the music. ... Any doubters who question the global reach of jazz in general, and latin jazz in particular, are directed to the superb writing and playing on this easy-to-overlook album."
--- Don Heckman, Los Angeles Times

"...conductor, composer, arranger Jere Laukkanen. El Maestro! Master Wizard!"
--- Anca Romeci, Societatea Romania de Radiodifuziune

"... Talk about a multicultural affair. It was once said of Baroque composer Handel that he...'was a Saxon, living in England, writing Italian operas.' Jere Laukkanen's Finnish Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra is a Scandinavian bunch playing American Music, channeling Chano Pozo. The result is a brash, loud, complex mercurial affair that jumps out and grabs the listener by the shirt collar. ... He has a smart ear and engaging compositional style."
--- C. Michael Bailey, www.allaboutjazz.com

"Afro-Cuban Big Band with Finnish musicians would not seem a likely success story but Jere and his band do an excellent job! They capture nuances in the music with daring new arrangements that freshen classics like "Manteca" and modernize ancient chants of the Yoruba tribe."
--- D. Oscar Groomes, O's Place Jazz Newsletter (New Jersey)

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