

## Michael Borek It Happened In June



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Michael Borek wurde 1963 in Lyon geboren und ist in Frankreich und Tirol aufgewachsen. Mit sechs Jahren erhielt er seinen ersten Klavierunterricht. Mit zwölf Jahren entdeckte er die Musik von Keith Jarrett und diese motivierte ihn, selber für Klavier zu komponieren und zu improvisieren. Soweit die Fakten. Nach „Beyond The Ocean“ und „Meditation“ ist „It Happened In June“ Boreks neuestes Solo Album. Dass der Pianist vorwiegend von klassischen Komponisten wie Satie, Chopin und Bartok beeinflusst ist, kann man bei diesem gut erkennen. Borek ist ein Romantiker durch und durch, neben den elegischen Eigenkompositionen hat Borek noch Mercers „Once Upon A Summertime“, John Williams „Hativka – Theme From Schindler’s List“ und „Pea-



ce Piece“ von Bill Evans im Repertoire, das sich zwar ein wenig in der Nähe des Jazz aufhält, aber diesen nicht tatsächlich lebt. Im Vergleich: Keith Jarrett fordert (bis in wenigen Ausnahmen) in seinen Improvisationen die Hörerinnen und Hörer heraus, erschafft aber im großen Meer des freien Jazz immer wieder kurze Wohlfühl-Inseln, um sich danach wieder auf den Weg in heftigeren Wellengang zu begeben. Boreks Musik ist eine Insel und so schön sie auch ist, würde man sich auch Ausflüge auf das offene Jazz Meer wünschen. **bak**

(...) After “Beyond The Ocean” and “Meditations”, “It Happened In June” is Borek’s latest solo album. One can well recognize there that as a pianist he is mainly influenced by classical composers like Satie, Chopin and Bartók. Borek is a romantic through and through; besides elegiac personal compositions he also has in his repertoire Mercer’s “Once Upon A Summertime”, John Williams’ “Hatikva-Theme From Schindler's List” and Bill Evans’ “Peace Piece”, which are indeed a little closer to jazz, but without truly living the latter. In comparison: Keith Jarrett in his improvisations (with a few exceptions) challenges his listeners, but he also repeatedly creates in the great sea of free jazz short islands of well-being, to set out after that again in rougher seas. Borek’s music is an island, and as beautiful as it is, one would also wish excursions to this open sea of jazz.

Audio Reviews

## Michael Borek: It Happened In June

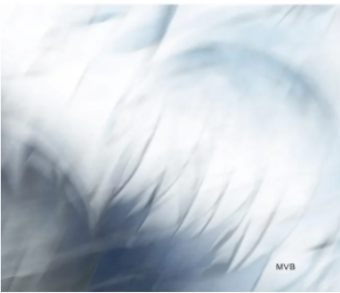
Solo Franco-Austrian pianist follows the Evans-Jarrett trail, taking a diversion on three pieces into what Messiaen called mode two

By **Sophie Prior** - 18 October 2022

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Michael Borek *It Happened In June*



*It Happened In June* is a 17-track album of solo piano by the French and Austrian pianist Michael Borek. What characterises the album is the subtle blend of classical style and jazz harmony: Borek makes the piano sing with expressive and emotional melodies, yet all in the context of a freer harmonic language than one might expect.

Borek's stylistic blend perhaps comes from the wide variety of musical influences he had growing up: the classical masters such as

Bartok, Satie and Chopin, as well as the jazz players Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck. Pianist Keith Jarrett also deserves a mention; his mixture of classical sensibility and harmonic freedom are integral to Borek's musical personality.

Reading the composition notes whilst listening adds to the experience. We come to understand the meanings behind each piece and improvisation, and instead of just hearing a skilled pianist, we hear a pianist trying to communicate something; whether that be a story, a person or a style, Borek communicates emotion, and delicately so.

The album features improvisations on past compositions, such as *The Seashore* and *Valley Of Silence*, as well as new ones in improvisations in E, G, F# and C. We also have tributes in style to masters such as Bill Evans with *My Story*, as well as to Olivier Messiaen: *Cloches Sur Le Lac*, *La Vallée Des Torrents* and *La Grotte De Cristal* exclusively use Messiaen's mode two [or, to seasoned jazz improvisers, the plain ol' diminished scale – Ed].

Once Upon A Summertime-Whispering Your Name and *Hatikva-Theme From Schindler's List* are more personal tracks, the latter being a dedication to his grandfather Lajzer Borek, who died in Sobibor extermination camp during Shoah. There are also arrangements of songs: *Septembre (Quel Joli Temps)* is the pianist's first attempt to arrange a song from French chanson and he captures the waltz feel as well as the memorable main melody.

*It Happened in June* is a diverse album full of rich melodies and rich harmony, and an example of a pianist using his instrument as an emotional outlet and a way to stylistic creativity.

### Discography

*Meditation I (The Seashore); Septembre (Quel Joli Temps); Improvisation In E; My Story; Meditation II (Una Corda Song); Once Upon A Summertime-Whispering Your Name; Improvisation In G; Mediation III (Valley Of Silence); Tears (Improvisation In F#); Hatikva-Theme From Schindler's List; Mediation IV (La Forza Del Destino); Peace Piece; Cloches Sur Le Lac; La Vallée Des Torrents; La Grotte De Cristal; It Happened in June; Eternity (75.00)*

Borek (p). Austria, June 2022.

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