

  
**EDINBURGH  
INTERNATIONAL  
FESTIVAL**

# THOMAS QUASTHOFF QUARTET

**FOR YOU**

—

24 Aug 7.30pm

EDINBURGH ACADEMY JUNIOR SCHOOL

The performance lasts approx. 1hr 10mins  
with no interval.

Please ensure all mobile phones and electronic  
devices are turned off or put on silent.

# THOMAS QUASTHOFF QUARTET

FOR YOU

—

**Thomas Quasthoff** Vocals

**Simon Oslender** Piano

**Dieter Ilg** Bass

**Wolfgang Haffner** Percussion

# PROGRAMME NOTES

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German bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff was one of the world's great classical singers, winner of three Grammy awards, fêted performer on opera stages and in concert halls right across the globe and dubbed 'the man with the most beautiful voice in the world' by magazine *Der Stern*.

In 2012, however, he unexpectedly announced his retirement from public performance. Quasthoff pointed to several reasons for his decision: illness, the strains of touring, and also the death of his brother Michael — who he called 'my dearest and greatest confidant, in both artistic and human matters' — from lung cancer. The period that followed, however, was far from fallow. Quasthoff took the opportunity to experiment artistically and to shift his musical direction towards a style he'd always admired but never performed: jazz.

When Quasthoff returned to the stage, it was as a jazz singer, enjoying the fresh sense of expressive freedom that was seldom available to him in classical music, as well as a new intimacy through the microphone. His repertoire blends jazz standards and pop classics old and new, from Gershwin

to Hoagy Carmichael, Stevie Wonder to John Lennon. For today's concert, he's joined by three long-term musical collaborators, all among Germany's most respected jazz musicians. Bassist Dieter Ilg has performed with Quasthoff since 2007; drummer Wolfgang Haffner has a performing career that stretches across many musical genres; and Simon Oslender was once considered a child prodigy across piano, organ and keyboards.

**David Kettle**

# THOMAS QUASTHOFF

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For almost four decades, Thomas Quasthoff has set the standard on international stages, moving the hearts of countless listeners with his artistry. He ended his outstanding career as a classical singer in 2012. However, he has retained his close ties to singing and music as a teacher at the Hanns Eisler Music Academy in Berlin and in various masterclasses. In addition to his teaching commitments, he has also discovered several new talents, appearing as a jazz and soul singer, narrator and even actor.

One of the most remarkable singers in his field, Quasthoff was a frequent guest of such orchestras as the Berliner Philharmoniker, Vienna Philharmonic and many other fine ensembles. He has performed at all of the world's major music venues, working closely with conductors including Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Christoph Eschenbach, James Levine, Bernard Haitink, Mariss Jansons, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Simon Rattle, Helmuth Rilling, Christian Thielemann and Franz Welser-Möst.

He gave his highly acclaimed opera debut in 2003 as the Minister in Beethoven's *Fidelio* with the Berliner Philharmoniker under Sir Simon Rattle at the Salzburg Easter Festival. His debut at the Vienna State Opera in the role of Amfortas in Wagner's *Parsifal* under Donald Runnicles followed in spring 2004. In January 2005, he returned to Vienna in the same role to perform under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle.

Quasthoff has been artist in residence at Vienna's Musikverein, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw, New York's Carnegie Hall and the Lucerne Festival, as well as in Baden-Baden and Hamburg, and at London's Wigmore Hall and Barbican. He released his new soul/blues/jazz programme *Tell It Like It Is* in 2010, and his new jazz album *Nice'n'Easy* in 2018, bringing him to numerous concert venues throughout Europe.

He was a professor at the Hochschule für Musik in Detmold from 1996 to 2004, and has taught at the Hanns Eisler Music Academy in Berlin ever since, where he dedicates himself passionately to the upcoming generation of singers. This devotion inspired him to launch the Das Lied international song competition. He has given masterclasses at festivals including Salzburg, Heidelberger Frühling, the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg, Verbier and Aldeburgh.

# SIMON OSLENDER

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Born in Aachen in 1998, Simon Oslender began to play drums at the age of two, and took his first classical piano lessons at the age of eight. While still in high school, in 2010 at the age of 12, he started playing professionally. He teamed up with drum virtuoso Jérôme Cardynaals and formed the duo Twogether. It won three awards at the prestigious Prinses Christina Jazz Concours in Amsterdam which served as a strong start to Oslender's career. In its ten years of playing together, the duo has toured all over Europe, worked with various greats in the jazz world (including Lonnie Smith and Nils Landgren), and produced two critically acclaimed albums.

At the age of 23, Oslender is currently touring the globe with some of the most acclaimed artists in the music world. He became a member of German drumming legend Wolfgang Haffner's band as well as saxophone icon Bill Evans's new band Bill Evans & The Spykillers!. In 2019, he joined Thomas Quasthoff's jazz quartet with Wolfgang Haffner and Dieter Ilg.

His debut album, *About Time*, was released in 2020, featuring original compositions by Oslender as well as an exciting cast of special guests: Randy Brecker, Bill Evans, Wolfgang Haffner, Christopher Dell and Ricky Peterson (who also appears as co-producer).



# DIETER ILG

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Bassist Dieter Ilg was born in Offenburg in 1961, and studied at the Freiburg Music Academy with Wolfgang Stert and at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. He took practical lessons from renowned bass players including Eddie Gómez, Ron McClure, Rufus Reid and Ron Carter. From 1989 to 1991, he was Ron Carter's successor as a regular member of the Randy Brecker Quintet. For many years, he played with the Mangelsdorff/Dauner Quintet and with the French-Vietnamese guitarist Nguyễn Lê.

From the mid-1990s onwards, he began to arrange folk songs as jazz pieces, finding enthusiastic colleagues in Wolfgang Muthspiel and Steve Argüelles. In 2001 he founded his own label, fullfat. Also winner of the Baden-Württemberg Jazz Prize in 1988, Ilg has drawn on talents across numerous musical styles, including those of the Norwegian vocalist Rebekka Bakken, Tunisian singer and oud player Dhafer Youssef, and the renowned German artists Till Brönner and Thomas Quasthoff.

Together with his award-winning trio, Ilg has been invited to well-known festivals and renowned concert halls. Since 1995 he has taught jazz double bass at the Freiburg Music Academy, also giving masterclasses in Germany and abroad. In 2011 and 2014 he won the ECHO Jazz Award in the best national bassist category. Among his recordings are *Otello*, *Parsifal*, *Mein Beethoven* and *B-A-C-H*.

# WOLFGANG HAFFNER

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Wolfgang Haffner is one of the most important percussionists and composers throughout the music world. He began his career at the age of 18, when jazz legend Albert Mangelsdorff invited him to join his band.

Haffner has played and recorded with such eminent musicians as Chaka Kahn, Al Jarreau, Pat Metheny, the Brecker Brothers, Ivan Lins, Jan Garbarek, Gregory Porter, Michael Franks, Roy Ayers, Bugge Wesseltoft, the Manhattan Transfer, Nils Petter Molvær, the JB Horns, Esbjörn Svensson, Bob James, Mezzoforte, Lee Ritenour, Till Brönner, Joe Sample, Larry Carlton, Cassandra Wilson, Clark Terry, Johnny Griffin, Nils Landgren, Mike Stern, Chuck Loeb, Hildegard Knef, Konstantin Wecker, Die Fantastischen Vier, Xavier Naidoo, the NDR Big Band and the WDR Big Band. He has also worked with some of the best-known names on the electronic music scene, including Ricardo Villalobos, Timo Maas and Nightmares on Wax.

Haffner can be heard on more than 400 albums. He has performed all around the world at the most important jazz festivals and toured 100 countries,

from Japan to the USA, from South Africa to Brazil. As a leader, he has released 18 solo albums, notably *Round Silence*, *Heart of the Matter*, *Kind of Cool*, *Kind of Spain* and *Kind of Tango*. He has also produced bands including Mezzoforte and the singer Max Mutzke.

In 2010 and 2018 he received the ECHO Jazz Award, followed by the Culture Award of his hometown of Nuremberg in 2014. In 2021 Haffner tours with his new programme *Haffner plays Haffner*, presenting just his own compositions.

## AUDIENCE SURVEY

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