

Media Information
04 May 2019

Winner of the BMW Welt Jazz Award 2019: The Maciej Obara Quartet.

Four versus five – Quartet wins.

Munich. The Polish jazz musician and saxophonist Maciej Obara and his quartet have delivered the winning performance in the final round of the BMW Welt Jazz Award 2019. With 'Saxophone Worlds' as the theme, the competition transformed the Auditorium of the BMW Welt into a jazz experience unlike any other. In a play-off against the Rudresh Mahanthappa Quintet, the Maciej Obara Quartet was able to take the top prize, with Dominik Wania on piano, Ole Morten Vagan on bass and Gard Nilssen on percussion.

The award was presented by Dr Nicolas Peter, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, Finance and City of Munich Cultural Adviser Dr Hans-Georg Küppers. Created specially by BMW Design, it was accompanied by prize money for the winner and runner up, with €10,000 awarded to the Maciej Obara Quartet and €5,000 to the Rudresh Mahanthappa Quintet.

Based on the theme of 'Saxophone Worlds', the BMW Welt Jazz Award 2019 centred on the instrument voted by the Association of Federal State Music Councils as Instrument of the Year 2019. The many facets of the woodwind instrument were demonstrated at six free matinee performances in the spring of this year, inspiring audiences of jazz lovers at the BMW Welt.

The specialist jury commented: "Rudresh Mahanthappa's consistent and immersive combination of bebop and modern jazz informed by elements of Indian music and rock has enthralled the jury. At the same time, they were equally enchanted by the enormous amplitude of emotion, the dynamics and possibilities of expression, with which Maciej Obara and his quartet was able to surprise and fascinate its audience. Just as the lightness of his sound, the power of his composition and the spontaneity of his delicate lyrics as well as the unchained power of this outstanding ensemble's improvisations turned the quartet into this year's winner."

Bandleader Maciej Obara convinced the jury with his lyrical playing style and outstanding technique. His creative reinterpretation of the familiar and respected musical instrument enchanted not only the audience but also the jury.

A further factor in determining the winner was the audience votes from the matinee performances. The Céline Bonacina Crystal Quartet can now look forward to an exclusive stay and performance at the Bavarian castle Schloss Elmau.

Dr Nicolas Peter, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, Finance, praised the skill of the two ensembles that had made it through to the final round: "Both of them delivered emotional and passionate interpretations of the theme 'Saxophone Worlds'. I would like to congratulate the Maciej Obara Quartet on winning the award. The language of jazz transcends cultures and unites people across the continents. Its power was very apparent today, palpable for us here in the Auditorium of the BMW Welt. This year the BMW Welt Jazz Award was a fitting celebration of the most significant instrument in jazz music. I look forward to the years ahead as well: in 2020 the theme of the awards will be

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‘The Melody at Night’. For the first time, the competition will comprise a series of evening concerts. I would like to thank our long-standing partners for their support, especially the City of Munich.”

Cultural Adviser Dr Hans-Georg Küppers also expressed his delight: “This finale with two outstanding ensembles was another special highlight for the Munich music scene. I would like to thank BMW for their tremendous, long-standing commitment to culture and, in particular, for this successful series of events. It demonstrates to so many people the multifaceted nature of this cosmopolitan music style and is the envy of so many other cities.”

During the course of the competition, from January to March, Sunday matinee performances were given by six renowned ensembles from around the world. Besides the two finalists, the musicians playing in the ‘double cone’ structure of BMW Welt were: the Céline Bonacina Crystal Quartet (France), the Geraldine Laurent Quartet (France), Matthieu Bordenave Archipel (France) and Maria Faust Machina (Estonia).

The winner of the BMW Welt Jazz Award 2019 was selected by a top-class jury of reputable jazz experts and connoisseurs. Chaired by Oliver Hochkeppel (music and culture correspondent with Süddeutsche Zeitung), the panel members were: Roland Spiegel (music editor and jazz specialist with the Bavarian broadcaster BR-KLASSIK), Andreas Kolb (editor-in-chief of JazzZeitung.de and new - neue musikzeitung), Heike Lies (musicologist with the Music and Musical Theatre Division of the City of Munich’s Department of Culture), and Christiane Böhnke-Geisse (artistic director of the international jazz festival Bingen swingt).

This year the BMW Welt Jazz Awards once again benefited from the kind support of BR-KLASSIK, nmz, Schloss Elmau and the City of Munich Culture Department.

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About BMW Group Cultural Engagement

For almost 50 years now, the BMW Group has initiated and engaged in over 100 cultural cooperations worldwide. The company places the main focus of its long-term commitment on contemporary and modern art, classical music and jazz as well as architecture and design. In 1972, three large-scale paintings were created by the artist Gerhard Richter specifically for the foyer of the BMW Group's Munich headquarters. Since then, artists such as Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Daniel Barenboim, Jonas Kaufmann and architect Zaha Hadid have co-operated with BMW. In 2016 and 2017, female artist Cao Fei from China and American John Baldessari created the next two vehicles for the BMW Art Car Collection. Besides co-initiatives, such as BMW Tate Live, the BMW Art Journey and the "Opera for All" concerts in Berlin, Munich, Moscow and London, the company also partners with leading museums and art fairs as well as orchestras and opera houses around the world. The BMW Group takes absolute creative freedom in all its cultural activities – as this initiative is as essential for producing groundbreaking artistic work as it is for major innovations in a successful business.

Further information: www.bmwgroup.com/culture and www.bmwgroup.com/culture/overview

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BMW Welt – at the heart of the brand, on the pulse of the city

The BMW Welt welcomes over 3 million visitors per year. With its pioneering architecture, BMW Welt is the heart of all the brands in the BMW Group – BMW, the sub-brands BMW M and BMW i, MINI, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and BMW Motorrad, which are impressively presented in their own worlds of experience. But it is not only the exhibitions and the collection of new vehicles that are highlights for car lovers from all over the world. Visitors can enjoy a year-round programme of varied events covering culture, art and entertainment as well as a popular event location for over 400 external events per year. The various restaurants of the BMW Welt offer a variety of culinary delights up to star gastronomy. In the BMW Welt Junior Campus, children and youngsters can enjoy exciting guided tours and workshops on the themes of mobility and sustainability.

The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2018, the BMW Group sold over 2,490,000 passenger vehicles and more than 165,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2018 was € 9.815 billion on revenues amounting to € 97.480 billion. As of 31 December 2018, the BMW Group had a workforce of 134,682 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain,

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comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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