

40 ART SCENE By Melissa Hekkers



There are no straight lines, only 'Curves'

Dimitris Kakavoulis Quartet's new album pulls together some of the island's top jazz talent

The zenith of a seven year effort to locate the right people with the right chemistry is the outcome of a newly released jazz album by the Dimitris Kakavoulis Quartet (DKQ). An effort that despite having had to reinvent the quartet, in part, to meet the demands of the Cypriot Jazz scene, embraces the realms of the local music scene and portrays the talent of local musicians who have strived to realise the sounds inside the quartet's founder's head.

Entitled *Curves*, "the concept of the album title mostly stems from the fact that there are no straight lines in nature. Only curves of sorts. Straight lines are an abstraction of the human mind. Also the curves that are formed from notes on a page as the music develops... and so on..." explains Kakavoulis, somewhat relevant to the path he had to follow in order to produce what is DKQ's first album.

"The musicians that come together to play in a band are crucial, especially when it comes to jazz or improvised music, as to what the sound of the band is going to be. So are the actual instruments that they play. I've had to reinvent the concept of the band because the musicians are different in terms of personality, but also some of the instruments have changed. We now have electric bass instead of acoustic, and trumpet or flute instead of a tenor saxophone. We have even hosted a violin player for some gigs! The repertoire therefore had to include more ambient compositions or even funkier ones in order to accommodate this new, more electric sound," continues Kakavoulis, who also composes the music for the Quartet.

The band draws from various music influences including Afro-American traditional music, African, Latin-American and Greek music, to more modern styles and genres such as New York jazz which clearly stands out within this first album. A good number of the compositions featured on the album have been around since 2004-5 and some are more recent. The whole thing finally came together this year, "we recorded 'Curves' in a four-hour studio session in the summer of 2011."

The quartet consists of Dimitris Kollias on the tenor saxophone; one of the leading saxophonists and musicians on the island who participates in major jazz figures such as the Big Band of Athens, the Fire Aether and the Jazz Utopia, Pericles Trivolis on the double bass; who is also very active and participates in explosive bands like Nucleus trio and collaborates with leading jazz musicians abroad, Leandros Fratnik on the drums; a young,



talented and very musical drummer with intense activity during the past two years and Dimitris Kakavoulis himself on piano.

Working closely with these musicians throughout the past seven years during which Kakavoulis was coming and going to the island from Greece where he was based, Dimitris studied at the 'Philippos Nakas' Music School in Athens where he was highly active in the local music scene after having pursued further studies in England at the 'Birmingham Conservatoire' and in Belgium at the 'Brussels Conservatoire'.

Moving to another country in the name of music was both a personal and professional challenge. "At first it was quite hard for all the reasons one can imagine. Moving to a new place, the uncertainty, starting over away from one's loved ones etc. It helped having many great friends here though who helped and supported me, making the difficulties of the transition go into the background," Kakavoulis tells me.

Yet he dismisses the potential of restraints a musician may face when trying to grow in a small country and music scene after having moved permanently to the island in 2011. "There were several ongoing projects for me here even before moving (to Cyprus). They were ready; the people were there. Despite the fact that

there may not be that many people to choose from in general, I'm perfectly happy overall with the people I work with; so that doesn't really concern me. The fact that people have to 'go around' a lot is a material reality that one can hardly avoid almost anywhere in the world these days..."

Kakavoulis maintains this positive attitude throughout his musical endeavours, whether this has to do with the array of musicians available, or even the venues available to perform his work in. He accommodates what is available and makes the best out of it. Finding venues for the Quartet to play in, "this process brought to the surface several compositions that I never had the chance to perform in the past."

But behind DKQ's journey and the delicate choices and efforts made to offer music of such standards and making albums such as *Curves* available to the local public, it's evident that Kakavoulis' inner drive, as anyone 'playing' with the realms of creation, is sharing one's inner ideals in a unique manner. And this is where his need to compose music more than play it comes from. As he says, "Sometimes existing compositions are not quite what you need in order to externalise what's inside you."

The album "Curves" can be ordered online at [facebook.com/DKQuartet](https://www.facebook.com/DKQuartet) or via email at rimshot_d@talk21.com or from Kala Kathoumena in the centre of Nicosia. It will be available at other selling points shortly.

