

Thaïsa Olivia Quartet

Thaïsa Olivia – vocals
Christian Doepke – piano
Sven Schuster – double bass
Joost Kesselaar – drums
Optional: guest soloist Kurt Weiss – trumpet



Thaïsa Olivia is a Dutch/American/German/Russian passionate singer, songwriter and lyricist, with a warm, distinctive sound and a special flair and presentation, based in Amsterdam The Netherlands. Already at a very young age singing and dancing were her passion and so she took a variety of lessons. She enjoyed her vocal training at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, amongst others with Sylvie Lane and continued with Aikema Mildred, Deborah Carter, Adrienne West and with Al Foster in New York.

Thaïsa performed both in The Netherlands, as well as abroad with her own Thaïsa Olivia Quartet, The Thaïsa Olivia Band, The Grand Piano Boogie Train, The Jaap Dekker Band, Hot Club de Frank, The Feenbrothers, The Croonettes (Germany tour) and the international music theatre group "Up with People" (U.S.- and European tour). After 3 years of touring as one of the three leading ladies of the famous close-harmony trio The Croonettes in the theaters in Germany, Thaïsa is now back in the Netherlands to focus on her own jazz quartet and other projects. But as a woman of the world, her next CD with only original compositions, will be recorded in New York. A place on this planet which always inspires her and makes her happy.

Her quartet interprets pieces from the American Songbook 'with a sense of lyricism and expressiveness', selected by Thaïsa, thus giving wellknown and lesser-known songs a unique interpretation. The repertoire consists of pieces written and/or are sung by Cole Porter, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Cy Coleman, Rodgers & Hart, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern and Kurt Elling, a.o.

Nowadays Thaïsa also focuses on composing her own work with original lyrics and arrangements. Coming season this will be the larger part of the repertoire. Thaïsa works with three excellent musicians, who have each a proven and earned their reputation. On occasion they are supplemented with guest soloist Kurt Weiss on trumpet.

Reviews:

- "(...) My first impression of Thaïsa I would therefore like to describe as a "sophisticated lady", with a lot of respect for her audience and the timeless repertoire of the great American composers (...) Especially "Cry Me a River", arranged by bass player Sven Schuster and Thaïsa... Thaïsa manages to evoke, turn this song into a true gem. This also applies to her original song "How Do You Know", (...) The melody, which is very pleasant to the ear, as well as the lyrics fascinate from beginning to end. This composition triggers my curiosity towards future songs, which hopefully will flow out of her pen." Hans Frijling (Jazzcorner)
- "Silky smooth! Thaïsa Olivia pleasantly surprised and pleased the packed room with her spontaneous singing with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band on a cold November rainy night in New Orleans. Impromptu singing with any unfamiliar band can often be much less than satisfying but Thaïsa's voice blended and moved in sync with the old familiar Preservation Hall personages. Such a treat! We could do no better than hearing her more often.... Preferably here in New Orleans!" L.V.Vehaskari (PhD, CEO GVEediting Associates "Keeping Your Voice in Your Manuscript")
- "(...) Thaïsa Olivia, an exceptional and fascinating singer. She showed a lot of nerve, choosing pretty complex songs, yet managed to bring them into the limelight with a lot of flair, captivating her audience. At her side trumpeter Kurt Weiss, blowing calm yet fantastic, behind her the ever-listening Ed Boeke on piano, Sven Schuster with his solid bass lines and Joost Kesselaar grooving impetuously on drums. A true feast!" Henk de Boer (Jazzclub Langs de Lijn)
- "Through this selection of songs, ranging from her own compositions to tastefully arranged standards, Thaïsa tells her story in a way that is uniquely hers; with a melange of colors, styles, musing and some surprises. A lovely ride!" Deborah J. Carter (jazz vocalist)



Bandmembers of the Thaisa Olivia Quartet:

Christian Doepke (piano)

Christian studied jazz piano at the Arnhem Conservatory, where he graduated in 1994. After his graduation he moved back to Munich, Germany. From 1995 to 2005 he performed with several groups in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Turkey. As a pianist, arranger and sideman he has contributed to many television, movie and theatre productions and numerous Cds. In 2003 he recorded 'Heaven Knows', his first solo album, featuring original compositions, followed by 'ADLIBS', his trio record featuring former Miles Davis sideman Rick Margitza, released in May 2008 by the emerging record label JAZZ & MILK. In 2006 Christian moved to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and has since then become an active member of the Dutch jazz scene. Christian has worked with: Rhiannon, Joey Blake, David Worm, Sheila Jordan, Jenny Evans, Rick Margitza, Rick Keller, Johannes Enders, Claudio Roditti, Horacio Hernandez, William Galison, Dusko Goikovich, Guido May, John Engels, Henning Sieverts, Christian Diener, Thaisa Olivia, Deborah J. Carter, Liz Howard, Masha Bijlsma, Peter Horton, Elke Voltz, Die Blauen Engel and The Croonettes amongst others.

Joost Kesselaar (drums)

In 1996, Joost Kesselaar graduated at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, the Netherlands. He continued his studies with Jeff Hamilton (the regular drummer of the late Oscar Peterson) Los Angeles and New York. Joost played with Toon Roos, Clark Terry, Benny Bailey, Jesse van Ruller, Michiel Borstlap, Barend Middelhof, Fleurine and Rick Margitza a.o. As a band member he has won several jazz awards, including the European Jazzcontest and the Middelsee Jazztreffen. Joost currently is a member of the Gerard Kleijn Group. In addition, he also plays in the groups of Soesja Citroen and David Golek, as well as many others. Joost is one of the most in-demand drummers in the Dutch jazz scene.

Sven Schuster (double bass)

From 1984 to 1988 Sven Schuster studied at the Musikhochschule in Graz, Austria. He continued his studies in Hilversum, the Netherlands, where he graduated in 1991. In that same year he won the Best Soloist Award at the Middelsee Jazztreffen in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Sven has performed and recorded with numerous renowned musicians, including Herb Geller, Wolfgang Muthspiel, Alan Praskin, Bill Elgart, Wolfgang Haffner, Mel Lewis, Ferdinand Povel, Ack van Rooyen, Han Bennink, Steve Altenberg, John Engels, Rick Margitza, Dale Barlow, Jim Hall a.o. Sven also toured in Europe, Africa, Jamaica, USA and Canada. In 1999 he released 'Three Is a Crowd', his first cd as a leader, which received wide critical acclaim. 'Shooster', his 2nd recording, was released in 2004.

Kurt Weiss (trumpet)

Kurt Weiss began his music studies at The North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Raymond Mase. He took a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Charles Geyer, a former member of the Chicago Symphony. Weiss performed with the award-winning Eastman Jazz Ensemble, led by Rayburn Wright. He received his Master of Music degree at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he assisted in giving trumpet master classes, jazz improvisation and big band masterclasses. Weiss performed with Aretha Franklin among others, Frank Foster, Steve Grossman, Natalie Cole, Donna Summer, Rosemary Clooney, Mel Torme and Bobby Short. Weiss toured extensively as soloist with the orchestras of Ray Charles, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller and Jimmy Dorsey. During his years in New York he performed with the orchestras of Toshiko Akiyoshi, Mario Bouza, Maria Schneider, Barry Harris and the Village Vanguard Monday Night Orchestra. In addition, he toured with his own bands in the USA and Europe, he performed in many Broadway theater orchestras and television shows and contributed to several CD productions. Weiss is currently a professor at the Prince Claus Conservatoire in Groningen, offering a unique jazz training called *New York Comes to Groningen* in which New York jazz scene is a central theme.



Press quotes

RakenDra Smit, Muziekwereld:

- 'With the clear sound of her voice, technical skills and the ability to translate all about letting go of loved ones to music, Thaisa Olivia leaves us deeply impressed with her album.'

Matthew Warnock, Review You:

- 'While there are many current singers who enjoy singing tunes out of the Great American Songbook in a traditional style, others, such as the talented singer Thaisa Olivia, prefer to move between the old and the new in their arrangements and vocal interpretations. Olivia brings her unique voice and personalized approach to jazz on her album Let Go, and the results are absolutely first rate'.
- There is something to be said for taking expectations and throwing them out the window, as long as the end result is entertaining and successful, which this album absolutely is. Fans of jazz vocalists, both traditional and modern, will find something to enjoy on these 10 well-thought out and expertly performed tracks'.



Dan MacIntosh, Review You:

- 'She vocalizes as though rock & roll, and a whole myriad of other musical styles, never even happened. Instead, she voices torch songs the way they were meant to be sung – over jazz arrangements'.
- 'You'd hardly guess she was not a homegrown American vocalist by the sound of Let Go'.
- 'The musicianship is extremely American, with plenty of traditional jazz instrumentation throughout and finds Olivia scatting fast and accurately, in a way that would even make Ella Fitzgerald proud'.
- 'Olivia is a wonderful retro jazz vocalist and Let Go is a treat for fans of beautifully sung jazz'.

Wildy Haskell, Review You:

- 'Thaisa Olivia displays a distinctive talent for phrasing and interpretation on Let Go. Coupled with a deep, warm alto sound that is exceedingly pleasant to listen to, Olivia leaves a strong impression on all whose ears are within range of her voice'.
- 'Showing a level of control and precision that's impressive, while maintaining an unexpected warmth'.
- 'Her rendition of Cy Coleman's "With Every Breath I Take" will probably rank as one of the finest renditions of that song outside of the Original Broadway Cast Recording'.
- 'Her ability to sell a song will ensure that audiences never walk away dissatisfied'.

Alex Henderson, Review You:

- 'She is a charming and expressive singer'.
- 'Olivia has good, clean articulation'.
- 'Olivia has no problem using the English language to get her points across emotionally'.

Nick De Riso, Review You:

- 'There's isn't much she won't try, and that keeps the album from falling into a rut of expectation'.

Heath Andrews, Review You:

- 'What vocalist Thaisa Olivia does with the songbook is exciting and original'.
- 'Though she draws on some familiar names like Cole Porter and Quincy Jones, Olivia gives them her own jazzy interpretations while juxtaposing them with some excellent pieces of original music. Accompanying her beautiful, powerful, and even sultry voice are an equally talented group of musicians, all of whom are responsible for making Olivia's album, Let Go, a tremendous recording'.
- 'Let It Go is the result of what happens when you amass a talented group of musicians, and let them play out time-tested songs along with ones they wrote based off their love and appreciation for that kind of music. As terrific as Thaisa Olivia is as a vocalist, she's also found herself one of the best possible backing bands a vocalist could ever ask for. Even at its slowest and sparsest moments, someone gives a performance to draw the listener into the song, and keep them there until it ends. Letting go can be a tough thing to do, but it's even more difficult when something is this well done'.