

Annual report 2019

UMO JAZZ ORCHESTRA IS NOW UMO HELSINKI JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Review helped outline future operations

The owner of the orchestra, the City of Helsinki, commissioned a review into the situation of the UMO Foundation in 2018. The review outlined its operations for the future and set a host of binding measures for its reorganisation. Most of these were carried out already in 2018: the foundation's by-laws, its profit target, operational and financial policies were updated; the role of the General Manager was clarified; and the musicians' collective agreement was reshaped. In addition, a members' club was launched and Ed Partyka was appointed Artistic Director for years 2020–2021.

In 2019, the process continued. In March, the orchestra changed its name, following a practice widely adopted by other big bands operating at an international level. Becoming UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra allows the big band to give its main sponsor and maintainer, the City of Helsinki, more visibility. A review was commissioned from Nyanza Oy on how to increase the elasticity of the big band's employee structure. Specialist trustees were appointed to the board, and a fixed-term audience outreach and project producer was recruited to improve the distribution of administrative work. Also, the board initiated the development of a new strategy, more firmly built around the orchestra's artistic vision. Negotiations were continued with key players in the industry on radio, TV and online broadcasting partnerships.

Organisation

UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra is a big band, whose regular line-up comprises 16 members. At the end of 2019, the orchestra had 12,5 permanent, salaried members. The remaining 3,5 positions were either fixed-term freelance or production-based posts. The UMO

Foundation employs a significant number of musicians, soloists, arrangers and composers annually, depending on the orchestra's programme. In 2019 the big band collaborated with 123 music professionals.

In addition to the orchestra members and a varying number of freelancers, the foundation employs four people responsible of administration, concert production and marketing communications.

Funding and finances

The UMO Foundation is funded by the City of Helsinki (46 %) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (28 %). Its current level of self-financing, 26 %, continues to be one of the highest among Finnish musical orchestras and comprises of e.g. private and festival performances and ticket sales. Staffing costs make up 68 % of the total operating costs. In 2019, the foundation reached its financial target and made a profit of 113 euros. This was the third consecutive profitable year for the UMO Foundation.

Attendance numbers increased

UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra offers a high-quality alternative for those interested in jazz and jazz-related genres. UMO Helsinki's listener base is established and the orchestra has a committed and active audience. In 2019, UMO Helsinki's concerts were attended by 32 907 people, in addition to which radio and online broadcasts reached altogether 341 000 listeners and viewers. Both the number of attendees and level of reach grew by 5 % from year 2018. The year 2019 saw UMO Helsinki perform in altogether 112 concerts, public and private events.