

A CHALLENGING BUT GOOD YEAR

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra only had 28 live events during the year 2021. Even more emphasis was put on digital activities.

Organisation

UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra is a big band with a default setup of sixteen musicians. At the end of year 2021 the orchestra had 12.5 permanently employed musicians with monthly salary. The rest, 3.5 posts, were filled by musicians with either temporary contracts of different lengths or production specific contracts. Each year, the UMO Foundation employs a substantial amount of musicians, soloists, arrangers and composers in different projects: during the year 2021 the orchestra co-operated with 128 professional musicians and other professionals in the event industry.

In addition to the orchestra and the freelancers, the UMO Foundation has four employees in charge of the administration, concert production, audience development as well as marketing and communication. The executive director of the UMO Foundation is Eeva Pirkkala and the artistic director is Ed Partyka.

Operations

During the year 2021 (in practice June to December), the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra arranged 28 live events due to audience and assembly restrictions. The attendance was 7107, which is in line with the low number of events. UMO continued the digital leap that was initiated last year. The orchestra performed 23 streamed concerts, with a total attendance of 15 432, and arranged a large amount of TV and radio broadcasts and other recordings and reached over a million pairs of eyes and ears.

During the year, UMO released one album, premiered 28 new compositions and 64 new arrangements.

New openings in audience outreach were digital content for nursing homes, summery jazz jam sessions with music students, educational and introduction videos in big band section playing as well as a new residency program together with partners. The audience development has also largely moved to the internet.

The orchestra's international operations have been rejuvenated since Ed Partyka began his period as artistic director and chief conductor in 2019. He has embraced the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra artistically. The instrumental repertoire and diversity of the orchestra has been broadened, and young talents as well as internationally interesting names have been more present in the orchestra than before. Partyka's period has been extended to the year 2024, including an option for the year 2025.

Objectives

The owner of the UMO Foundation, the city of Helsinki, has clarified the objectives of the foundation. One of the most important goals is working towards an ecologically sustainable development. UMO is committed to the programme Carbon-neutral Helsinki 2030, and commissioned a carbon footprint report as well as a roadmap to carbon neutral operations. The organisation strives to be carbon neutral by the year 2025.

Other goals set by the city are customer oriented operations as well as cultural and social effectiveness regionally and internationally. The customer satisfaction of UMO is extraordinary: 4.3/5. The recommendation index is high as well: 89 % of customers would recommend the concerts to others. UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra is viewed as an active and important actor that is easy to approach.

Funding and finances

The UMO Foundation is funded by its owner, the City of Helsinki (49.5 %), and the Ministry of Education and Culture (42 %). The self-financed part of the funding (8.5 %) comes from ticket sales as well as commissioned concerts and festival performances. The personnel costs account for 71 % of the total expenses. Despite the corona situation, the UMO Foundation achieved its financial goals and reached a positive result for the fifth consecutive year: the result was 2 980 euros.