

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Organisation

The UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra is a big band with a default setup of sixteen musicians. At the end of the year 2024 the orchestra had 13 permanently employed musicians with a monthly salary. The remaining 3 seats were filled by freelancer musicians with production specific contracts. Each year, the UMO Foundation employs a substantial number of musicians on a project basis, conductors, soloists, arrangers, composers and other professionals in the event industry. In 2024 the orchestra co-operated with 167 professionals altogether.

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 communications. The managing director of the UMO Foundation is Henriika Steidel-Luoto and the artistic director is Ed Partyka.

Highlights and numbers

The year 2024 was special for the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra in many ways. Successful program choices combined with effective communication led to good audience numbers, several sold out concerts and a record in euro-denominated ticket sales since the foundation's founding in 2008 (note: the orchestra itself was founded in 1975).

UMO performed in 88 live concerts which had a total of 34,231 visitors. There were 3 online concerts which reached 5,911 viewers. When the number of viewers of online concerts is added to the number of visitors of live concerts, the total audience for the year was 40,142.

One of the highlights of the year was UMO's children's music project, i.e. co-operation with the super popular Pikku Papun Orkesteri. Several joint concerts reached thousands of children, and UMO was awarded the Children's Music Project of the Year. This is a great demonstration that UMO's investment in audience outreach and education work is bearing fruit and bringing new generations to jazz.

UMO is a promise of new music: the orchestra premiered 10 compositions and performed 75 arrangements for the first time.

UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra aims to be an international, agile and networked operator and a sought-after partner both in Finland and worldwide. In 2024, UMO was invited to the Classical Beat Festival in Travemünde, Germany. International activities included bringing foreign guest conductors and soloists to Finland, as well as ordering new compositions and arrangements also from abroad. In addition, UMO participated in the Jazz Finland Residency.

The customer satisfaction of UMO was extraordinary: during the year 2024, the overall rating was 4,4 (on a scale from 1 to 5). The recommendation index is high: 91 % of customers would recommend concerts to others.

UMO contributes to the implementation of the cultural political objectives of the Helsinki city and strengthens the attractiveness of Helsinki by producing versatile and innovative concerts of high quality for different target audiences. As well, UMO's position as a nationally important jazz orchestra – the only one receiving central government transfers (VOS) – is important. In 2024 UMO performed in 18 municipalities around Finland.

UMO's objective is to be carbon neutral by the year 2025 and to gradually cut emissions by 70 % by the year 2035. This will be achieved by avoiding and reducing emissions across the whole operations according to the plan. The objective is to use money to compensate only the emissions that aren't avoidable.

Funding and Finances

The orchestra is funded by the UMO Foundation, which in turn is funded by its owner, the City of Helsinki (43,5 %), and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland (33 %). The self-financed part of the funding (23,5 %) comes from ticket sales as well as commissioned concerts and festival performances. The personnel costs account for two-thirds of the total expenses.

The result of the foundation was +30 399 euros.