

Charis Ioannou

Charis Ioannou was born in Nicosia, Cyprus in 1976. At the age of eight he started piano lessons and later picked up the saxophone at the age of fourteen. After graduating from high school he went on to do his military service, where he served his country as a sergeant in the military band playing tenor saxophone. In 1997 Charis was enrolled at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied saxophone performance and Jazz composition. Charis won the Woodwind Achievement Award in the last year of his studies in Boston and in 2001, after graduation, he moved to New York where he stayed for three years. While in New York, Charis earned his Masters degree in performance from the New York University and in the meantime performed and taught around the state. The collaboration with Rick Parker lead to the CD release of Rick Parker Collective – New York Gravity on the Fresh Sound Label where Charis plays tenor and soprano saxophones as well as doubling on bass clarinet. Charis left from the United States in 2005 and moved back to Cyprus. The return to his home country found Charis collaborating with various musicians. Charis is now a member of many local bands, including The Petsteppers, Uptown Beat, Kyprogenia and The Cyprus Big Band with which he performs around the island and other neighboring countries. In 2008, The Petsteppers released their debut album featuring compositions from its band members. The group was invited to play at The Cracow Jazz Festival in Poland and the concert's success was verified by the festival's director who invited the group to participate in the upcoming festival of 2009. Charis also teaches saxophone and the jazz idiom at the Nicosia University.