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LIVE REVIEW

## Outreach Festival 2021, Austria

ON 24 AUGUST 2021 • ( [LEAVE A COMMENT](#) )

**Outreach Festival**

(Schwaz, Austria 5-7 August. Report by Oliver Weindling)



The Makanda Project on the final night of Outreach. All photos courtesy of Outreach Festival

Franz Hackl's Outreach Festival, in Schwaz just outside Innsbruck, was able to recover much of its previous blend of summer school and festival. The American instructors who couldn't attend in 2020 were back. And there was a full programme of musicians from both sides of the Atlantic.

As last year, however, he kept the intriguing approach for the second and third nights, by having all the bands on stage together and each performing 3 short sets in rotation.

The first night though was more 'traditional' in its format, if not its music. The first two acts in particular, brought together video and music, though in very different ways.



Kurtis Rivers in the Makanda Project

The first set, 'Nwei Ook Meit Swayk', took arrangements of folk music of Myanmar (Burma), rearranged for strings by **Gene Pritsker**, being played as we were shown some videos which had been smuggled out since the military clampdown earlier this year. The intensity and intimacy of the arrangements enhanced the moving visuals, of people trying to go about their daily lives but, at the end, showing how the police assert themselves pretty viciously.

Bassist **Clemens Rofner** (who is also the co-artistic director with Hackl) took the opportunity to premier his new work CLERQ, whose music merged as a self-standing soundtrack to a mesmerising film – a dystopian story using stop motion involving Lego bricks and also Lego figures. The musicians themselves were cleverly lit to help the atmosphere. Their connection with the film was so effective that a pre-recorded solo on film by Adam Holzman seamlessly wove itself into the performance. The album will be ready later in the year, and the performance is already quite special.



Gene Calderazzo and Andrea di Biase in the Bruno Heinen Trio

For the second night, we had three bands in the rotating performance as last year. To call **Bruno Heinen's** band just his trio would be to understate the mesmerising interplay with **Andrea di Biase** and **Gene Calderazzo**.

It contrasted well with singer **Mafalda Minozzi**, who was able to show off her versatility in songs in both Italian and Brazilian, with Paul Ricci as a strong foil on guitar. But also with the big band, led by **Franz Hackl** himself on various trumpets. All played impeccably – hardly surprising given that he is from a family of trumpet makers ([WEBSITE \(https://hacklmusic.com/en/\)](https://hacklmusic.com/en/)). Much of the music was either written by, or arranged, by members of the band. Notably saxophonists **Dennis Brandner** and **Danny Leerman**, as well as **Gene Pritsker**, also, playing dynamic guitar and rapping. The night ended upliftingly with tunes by Paolo Conte sung by Minozzi.



L-R: Guido Spannocchi, Gina Schwarz and Aaron Castrillo. Photo courtesy of Outreach Festival

The last night followed the same format. Two smaller line-ups – saxophonist **Guido Spannocchi** playing as well as I have heard him, here with a trio with drummer Aaron Castrillo and bassist **Gina Schwarz**. The latter played what was possibly the solo of the festival) and Animali Notturmi from Bolzano – sandwiching the Makanda big band from the U.S. with special guest Chico Freeman. The band's repertoire is based mainly around the music of Makanda Ken McIntyre, who died in 2001, leaving a large library of originals and arrangements. The added bonus of Freeman raised it to an extraordinary level: intriguing voicing and great tight playing.



Marie-Therese Finkler and Peter Oswald, trumpets as part of the Jözzband – a band created by Outreach to play on the main stage of our 29. July pre-opening event Music Power in the Park, using six locations in the center of Schwaz to offer a free kick-off event for the public.

It is reassuring to see and hear festivals back, with distancing hardly felt. Though a great shame that this hasn't extended back to UK. Also, organisers such as Hackl and Paul Zauner of Inntoene have made an effort to bring UK musicians over and they certainly delivered. I hope that they don't start being 'ignored' when the difficulties of Brexit really kick in.