



Iiro Rantala (1970) – piano – Finland - www.iiorantala.com

After touring the world for 18 years with Trio Töykeät, Finnish jazz piano virtuoso **Iiro Rantala** is refreshingly still at the forefront of international pianism. The energetic keyboard lion crosses musical genres and styles with ease and excitement, playing at his exhilarating and adventurous best. Definitely entertaining, zany, unconventional and occasionally wicked, yet always uncompromising.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_CLboHD6Eg

Iiro Rantala is among the most internationally visible Finnish jazz musicians, and is second to none when it comes to unsurpassable keyboard technique and flaring showmanship. The pianist first became infected by music in the children's choir Cantores Minores at the age of seven and soon afterwards was already taking piano lessons... And the rest, as the cliché goes, is history.

Iiro began his piano studies at the Käpylä Music Institute, took private lessons from Seppo Kantonen, and went on to study at the Oulunkylä Pop/Jazz Institute and the Jazz Department of the Sibelius Academy. His musical education also included studying classical piano at the Manhattan School of Music in New York for two years beginning in 1991. Iiro Rantala is best known as the founder and pianist of Trio Töykeät, Finland's most famous jazz group, which became one of the biggest success stories in Finnish jazz. Töykeät gave over 2,500 performances in 60 countries between 1988 and 2006, and released 8 albums - a formidable achievement. The development of Iiro Rantala as a creative pianistic improviser has been one of the most astonishing phenomena in the Finnish music world, and he has been the winner of all major jazz awards in Finland during his 22 year career.

Exploring the boundaries between musical genres is characteristic of Iiro Rantala's artistic personality. He has appeared in Finland with symphony orchestras, performing the Cartoon Concerto by Riku Niemi, Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, Mozart's No.23 piano concerto, and Iiro's Concerto in G#majAs, was premiered in Finland in 2003 with the Tapiola Sinfonietta, and released on the Finnish Ondine label. Iiro's creative diversity has seen him also intensively engaged with music for children's theatre, as well as performing with cross-over classical musicians, including the popular a cappella Finnish vocal group Rajaton. Iiro recently formed a tango duo with world renowned virtuoso violinist Pekka Kuusisto. Since 2010 Iiro has focused also on the development of his solo piano career. Iiro's 'talk-and-meet' series on Finnish national television started in 2006, and continues today.

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