

# MIK KEUSEN'S BLAU «NALU»

Tonus-Music-Records 2011

Release: march 2011

Distributor Switzerland: Musikvertrieb

Distributor Austria: Lotus Records

Distributor Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg: Challenge Records International

Distributor Australia: Fuse Music Group

Distributor Japan: Disk Union Music Distribution

Download on: [www.mikkeusensblau.bandcamp.com](http://www.mikkeusensblau.bandcamp.com)

**LC: 11805, Ton 033, EAN: 7640110810330**



*«„Nalu“ is term originally used in Hawaiian language, meaning wave, surf, meditation. The feeling of riding on a wave is exactly how I feel about what I want to express through my music» (Mik Keusen, 2011)*

*«...A real gem of a sound...» (Frank von Niederhäusern, Kulturtipp, march 2011)*

*«Mik's band is reminiscent of a precise Swiss clock. It lets you sink into spheres, grooves, scenes from a thriller and relaxing, meditative landscapes - a musical universe without limits opens up...» (Nick Liebmann, Facts)*

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«Mik Keusen's Blau» is the name of the quartet founded by pianist and composer Mik Keusen. His first album «Mik Keusen - Blau», which was released in 2005 by the Swiss label Tonus-Music-Records, was an instant success.

In his new album «Nalu», Mik Keusen again works with a mix of repetition, minimalism, groove and ambiance. Influenced by Jazz and New Music, he now also incorporates elements of progressive pop culture. Even though his songs don't really feature song structures, and are often based on uneven meters, some of the melodies now appear to be catchy tunes.

Not only is Keusen a gifted pianist and composer, he also excels in leading the band to perform in perfect harmony. The new band member, Swedish percussionist Fredrik Gille, masters a wide sound range, and he is an expert in balancing earthy beats and delicate rhythms, while double-bass player and singer Anna Trauffer contributes her own, fascinating combination of sound and song. Ronin-clarinet and saxophone player Sha adds his own, sophisticated sounds and atmosphere, and his solos are brilliant high-lights.

Most of all, however, the development of and construction of a homogenous, lyrical and sound combination which seems organic, is a product nourished by all band members to an even degree.



Download Infosheet, Bios und Fotos: [www.mikkeusen.ch](http://www.mikkeusen.ch)

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## MIK KEUSEN'S BLAU **NALU**

25.0	8:35
14.0	7:30
26.0	8:44
21.0	5:49
12.0	8:46
23.0	6:26
22.0	3:22
Total	49:17

All music composed by Mik Keusen / Arranged by Mik Keusen and Blau / Recorded by Björn Meyer , Greencube and Mik Keusen at Atelier 161, Progr Bern, 14.-18. Juni 2010 / Mixed and mastered by Björn Meyer and Mik Keusen / Executive produced by Mik Keusen and Don Li / Cover-Design by Andrej Marffy / Supported by Fritz Keusen, KulturStadtBern, Amt für Kultur des Kantons Bern-Swisslos, Burgergemeinde Bern

### **Press about Mik Keusen's Blau**

#### *A WEALTH OF CONTRASTS*

*„There are some, mostly self-proclaimed “experts” and those less talented, who claim that the musical concept developed by the Bernese composer and clarinet player Don Li some years ago cannot be further developed. The brand-new album of the young pianist Mik Keusen and his just as young quartet proves these claims wrong. The new CD features fresh, individualistic music, and though it follows in the path of the “Don of Bern” by overlaying and repeating short, rhythmically sly groove so many times until they lure the audience into a pleasant, dreamy state of mind, Mik Keusen’s grooves are more melodious, less harsh, thus more accessible to the listener, and the CD is also richer in dynamic contrasts than the sound of the master himself. Mik’s band is reminiscent of a precise Swiss clock. It lets you sink into spheres, grooves, scenes from a thriller and relaxing, meditative landscapes – a musical universe without limits opens up...”*  
(Nick Liebmann, Facts).

#### *JAZZ-HIGHLIGHTS / SPARKLING COLOURS*

*„People who have listened to the music produced by the Tonus-Labor of the Bernese clarinet player Don Li have been acquainted with the suggestive secret of repetitive sound patterns. Not only Li’s own music is based on this principle, his musical partner and innovative musician and composer Don Li has been experimenting with repetition and reduction. Therefore, the CDs produced by Tonus are rather similar in some ways. Therefore, this latest release is quite refreshing. With his first CD “Blau”, the 28 year old pianist Mik Keusen is clearly a Tonus musician, though he adds his own distinct spices to sound and rhythm loops. Keusen, with origins in classical music, introduces playful melodic bits and peaces and arranges his quartet (Sha, Anna Trauffer, Ben Loosli) so that they create an orchestral, sparkly and colorful sound.*  
(Frank von Niederhäusern, Radiomagazin)

*“Pianist Mik Keusen is the latest issue of the Bern-based Tonus Family, the famous musical laboratory known for their innovative style. Besides the label-specific ingredients Minimal Music and Impaired Metres, Mik’s music also contains a strong measure of Ambient. However, his compositions create those spherical moods exclusively through acoustic instruments, and electronics of any kind are consistently avoided. Keusen’s cleverly composed patterns are a continuous, strong current of sound which strongly interact, thanks to his three musical partners, issuing exciting sound structures... Keusen’s trademark and main asset may be the spherical voice of bass player Anna Trauffer, a distinctive touch to the blue album, even though only heard occasionally. (Marcel Benedikt, Jazz'n'more)*

#### **MIK KEUSEN'S BLAU - 8.0**

*«Here's another sublime recording from the Tonus-Music-Records catalogue, this time from pianist Mik Keusen and his quartet Blau. 8.0 comes from their eponymous 2005 debut album, and it stretches the marriage of minimalism and contemporary jazz further in the minimalist direction than perhaps any other recording. Keusen's contribution is a lesson in restraint - or perhaps the patience of the listener - dominated*

*by a single note played once per bar. But it's this one note that is the key to the interlocking patterns that comprise 8.0. With its slow and deliberate progress, it becomes a work of hallucinatory beauty.»*  
(Cyberinsekt/Livejournal)

**Tour Dates:**

To be announced at: [www.mikkeusen.ch](http://www.mikkeusen.ch)

**Additional Information:**

[www.mikkeusen.ch](http://www.mikkeusen.ch)

[www.mikkeusensblau.bandcamp.com](http://www.mikkeusensblau.bandcamp.com)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Mik-Keusen-BLAU/118536179633](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mik-Keusen-BLAU/118536179633)

[www.vimeo.com/mikkeusensblau](https://www.vimeo.com/mikkeusensblau)

[www.youtube.com/user/blaumusic](https://www.youtube.com/user/blaumusic)

[www.tonus-music-records.com](http://www.tonus-music-records.com)

## Bios

**Mik Keusen**, pianist and composer from Bern, Switzerland, started taking classical piano lessons when he was eight years old. Later, he studied jazz piano and educational science at the Lucern University of applied Sciences and Arts. At that time, he has also started getting acquainted with Don Li's concept of "Tonus-Music", which leads to a direct collaboration with the musicians Sha and Zimoun, which in turn influences the music of the bands "Banryu" and Zimoun NÅ".

In 2003 he established the quartet "Mik Keusen's Blau", and in 2004 their „outstanding sound concept“ received the "Axell and Max Koch-Foundation Award". In 2005 Mik composed the music for a multimedia production, commissioned by the Paul Klee Center. During the same year, in collaboration with the Swiss Radio Company DRS II, he produced the widely recognized debut album "Mik Keusen - Blau". In 2006 he launched the trio "DKS" with Gareth Davis (GB) and Julian Sartorius (CH), with whom he performed live at the "Expozice Nové Hudby" (Festival for New Music) in Brno (CZ).

In 2010, with a scholarship from the SSK and the City of Bern, he spent six months in Varanasi/India, where he studied the reed organ and tabla with Manju Sundaram, Sri Jamuna Ballabh "Bhaiyan-ji" Gujrati and Sagar Gujrati.

Since 2004, Mik has been working as a freelance pianist and composer at the „Progr - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion“ (Center for Cultural Production) in Bern.

**Sha:** Bass clarinet and alto saxophone player from Bern. He has studied with Don Li, Nik Bärtsch, Bänz Oester, Sujay Bobade and Nat Su. Leader of the Band Sha's Banryu and member of the bands Nik Bärtsch's Mobile und Nik Bärtsch's Ronin. He has worked with musicians such as Jürg Halter, Ania Losinger, Thomy Jordi, Trygve Seim, Walter Grimmer, Claudio Puntin, Michael Gassmann, Phillip Schaufelberger, Zimoun, Benfay as well as many others.

He performed at the following festivals:

Montreal Jazzfestival (CAN), London Jazzfestival, Vancouver Jazzfestival (CAN), North sea jazz (NL), Berlin Jazzfest, Jazznojazz Zürich, Stanser Musiktage, Cully Jazz, Jazzfestival Novara (I), Motives Festival (B), Jazzfestival Saalfelden (A), Jazzfestival Stuttgart, Factory Festival (F), Enjoy Jazz (D), Jazz and joy (D), Traumzeit Festival (D), Jazz em agosto festival (P)

**Anna Trauffer:** Lives in Zurich and works as a freelance contrabass player for musical theatres, improvisation and performance.

She studied at the Bern University of the Arts with Béla Szedlák and with jazz pianists Peter Frei and Walter Schmocker. She mainly performs as a singing solo artist. She has been a member of the Ensemble for New Music in Zurich since 2004. She has worked with Martin Schick, Astride Schläfli and Tim Krohn, and played in various orchestras, amongst which the Bern Chamber Orchestra. In 2006 she won the special prize for best interpretation of the obligatory piece of contemporary music at the international contrabass competition in Bern.

**Fredrik Gille:** Fredrik Gille is a Swedish percussionist, he collects instruments, playing-techniques and inspiration from percussion-traditions all around the world. Originally from Eskilstuna, Sweden, Fredrik spent many years as freelance musician in Stockholm before embarking a more international career.

He has a great passion for worldwide percussion-traditions and has collected a unique set of instruments - a constantly growing set-up. Learning about sounds, techniques and origins of such a variety of drums has given him a colourful spectrum of musical expressions. His playing is a palette of tasteful combinations of beautiful sounds and amazing, unexpected grooves - a typical trademark which makes him a very sought after musician. Almost constantly on tour, he takes every opportunity to meet and learn from local musicians and find new drums for his collection.

Fredrik has played with groups and artists from all over the world, among just a few: Mich Gerber (Bern, Switzerland) Andreas Vollenweider (Switzerland) Mina (Bern, Switzerland) Asita Hamidi (Bern, Switzerland) Väsen (Sweden) Radio Tarifa (Spain) Alfredo Lagos (Spain) Karima Nayt (Algeria) Fathy Salama (Egypt) Sofia Karlsson (Sweden).

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