

saxophonist &  
composer



## Biography

**Nicolas Simion** was born 1959 in Dumbravita, a small village in the Carpathian Mountains of Transylvania. He showed his musical talent very early and was sent to the **Brasov** Music School at the age of ten. After that he appointed the Music Academy in Bucharest where he completed his classical music studies.



During that time he discovered his affection for improvised music and founded his first jazz Band *Opus 4* in the early eighties, with pianist Mircea Tiberian and sax player Dan Mandrila. This band soon became the most successful jazz band in Romania. After numerous appearances in the country and invitations to jazz festivals in East-Berlin and Warsaw he decided to emigrate to the west in 1989.

Arriving in Vienna he met both local and international jazz *heroes* and, for the first time in his life, had the opportunity to play with them. Among them Art Farmer, Leo Wright, Idris Muhammad, Jim Pepper, Harry Sokal, Christian Muthspiel and others and, with the latter, he recorded his first album in the west as a sideman.

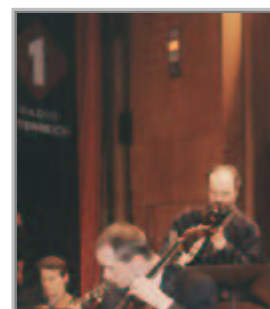


His first CD under his own name, "Black Sea", was released in 1992. Since then he drew the attention of a growing audience with periodical **releases**. With him were names like Graham Haynes, Lonnie Plaxico, Ed Schuller, Peter Perfido and pianist Mal Waldron

The latter replaced the much too soon deceased sax player Jim Pepper in his band with young Nicolas Simion. Since then both musicians shared a fertile musical relationship which culminated in extended tours and the release of the duo recording "The Big Rochade" in 1998. What Mal Waldron appreciates of Nicolas Simion is his flexibility and intuition, as well as his ethnic background. Another very important companion Simion's was polish trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, with whom he released some very interesting recordings.

Gunther Schuller, the great *Third Stream* composer, was so pleased with the music of Nicolas Simion, that he decided to release a recording on his own label **GM Recordings** in the states. He also chose the sax player as a soloist on his project "The Music of Jim Pepper".

Nicolas Simion also showed his mastership as a contemporary composer. He was awarded the "Koernerpreis" in 1995 for a work commissioned by the Austrian Ministry of Culture. Besides that he has written numerous pieces for brass and string ensembles and saxophone orchestras. In 1998 he composed the "**Canzonieri Sacrale**", with motives from church songs from all over the world for string ensemble, voices and jazzband, first performed at the Ruprechtskirche, the oldest church of Vienna. An completely rewritten and extended version was presented two years later live at



the **ORF Radiokulturhaus** by the Austrian Broadcasting Company ORF. Early 2001 he had a great success during the first performance of the "Canzonieri" in his home country in **Brasov**.

The late nineties showed up with many engagements in Germany, where he settled in 1997 in Cologne. There he met local musicians and further developed a new project, called "Balkan Jazz".



With "**Lullabies & Fairytales**", the latest outcome from this works, Nicolas Simion reflects his roots in the traditional music of his homeland and combines its motives and colours with modern forms in improvised music. With musicians from different countries of the Balkans in his band he creates wonderful, almost spiritual, ballads as well as wild and fiery carpathian dances.

In fall 2001, german label **Intuition Music** in collaboration with german radio station **Deutsche Welle** released a live recording from the **Stadtgarten** in Cologne. On this CD, **Balkan Jazz**, Nicolas Simion found a congenial partner in legendary yugoslav trumpeter **Dusko Goykovich**.

At this time, another highlight is presented in the rediscovery of romanian Master pianist **Yancsy Körössy**. One of the most original pianists on Europe's scene in the fifties and sixties who emigrated to the US in 1970, Körössy returns after more than 30 years to play his comeback with Nicolas Simion. The first tour will lead them to Germany, Austria and homeland Romania, joined on some occasions by legendary sax player **Lee Konitz**. Besides some live recordings, Nicolas Simion and Yancsy Körössy will do some studio recordings as well. Körössy in his own words: "the flame is still burning".

Nicolas Simion is one of the most innovative musicians on today's scene. A growing audience is observing his development as he is finding his way to the musical "Olymp".