

## Wojciech Jachna

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Trumpeter, composer and teacher associated with the Bydgoszcz music scene. Member of numerous ensembles, often going far beyond jazz.

Wojciech Jachna was born in 1976 in Bydgoszcz. As he recalls, his family home did not listen to much music, so he was not drawn towards it as a child. The situation changed in the 1990s, when Jachna enrolled in the boy scouts. On the one hand, he liked sung poetry, on the other, it was during camps that he first listened to the sound of the trumpet. Jachna recalls:

*Our troop leader used to announce the curfew or play the wake-up call on the horn. When he left the team, a problem arose: who should play it? So I grabbed this beautiful old instrument and clumsily started trying. It wasn't any good...*

These teenage rehearsals did not change Jachna's life, and over the following years he was more willing to pick up the guitar. The first band he formed with his peers played punk rock. If he was thinking about formal music education at this time, it didn't last long.

*My mother sent me to the Kapuściski community centre to join the guitar class. I walked into the lesson, where I saw children with acoustics, pads under their feet and playing from sheet music. I left the room and never came back.*

Instead of playing the classics, Jachna was interested in punk and hardcore, which is understandable, because in the 1980s and 1990s this scene was extremely active in Bydgoszcz. It was in Bydgoszcz that bands such as Abaddon, Kompania Karna and Schizma originated, where the Kanaloza zine was founded, and where the anti-fascist Never Again Association had its beginnings. The Bydgoszcz student clubs also hosted numerous concerts by Polish punk, noise rock and hardcore bands. Involved in this scene, Jachna only heard about the existence of the Mózg club a few years later. In fact, he learned about the cult venue for yass and improvised music, which had been operating in his own backyard for several years, from national television.

Before Jachna crossed the threshold of the cult club, he grabbed his trumpet again. He borrowed it from a friend, who had probably stolen it from the orchestra of a technical school for electronics. Today, Jachna admits that by trying to play without any knowledge of proper blowing, he could have hurt himself. Happily, this did not last long.

*My poor mother, hearing me struggling, told me that her work colleague's son was studying the trumpet and could give me some lessons. With reluctance, I went to him. He was devastated when he heard me. I was completely clueless. He didn't know what to do with me and after a few meetings he finally gave up on me. Before that happened, however, he taught me how to make sounds properly. He succeeded that much.*



## Studies and studios

Jachna met his next teachers already in Mózg. Of these, he owes the most to Janusz Zdunk – a trumpeter associated with the yass scene (including Mazzoll & Arhythmic Perfection), as well as the band Kult.

*I started studying with him and finally made some progress. Zdunek was a great teacher. I went through the whole circle of fifths with him, all the scales with a metronome, various articulations. He explained the basics to me, because I had no theoretical knowledge until then.*

Now feeling more confident as a trumpet player, Jachna became involved in further projects (including the Eljazz Big Band and the reggae-like Dubska). Whenever he had the opportunity, he took part in jazz workshops, perfecting his technique. Eventually, however, at the age of 33, he decided to start studying at the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz. And yet, by then, he was already playing in two bands that were key to the Polish jazz of the time. The first was the quintet Sing Sing Penelope, rooted in the local avant-jazz fashion (for example Maestro Trytony), although also drawing on the psychedelic jazz-rock of the 1970s.

Tomek Glazik was starting to play in Kult at the time, so the guys asked me to replace him at some important festival. The jump to playing with Rafał Gorzycki was a big deal: odd metres, solos – I could barely cope. Fortunately, we practised a lot and it worked out. After the gig, the guys said that I could remain in the line-up and play together with Tomek. That way, it would be better, fuller. And so it began.

Shortly afterwards, Jachna met Glazik in the Contemporary Noise Quintet, founded by the Kaps brothers. The trumpeter recalls that the music proposed by this group was very different from what he was playing with Sing Sing Penelope. The Kaps were not drawn towards jazz-rock or yass. They were closer to Coltrane, but also post-rock, minimalism and even Chopin.

We hit the jackpot because this was exactly the kind of music that was starting to be played in the West: E.S.T. Cinematic Orchestra... All these mixtures of rock, jazz and film music. A jazz line-up playing music that was somewhat not-jazz. Young audiences suddenly started listening to it, and older audiences didn't really know what it was about. There was no theme-based improvisation, no swing, no groove in CNQ.

The critics were certainly in favour of the Bydgoszcz-based band. Its debut album, **Pig Inside The Gentleman**, received rave reviews in the media. In PopUp Magazine, Piotr Lewandowski wrote: "CNQ immediately convinces that he has his own idea of music. And because it is not only attractive, but also perfectly realised, **Pig Inside The Gentleman** simply has to be reached for, as it is one of the best Polish albums of AD 2006." At the time, this was indeed a popular opinion, reaching far beyond the jazz community. The band went on to record three more albums, but could not repeat the success of the debut. Jachna reveals that one of the reasons may have been artistic discrepancies between the Kaps brothers and the rest of the line-up.

Concerts were the bone of contention. The Kaps wanted to play our songs on a rock model, that is, play them very faithfully. Meanwhile, we wanted to have some space for improvisation. Anyway, that's the point of a concert for me – it's not playing the record.

Wojciech Jachna Squad - The Last White Rhino (live version). Live at the Fabryka Sztuki in Łódź, 17.11.2022 Wojciech Jachna - trumpet Marek Malinowski - electric guitar Jacek Cichocki - piano, Vermona piano, Moog Antoni Olszewski - double bass Mateusz Krawczyk - drums Recorded - Fabryka Sztuki. Mixed - Jacek Cichocki

## Relay of generations

Before CNQ went on hiatus, Jachna teamed up with drummer Jacek Buhl (Trytony, Variété). They recorded five albums as a duo, but didn't stop with this format. The trumpeter and percussionist also formed a trio with double bassist Jacek Mazurkiewicz, with whom they recorded two more albums. The album **Dźwięki Ukryte** [Hidden Sounds], released in 2016, was particularly well received. 'Absolute chamber music' – Bartek Chaciński wrote about it on the Polifonia blog.

Jachna's and Buhl's album **Animated Music**, with guitarist and vocalist Jakub Ziółek, was released in 2020. This was not the first time the musicians shared a studio with the winner of the Polityka Passport award for 2015. For both the trumpeter and the drummer, the second decade of the 21st century was marked by successful collaborations with artists of the younger generation. Not necessarily those associated with the jazz scene. In 2011, Jachna took part in a recording session that marked the beginning of the Innercity Ensemble septet – a group combining jazz, Chicago post-rock, minimalism, ethnic music along with many other styles. Jachna joked:

*'Innercity' is completely crazy – in the positive sense, of course. We got together to record an improvised session, and we've recorded four albums and played dozens of gigs. Such ensembles should be rewarded for surviving so long: seven artistic personalities from different worlds and, to make things funnier, from different cities.*

The group has not only survived, but its music has received a very warm reception at home and abroad. The album **III**, released in 2016, reached number three in the list of the best albums of the year according to the British portal The Quietus.

As a break from performing with the Innercity Ensemble, Jachna developed the jazz trio Sundial. He joined forces with musicians a generation younger: pianist Grzegorz Tarwid and drummer Albert Karch. 'The relay of generations is always there, Namysłowski played with the young, Stańko played with the young, any musician playing challenging original music reaches for them. The old are bored and don't want to invent – it's the natural order of things.'

After recording their third album, Karch was replaced by drummer Krzysztof Szmańda. With the new line-up, Sundial recorded the album **IV**, which was released in 2022.

## Making a comeback and fighting

In recent years, the trumpeter has recorded many albums under his own name. In 2020, the debut of the quintet Wojciech Jachna Squad (**Elements**) was released, and two years later the album **Earth** premiered. The trumpeter also began recording solo music. Jachna recalls:

*During one of the sessions for 'Sundial', we had a moment to ourselves and everyone played something solo. I heard then that I couldn't come up with anything meaningful. I play in a nice hall, good acoustics, great microphone, but I can't communicate anything interesting. This gave me food for thought. I decided to record a solo album: acoustic, without the effects I've been playing with for a long time (reverbs, delays, loops, etc.). I got knocked out, but I make a comeback and continue to fight...*

In 2018, the album **Emanations** was released, followed two years later by **Conception**. On the latter, Jachna returned to electronic effects, whose presence makes it easier to perform this music live. For although Jachna has greatly developed his technical skills since his days of intuitive rehearsals with the boy scouts, a solo set on trumpet still remains a challenge for the performer's stamina.