

Ron van Stratum - drummer / percussionist/ composer/ teacher

Born and raised in the Netherlands, Ron started out beating rhythms on his mom's pots and pans before getting his first real drum at the age of 4. During his childhood he joined the local drumcorps and got a 'no brand' green sparkle 4 piece drumkit. At age 12 he became Dutch champion in rudimental drumming. Following his passion for drums and musicianship, Ron studied Classical Percussion at the conservatory of Tilburg (NL) and Jazz drums at the Maastricht conservatory (NL). After graduating in 1993, he was asked to join the teachers staff at the Maastricht conservatory, where he still teaches to this day.

Van Stratum is known for his ability to play a variety of musical styles such as jazz, pop, worldmusic, latin, R&B, rock, and his outstanding sensitive way of comping for singers.

Over the years Ron has played and worked with countless bands and musicians, to name just a few: Randy Brecker, Brian Bromberg, Mike Mainieri, Bob Sheppard, Jimmy Haslip, Mike Stern, Jim Beard, John Beasley, Eric Gale, Scott Kinsey, Billy Cobham, Christoph Eidens, Andy Middleton, Lynle Marthe, Emiel van Egdom, Sam Vloemans, Henk de Laat, Mike Roelofs, Wilbert Kivits, Nadine Nix, Hakim Ludin, Peter Hermesdorf, Frank Peeters, Roman Korolik, Jon Herington, Sabine Kühlich, Martin Verdonk, Dirk Schreurs, Jo Lemaire, Margriet Eshuijs, Bart Fermie, Gerard van Maasakkers, Surfcake and many, many more.....

Besides playing sessions, teaching and leading his own projects, Ron is the drummer for Nadine Nix's band and Henk de Laat. To this day Ron has 3CDs out as a leader, the latest being the internationally acclaimed "Swingin' in the Swamp".

Ron van Stratum is endorsed by and playing clinics for Meinl cymbals & percussion, Yamaha drums, Evans Drumheads, Schlagwerk, Cympads.

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www.youtube.com/odakija

JazzThing (leading German Jazz magazine)

Swingin' in the Swamp - Ron van Stratum

Ron van Stratum hat sich ziemlich lange mit einem neuen Opus zurückgehalten, nicht zuletzt, weil er ein gefragter Drummer in Fusionkreisen ist. Nun hat er für "Swingin' in the Swamp" einige illustere Kollegen ins Studio geholt, unter ihnen Keyboardmonster und Vorbild Jim Beard. Der steuert auch die locker grooveende "Ode To The Doo Da Day" bei, auf welcher Steely Dans Jon Herington gastiert. Mit solide rockende Beats oder kniffliger Percussion setzt Van Stratum seine Ideen um, zuweilen mischt er sich auch per Vocoder ein ins Geschehen, in welchem auch Latin-Elementen vorkommen und wo sich afrikanische Klänge hin und wieder andeuten. Der Titeltrack des Albums, eine kollektiv brodelnde Improvisation, verrät den Einfluss von Scott Kinsey auf Van Stratum. Das einem anderen Vorbild ein Stück gewidmet ist, wird eine Herzensangelegenheit des Niederländers gewesen sein: "Zawinizm", natürlich mit Vocoder.

Werner Griff (JAZZthing magazine, nov 2010)

Ron van Stratum kept us waiting a long time to release his amazing new work of art, not the least because he's a very in demand (fusion) drummer. For "Swingin' in the Swamp" he invited some illustrious colleagues to the studio, among others keyboard-monster and inspiration Jim Beard who contributed the vastly grooving "Ode to the Doo Da Day" on which Jon Herington (of Steely Dan's fame) played the guitar parts. Van Stratum converts his ideas with solid rocking beats and intricate percussion, with latin elements as well as African voicings, furthermore a vocoder comes into play. The album's title track, a sizzling collective improvisation, reveals Scott Kinsey's influence on Van Stratum's music. To dedicate a piece to another significant influence must have been really important for the Dutchman: "Zawinizm" - of course with vocoder.

(translation by Sandra Kringels)

Nanu? Weather Report? Nee, doch Ron van Stratum, der hier gleich im ersten Track 'Zawinizm' einen wundervollen Tribute an den großartigen Keyboarder Joe Zawinul hinlegt. Und die Musiker treffen hier nicht nur den grooveenden Spirit der Musik, sondern liefern auch eine klanglich unglaubliche Replik des einzigartigen Weather-Report-Sounds, wie man ihn von großartigen Alben wie 'Black Market' her kennt. Auch bei den nächsten Tracks bleibt man diesem musikalischen Kontext treu, bevor man im Folgenden dann eigenständiger wird, aber immer wieder Zawinulsche Einflüsse bezüglich Sounds, Grooves und Melodien einfließen lässt. Dabei beweist Ron van Stratum, dass er als Drummer und Percussionist über den besonderen Touch und swingenden Groove verfügt und auch als Sound-Designer auf allerhöchstem Niveau arbeitet. Nicht nur Fans von Weather Report / Joe Zawinul empfehlenswert.

Sticks Magazine (01-2011)

Ron van Stratum: Swingin' in the Swamp (Mons Rec.)

Dass man hier im "Sumpf" swingt, hat nichts zu sagen. Der niederländische Drummer/Percussionist hat sich lediglich mit dem Duktus seines Funk-Fusion-Jazz-Materials nicht an eine feste Richtung halten wollen. Mit einem Dutzend Musikerfreunden blitzt hier und da also mal Joe Zawinul auf, dort geht's in Richtung Jim Beard (keys), der teils auch mitspielt. Das Album hat van Stratum komplett im Alleingang ge- oder mitgeschrieben wie produziert, und von feinstem und beseeltem, funkelndem Groove- wenn auch in bereits recht gut erforschten Gewässern - gibt's hier reichlich. Info: ronvanstratum.com

(Drums & Percussion magazine 01-2011)

Fan mail

WOW!!!! Just downloaded your album from iTunes!!! I must say, it is one of THE FINEST tributes to Zawinul that I have ever heard! I am just blown away... The compositions, sounds, playing really captures that vibe, and yet is so fresh, so in the moment. As a bassist, I am SO INSPIRED!!!! Thank you SO MUCH for this TITANIC effort!

Best Regards, Randy Clere

(webmaster @ Zawinul Online)...By the way, I got an email yesterday from a viewer of my website:

..Thanks for your post on the website about Ron Van Stratum's album. I downloaded it more or less immediately, and am letting you know that it's impressive. There's a lot going on with it. Some Charlie parker Bebop, Cannonball phrasing, Faces and Places references, but most of all a big nod to Weather Report and a notable Scarlet Women lurking in the grooves...For a drummer to have such width of expertise/imagination is something else! I've been listening to French drummer Manu Kathe a lot recently, but this guy Van Stratum has got the chops.

Des Hughes

CD Title: Swingin' In The Swamp

Year: 2010

Record Label: Mons Records

Style: Fusion

Musicians: Ron Van Stratum (drums, percussion), Jim Beard (keyboards), Wilbert Kivits (keyboards), Mike Roelofs (keyboards), Roman Korolik (electric bass), Henk De Laat (double bass), Jon Herington (guitar), Frank Peeters (guitar), Berland Rours (guitar), Peter Hermesdorf (saxophones), Andy Middleton (saxophones), Sam Vloemans (trumpet, voice), Nadine Nix (vocals)



Review:

While heavily derivative of Weather Report and Steps Ahead, Ron Van Stratum's *Swingin' In The Swamp* still satisfies. This should, however, be no surprise when one considers who this Netherlands born and raised drummer and percussionist has played with. Following studies on classical percussion at the conservatory in Tilburg and jazz drumming at the Maastricht conservatory, both located in The Netherlands, Stratum has worked with artists like Mike Mainieri (founder of Steps Ahead), Jaco Pastorius enthusiast Brian Bromberg, John Beasley, Eric Gale, Andy Middleton, Randy Brecker, Mike Stern and Peter Hermesdorf, among others.

This recording's history is an interesting one. After working almost non-stop on projects for other artists, Stratum started to write new repertoire for his working band. After inviting a few others to play some on his demo tracks, he was so impressed with what had been recorded he decided to go ahead and make the album completely by himself as composer, drummer, percussionist, producer, sound designer and engineer. The result is a wonderful balance of incredible to-the-walls playing by all involved, exciting compositions, heavy synthesizer sounds and world beats reminiscent of Joe Zawinul and tasteful solos.

Stratum is a solidly focused and incredibly nimble drummer. His work throughout, as well as in solo on the title number, is impressive. His cymbals shimmer and shine on "Mind The Mosquitos" and his snare is so tightly crisp on his tribute to Joe Zawinul "Zawinizm" that he sounds like a combination of a young Billy Cobham and Bill Stewart, able to incorporate new and traditional at the same time. "Heat Factor Seven" is so hot, it's obviously based on a scale of one to seven.

Stratum passes the good times around liberally throughout the recording. Guitarist Jon Herington's solo on "Ode To The Doo Da Day" is so locked-in-the-pocket of the groove you almost can't imagine how he was able to find time to breathe. Keyboardist Jim Beard plays some stunning piano on the same piece, as well as throughout the disc, and is always one of those performers who you just can't imagine any project he works on being as good with someone else in place of him. Saxophonist Andy Middleton, along with keyboardist Mike Roelofs, are fleet of finger and steeped in the tradition at the same time as they work the modern side of jazz harmony on "Mind The Mosquitos." Few artists who have walked the post-Weather Report/Steps Ahead side of the street have succeeded as well as or as completely as Stratum does on this recording.

Tracks:

Zawinizm, Avoiding The Plot, Swingin' In The Swamp, Ode To The Doo Da Day, Sunrise At The Pyramids, Nomads Trail, Round Trip, Little Argument, Mind The Mosquitos, Heat Factor Seven and Let's Move

Record Label Website: <http://www.monsrecords.de/>

Artist's Website: http://home-3.worldonline.nl/~vstratum/Ron_van_Stratum/HOME.html

Reviewed by: [Thomas R. Erdmann](#)

Swingin' In The Swamp

Ron van Stratum | Mons Records (2010)

Like 35 people like this.

By GINA VODEGEL

Published: December 13, 2010

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It's a generally accepted misconception that those who earn a living as a teacher in the arts must either not be good enough a performer, or are compelled to satisfy a wretched sense of envy, while clipping the wings of very talented students. Some of the stories out there may be true, but drummer/percussionist Ron van Stratum's *Swingin' In The Swamp* defies all such horror tales. Van Stratum has been a drum teacher since 1993 at The Netherlands' Maastricht Conservatory—recruited immediately after graduation, in fact. Some of his former students have entered the local and regional music scenes successfully and, like their teacher, simply love to travel in wide musical circles as versatile drummers and percussionists—or drum school owners, even. So much, then, for teacher stereotypes.

Van Stratum divides his time between educating students and working with various musicians. His list is impressive, ranging from regional dialect singers to nationally acclaimed pop artists, as well as international jazz giants like [Brian Bromberg](#), [John Beasley](#) and [Mike Mainieri](#). *Swingin' In The Swamp*, his third release as a leader, demonstrates van Stratum's skills as a seasoned and intuitive drummer/percussionist. He has surrounded himself with some of the finest musicians and friends hailing from The Netherlands' southern region, Belgium, Austria and the USA, to see where the flow might take them. Van Stratum and bassist Roman Korolik go way back, and their narrative chemistry serves as a tasty backbone in what can best be described as a colorful tapestry with singular as well as multilateral stitches. It's fusion at its hottest, breathing warmth in a rich approach, with some tracks raw enough for those seeking intricacy and unexpected twists and turns, as in the title track and "Mind The Mosquitos."

The album opens with "Zawinizm," a tribute with a clear conviction to keep the late [Joe Zawinul](#)'s legacy alive. Van Stratum also pays homage to keyboardists [Jim Beard](#)—who graces the album with his presence on four tracks ("Avoiding the Plot," "Nomads Trail," the charming "Little Argument" and "Let's Move")—and [Tribal Tech](#)'s [Scott Kinsey](#). "Beard's "Ode To The Doo Da Day" features guitarist Jon Herington, with whom the keyboardist shares a recording studio and [Steely Dan](#) tours. Kinsey mastered the 11 tracks in a signature and superior manner, while van Stratum took care of all of the sound design, recording, mixing and production—album cover included. He's not just a drummer or percussionist offering danceable beats and infectious rhythms; he offers sonic colors, brings out different, but always warm shades of different places. Despite the many details that call for repeated spins, *Swingin' In The Swamp* is always a friendly, inviting and never tiresome listen, with fringes of hope.

Swingin' In The Swamp is world fusion with a passion one would not expect to flourish in Holland, but then again, the southern parts of this small country abide by different rules. Van Stratum and his posse simply own them.



Track Listing: Zawinizm; Avoiding the Plot; Swingin' In The Swamp; Ode To The Doo Da Day; Sunrise At The Pyramids; Nomads Trail; Round Trip; Little Argument; Mind The Mosquitos; Heat Factor Seven; Let's Move.

Personnel: Ron van Stratum: drums, percussion, vocoder; Jim Beard: piano, Rhodes and synth (2, 6, 8, 11); Mike Roelofs: piano, rhodes and synth (3, 5, 7, 9-11); Wilbert Kivits: piano, Rhodes and synth (1, 2, 4-10); Roman Korolik: bass (1-8, 10, 11); Henk de Laat: double-bass; Peter Hermesdorf: tenor and soprano sax (1-3, 5-8, 10, 11); Andy Middleton: tenor and soprano sax (9); Berland Rours: guitar (1-3, 6-8); Frank Peeters: guitar (10, 11); Jon Herington: guitar (4); Sam Vloemans: trumpet (3, 8); Nadine Nix: vocals (1, 2, 6, 10).

Style: Beyond Jazz



Fusion-Veredler Ron van Stratum

Der niederländische Schlagzeuger, der hierzulande durch gut gemachte Fusion-Alben auffällt, präsentiert sein neues, mittlerweile drittes Solo-Album künstlerisch gut abgehangen. 1994 war „Going Up“ (GLM Records) erschienen und 1999 „Plain View“ (VIA Records). Nach weiteren 12 Jahren also das dritte Album: *„Schon vor circa 5 Jahren fühlte es sich für mich so an, dass es an der Zeit sei, ein neues Repertoire für meine Band zu schreiben, in ein großartiges Studio zu gehen, eine CD aufzunehmen und diese auf den Weg zu bringen. Aber, wie das Leben so spielt, ständig war ich mit anderen wunderbaren Projekten für andere wunderbare Leute beschäftigt, auf den Bühnen und im Studio. Parallel dazu fing ich dann an, mein eigenes Tonstudio aufzubauen, endlich neue Stücke zu schreiben und Demos aufzunehmen. Ich lud einige Musikerfreunde ein, diese Stücke mit mir zu spielen – und wow, das klang so gut, dass ich beschloss, viel mehr als sonst selbst zu machen. Ich komponierte, war natürlich an den Drums und der Percussion, habe auf dem Produzentenstuhl gesessen und war der Soundingenieur.“* Ron van Stratum bringt eine ganz genaue Vorstellung mit ins Studio:

Fusion Music mit stark weltmusikalischen Einflüssen. Inspirieren lässt er sich dabei von Größen wie Joe Zawinul und damit der Tradition des kürzlich verstorbenen Keyboarders der Fusion-Kultband Weather Report. „Zawinizm“ ist dieser Stilrichtung gewidmet. Das Titelstück „Swingin’ in the swamp“ ist als reine Improvisation bei der Aufnahme im Studio entstanden. Es hat weder ein „richtiges“ Thema oder Melodie noch hält es sich an eine traditionelle Form. Der Freigeist Ron van Stratum soll hier spontan an weites Moorland gedacht haben: flexibel, ungeheuer dicht, nie ist es das, was es zu sein vorgibt. Mit im Studio waren Jim Beard, Wilbert Kivits und Mike Roelofs an den Keyboards; Roman Korolik und Henk de Laet am Bass; Jon Herington, Berland Rours und Frank Peeters, Gitarren; Peter Hermesdorf und Andy Middleton, Saxophon; Sam Vloemans, Trompete; Nadine Nix, Gesang. Das Album überzeugt durch geschmackvolle Arrangements. Seine Musik ist eine Verbeugung vor Joe Zawinul und Weather Report, entsprechend hoch ist das Spielniveau, das er sich selbst und seiner Crew abfordert. Schließlich ist er auch als Sideman von den ganz Großen dieses Genres vielfach engagiert worden. z.B. darunter Randy Brecker, Mike Mainieri, Mike Stern, Eric Gale, Jimmy Haslip und Billy Cobham. Ron van Stratum ist Dozent am Maastricht Konservatorium. Sein Unterricht ist dank seiner stilistischen Bandbreite über Jazz, Latin, R&B bis zu Pop-Rock ein Grund dafür, dass seine Unterrichtseinheiten gut besucht werden. Gern spielt er regelmäßig mit seinen Bands live. Zwischen Mai und Oktober spielt er mit seiner eigenen Band, aber auch als Sideman regelmäßig in den Niederlanden, in Belgien und Deutschland: am 18.09.2011 in Aachen als Schlagzeuger der Band von Nadine Nix.

Ludwig Jurgeit

CD: Ron van Stratum „Swingin’ In The Swamp“,
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