

Sal La Rocca – bass

Initially briefly interested in rock guitar playing, Salvatore La Rocca discovered jazz at age 23, in the early 80's, switched to double bass and taught himself the jazz idiom, taking Paul Chambers as a model.

At first, La Rocca was regularly seen accompanying Jacques PELZER. Establishing himself as a bass player, a position rather empty in those years in the Liège area, he played with the local musicians: Robert Jeanne, Robert Grahame, Steve Houben, Pierre Vaiana...

In the mid-80s, PELZER introduced him to John Eardley, then Michel Graillier, Leo Mitchell and Steve Grossman who hired him in 1987 for a tour in the surrounding countries. In 1988, he was hired by Steve Houben to play a 6-week engagement at the Singapore jazz club, and toured Germany with guitarist John Thomas' quartet.

In 1990, he played at the Gouvy Jazz Festival with Sal Nistico, Jacques Pelzer, and Mal Waldron. In 1991, Sal was a member of vocalist Raffaella Renzulli's Ensemble, featuring Charlie Mariano. In 1993, he was with Steve Houben's quartet at the Lafayette International Festival. It was with this quartet that he recorded a first CD.

In 1994, tours with Pierre Vaiana, in quartet with Salvatore Bonafede, and Dré Pallemarts as well as with Mike Del Ferro's trio with Hans Van Oosterhout and Harold Land as a guest. He also performed the Liège festival with a quartet featuring saxophonist Dave Turner. The show was recorded by Belgian television.

In the mid-90s, Master drummer Bruno Castellucci, taking La Rocca under his wing, began hiring him for several projects, and introducing him to many. They started performing in trio with Jeanfrançois Prins, and different guests like John Ruocco, Richard Rousselet, Michel Herr, and Judy Niemack. Prins took them on the road in Belgium and France with saxophone legend Lee Konitz in 1995. They released a live CD with Konitz the same year. Sal played with Nathalie Loriers's trio at the Montréal Festival.

In 1996, the Nathalie Loriers Trio toured in Syria and Jordan for a week (1st Euro-Arab jazz festival "Jazz Caravan '96"), then the Jeanfrançois Prins Trio toured Belgium, Holland, France and Corsica with Lee Konitz, and sometimes Judy Niemack as a guest. At the Calvi Jazz Festival, they introduced Sal to vocalist Anne Ducros a.o.. Castellucci hires Sal as a member of his "Stringtet" project, with which they recorded a CD. La Rocca also joined the Franck Vaganee - Mike Del Ferro Quartet with numerous tours around Europe and a CD recording, the trio of pianist extraordinaire Erik Vermeulen, and performed with Brazilian songwriter Marito Correa.

In 1997, he was with Nathalie Loriers in Quebec, with Philip Catherine as a guest, performed with Ivan Paduart Quartet, and toured in the Near East with the band "Ode for Joe".

In 1999, Castellucci brought Sal to Toots Thielemans' quartet, with whom he did a few dates (also in 2000), and a live CD recording (Palais des Congres).

In 2001, CD recording with Anne Ducros "quintet" with Gordon Beck, Didier Lockwood and Bruno Castellucci.

In 2003: a few concerts with Philip Catherine, an international tour with Anne Ducros "quartet", with which they recorded the CD "Close Your Eyes" with guests, and tours with Nathalie Lories "trio" (Japan , Brazil...). 2003 also saw Sal La Rocca's first endeavor as a leader, presenting his own quintet, and a first CD under his name: "Latinea".

In 2004, he toured the Emirates with Stanley Jordan and Bobby Durham. In 2005: CD recording with Anne Ducros "Piano, Piano" featuring several pianists including Chick Corea, Jacky Terrasson, and Enrico Pieranunzi, and subsequently toured with Anne Ducros' French band. Also toured with Philip Catherine in Europe (+ Nathalie Lories in Italy).

In 2006, "Jazz à Liège" with Steve Houben "trio" + Richie Beirach (recorded by Belgian TV). La Rocca became a member of the pop band VAYA CON DIOS with Dani KLEIN, and a live DVD recording ensued. In 2007, he toured Europe with VAYA CON DIOS, and recorded with the Olivier Hutman quartet. In 2008, Sal recorded on the CD "Après un rêve" with Julie Mossay and Gregory Houben.

In 2010, VAYA CON DIOS feat. Dani Klein recorded a double CD (Comme on est venu + Bonus Live) and toured Europe. In 2011, CD recording and Belgian tour with the Greg Houben/Pierrick Pedron quintet, Belgium and Luxembourg tour with Denise King + Olivier Hutman trio, Jazz à Liège Fest. with Jacques Schwarz-Bart Quartet , and Steve Grossman Two Tenors Quintet at "Dinant Jazz Night" .

Other musicians with whom Salvatore played :

Gianni Basso, Jack Van Poll, Kris Defoort, Ali Ryerson, Paolo Radoni, John Engels, Guy Cabay, Andre Ceccarelli, Bert Joris, Jiggs Wigham, Nico Menci, David Linx, Sheila Jordan, Deborah Brown, Mark Murphy, Sangoma Everett, Ada Rovatti, Roni Ben-Hur, Bob Mover, Stanley Jordan, Randy Brecker, Bob Franceschini, Scott Hamilton, Tony Lakatos, Roby Lakatos, Bobby Durham, Steve Williams, William Lecomte, Batiste Trotignon, Alvin QUEEN, etc...

Sal La Rocca has released two more albums under his own name: "It Could Be The End (2012), with Jacques Schwartz-Bart, Lorenzo Di Maio, Pascal Mohy, and Hans van Oosterhout, and "Shifted" (2018), with Jeroen van Herzeele, Pascal Mohy , and Lieven Venken.