

# Sebastian Noelle

After choosing New York City as his permanent residence in 2002, guitarist Sebastian Noelle has been performing with his group on a regular basis. His name can be found on the programs of the city's hot spots for creative music such as the 55 Bar, Cornelia Street Café or CBGB's Gallery.

Sebastian Noelle's performance experiences include concerts at the North Sea Festival, Montreux Festival, and tours in Holland and Slovakia.



His melodic playing can be heard to advantage throughout his latest CD "Secret Sound Nation" (2004, Nolimit Records), which showcases original compositions exclusively. Among his former recordings are "Freedom Trail" (2001) featuring a quartet with former mentor John Abercrombie and "Home Is Where The Heart Wants To Go" (2001), an acoustic guitar album with duo partner Gene Bertocini.

After growing up in Germany in a musical family with a classical background, Sebastian became interested in the jazz traditions and the practice of improvised music. The curiosity for musical cultures from all over the world led him to New York, where his style was enriched by Middle Eastern, Asian and South American folk music.

His steady group consists of Donny McCaslin or Chris Cheek on tenor saxophone, Ted Poor (Ben Monder Trio, Maria Schneider Orchestra) on drums, Thomson Kneeland (Matthias Lupri, Chris Potter, Mark Turner) and himself on guitar.

As a sideman Sebastian Noelle has performed with JoAnne Brackeen, Lewis Nash, Mulgrew Miller, Bob Moses, Maria Schneider, Joel Frahm, Bobby Shew, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Dave Santoro, John Hollenbeck, Scott Reeves, Michael Abene and Tony Moreno.

His original compositions also include works for big band, string quartets, solo guitar, voice, and small jazz ensembles and have been performed extensively in the U.S. and Europe.

*Education: BA in jazz performance and composition (Hochschule für Musik in Mannheim, Germany), MA with Distinction in Performance (New England Conservatory, Boston, MA)*

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## OPENING **axe**



### JAZZ JOINT

# Sebastian Noelle

**F**or Sebastian Noelle, a fastidious guitarist based in Queens, New York, creating music has always been an intensive process. First drawn to the six-string through Beatles records, Noelle fashioned a makeshift 4-track from a pair of cassette recorders and attempted to eke out complete Fab Four arrangements. He remembers, "I would record the primary vocal and guitar parts at the same time, on one machine. Then I'd play the tape back, while singing and playing the secondary parts and recording everything on the other machine. I'd repeat the process, playing the bass line on my cello. Of course, by the time I was finished, the first 'track' would be barely audible."

Shortly after recreating the Beatles, Noelle became enamored with jazz, and began dissecting the solos of Joe Lovano and John Scofield. Noelle formally studied at the Hochschule fuer Musik in Heidelberg-Mannheim, Germany. There, he became acquainted with the common practice of jazz. "It was a very bebop-oriented education," says Noelle. "I listened intently to hard-

bop, and did a lot of transcribing and internalizing. After University, I finally felt ready to deviate from the traditional level."

On a full scholarship, Noelle pursued a less conventional curriculum at Boston's New England Conservatory, where he explored microtonal music with Joe Maneri and forged a personal style with Ran Blake. Says Noelle, "Both professors were amazing. From Maneri, I learned to pursue my inner musical voice without making any compromises; and from Ran, I learned how to listen deeply, and also the importance of tracing one's musical roots in creating new sounds."

While at NEC, Noelle also studied with

## SWING SETS New Jazz Releases



**Eric Hofbauer *American Vanity* (Creative Nation)**  
The Boston guitarist's solo outing is inspired by the successes and failures of American culture.



**Pat Metheny *One Quiet Night* (Warner Bros.)**  
New solo acoustic set highlighted by a moody interpretation of Gerry & the Pacemakers' "Ferry Cross the Mersey."



**Tisziji Muñoz *Divine Radiance* (Dreyfus)**  
With Paul Shaffer, Ravi Coltrane, and Pharaoh Sanders, the avant-garde guitarist invokes Hendrix and Coltrane.



**Dr. Lonnie Smith *Boogaloo to Beck* (Sufflin')**  
The soul-jazz organist's take on the material of pop star Beck features guitarist Doug Munro. —AP

jazz guitar aces Gene Bertoncini and John Abercrombie. On account of his busy performing and recording schedule, Abercrombie often had to cancel lessons. So Noelle came up with a plan: "I asked him if instead of rescheduling the lessons—which mostly involved playing—we could just jam in the studio."

Abercrombie was amenable, and the excellent results of the sessions can be heard on *Freedom Trail*, available directly from Noelle's Web site, [geocities.com/sebnoelle](http://geocities.com/sebnoelle). Throughout the disc, the guitarists spar amiably over a firm foundation supplied by bassist Noah Jarrett and drummer Ferenc Nemeth; Noelle matches wits with his elder, essaying in an articulate, vocal-like manner. As the guitarist explains, "I could sing before I could speak, and that's still with me. For me, singing has a more communicative quality than speaking words." —ADAM PERLMUTTER

#### AT THE IMPROV Sebastian Noelle Line >> HEAR IT ONLINE AT [GUITARONEMAG.COM](http://GUITARONEMAG.COM)

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

Fm7                      Bb7                      Ebmaj7

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A  
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ALBUM *Freedom Trail* (Nülimit) **AXE** 1993 Gibson ES-335, D'Addario strings (.011-0.52) **AMP** Roland Jazz Chorus **FX** ProCo Rat distortion, Line 6 Delay Modeler

## Press Reviews

### **About "Secret Sound Nation" (2004)**

"SEBASTIAN NOELLE QUARTET - Secret Sound Nation (Nolimit Records 1003) Featuring Sebastian on guitar & effects, Rainer Boehm on Rhodes electric piano, Panagiotis Andreou on electric bass and Martin Valihora on drums. Sebastian has played here at DMG a couple of times and put out a fine cd with John Abercrombie as his guest. This CD was mixed in Boston, where Sebastian went to college and recorded in Bratislava, where I think his quartet is from. The music here is a nice mix of laid back and somewhat funky electric jazz, played with taste and restraint. On "Get Real" the quartet take off for some quick and intricate interplay with the guitar and el. piano playing that difficult theme with ease. Sebastian actually sounds like his mentor and cohort John Abercrombie on this, with his sterling tone and quick spinning lines of notes. As this long (78 minutes) CD evolves, the pieces become more intricate and more complex, yet still remain somewhat subdued. Both Sebastian's electric guitar and Rainer's piano work well together, playing difficult lines in harmony or even sailing around one another at times. This little treasure approaches the fusion terrain at times, without ever having to deal with that high-speed, show off your chops bullshit. Well done!" *(Bruce Gallanther, Downtown Music Gallery Newsletter 05/04)*

### **About "Freedom Trail" (2003)**

"[...] The excellent results of the session can be heard on "Freedom Trail". Throughout the disc, the guitarists spar amiably over a firm foundation supplied by bassist Noah Jarrett and drummer Ferenc Nemeth; Noelle matches wits with his elder, essaying in an articulate, vocal-like manner." *(Adam Perlmutter, GuitarOne Magazine)*

"Sebastian and John both play electric guitars, hollow body and solid body respectively, their rhythm team includes Noah Jarrett on acoustic bass and Ferenc Nemeth on drums. This is a fine, laid back effort for two jazz guitarists who both play with exquisite taste and perform dreamy, slow burn, intricate playing, throughout. Both guitarists compose and a few standards are done nicely, especially "How Deep is the Ocean?" A most impressive debut." *(Bruce Gallanther, Downtown Music Gallery Newsletter)*

### **About "Jazz Changes?" (2001)**

"Noelle's style ranges from acoustic-electric jazz guitar with warm single lines to Scofield regions" *(Jazzpodium, German national Jazz magazine)*

"Jazz Changes? displays an enormous stylistic range – even managing to portrait a dim nightclub atmosphere. But more than that, these five young virtuosos succeed in the difficult task of making music that is artistic yet at the same time accessible. [...] Light as a feather soar Olaf Schoenborn's alto sax and Sebastian Noelle's guitar sounds on the ballad "C'est qu'elle dit"."  
*(Stereoplay, German National Music Magazine)*

"Changes' playing sounds mature and technically versatile. Strong original compositions by [Olaf] Schoenborn and guitarist Sebastian Noelle emphasized the impression of high professionalism. "Changes" has developed a feeling for color, and these compositions were the perfect forum to prove it: Above all Noelle's "Hands off the Wheel", a Latin piece heavily drenched with Funk influences, was kept in motion by the guitarist with his elastic solos. Via effect processor he managed to get great sounds out of his guitar and created an authentic Calypso feel using steel drum sounds and burning runs. Noelle also contributed the beautiful ballad "Changes and Chances", in his solo combining relaxed looseness and tender excitement." *(Rheinlandpfalz 2000, Regional German News Magazine)*