

**OBLIQ SOUND™**  
**MASSIMO BIOLCATI**  
**= Biography =**

For several years bassist Massimo Biolcati has provided strong support for a variety of acclaimed jazz artists, including Terence Blanchard, Lizz Wright, Ravi Coltrane, Paquito D’Rivera, and Lionel Loueke. With the 2008 release of Persona on ObliqSound, which is his debut recording as a leader, Biolcati is finally taking a giant stride into the spotlight in his own right.

“I’d been composing my own songs for years and always dreamed of having the chance to record it with a dream band,” says Biolcati in explanation of his decision to finally pursue a solo career. “When [ObliqSound co-founder and album producer] Michele Locatelli first approached me to suggest that I record a project featuring my original material, I put a lot of pressure on myself to assemble just the right repertoire and players, which doesn’t always lead to an uninhibited flow of musical inspiration. I’m really pleased that it finally came together just as I’d envisioned it for so many years.”

Born in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden, Massimo Biolcati began his musical career at age 16, performing jazz on acoustic bass in Torino, Italy. When he was 21, he returned to Sweden to study at the Royal Music Academy of Stockholm, and soon became a presence both on the local jazz scene and as part of several Scandinavian folk music groups. His early influences range from symphonic rock to Pat Metheny and Dave Holland, all of which have contributed to his strikingly original blend of extended compositions, unusual time signatures, and a lyrical, melodic style. “Growing up in both Italy and Sweden and speaking two languages probably most significantly influenced my own musical development, because I had such a vast, exciting playground to explore. It stoked my early curiosity about different music from different places,” says Biolcati. “In jazz and improvised music, I have found the perfect medium to pour all the things I assimilate in my ongoing journey of discovery.”

While still in his early 20s, Biolcati received a scholarship to study at Boston’s Berklee College of Music, and was subsequently selected for the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at the University of Southern California, where he studied and performed with jazz greats such as Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland, Wayne Shorter, Kenny Barron, John Scofield, Christian McBride, and many others.

Upon relocating to New York City, he quickly immersed himself in the NY music scene, playing with his peers and with more established artists. In 2003, he toured with trumpeter Terence Blanchard. “Playing with Terence taught me so much about musical interaction between performers on stage,” remembers Biolcati. “Performing his compositions also helped me improve my own compositional skills.”

Throughout 2005 and 2006, Biolcati toured with Verve recording artist Lizz Wright. In the years leading up to the 2008 release of Persona, he also played frequently with saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, and with the legendary Cuban musician and composer Paquito D’Rivera, who, says Biolcati, “is a great inspiration, not only challenging me to learn more about Latin music, but about classical music as it intersects with jazz.”

He has also recorded with Michael Buble’ and Gretchen Parlato, as well as with the trio Gilfema, which he formed with Lionel Loueke and drummer Ferenc Nemeth and which released their self-titled debut on ObliqSound in 2005. Biolcati has been collaborating with Loueke since the two attended the Berklee School of Music and the Thelonious Monk Institute; the acclaimed West African guitarist tapped Biolcati for his own recent ObliqSound recording, Virgin Forest. Biolcati is featured on “Kponnon Kpete,” the Virgin Forest track which recently won a 2008 Independent Music Award for Best Song, World Traditional.

Persona’s players include Loueke (on guitar and vocals,) along with Peter Rende (Rebecca Martin, Jen Chapin) on piano, accordion and vocals, and Jeff Ballard (Brad Mehldau, Chick Corea) on drums. Singers Lizz Wright (Verve recording artist) and Gretchen Parlato each contribute a vocal track.

Biolcati is certain to make his own name more widely known with the release of his striking and complex debut. “I don’t try to be different or original for its own sake,” he concludes. “I just try to be honest and true to my own musical persona.”