

# NORBERT SUSEMIHL



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## **Biography:**

Norbert Susemihl, born 1956 in Hamburg, began to play at the age of 14, as the co-founder of "Papa Tom's Lamentation Jazzband". First he played the guitar and sang Spirituals and Gospels, inspired by the Golden Gate Quartet. In 1971 he began to play trumpet. Later he also started using the Flugelhorn in order to be able to use a wider spectrum of sounds. Occasionally he can also be heard playing the drums. All the early members of Papa Tom's Lamentation Jazzband were still attending school, while the band started making a name for its self and played the local clubs in Hamburg and North Germany.

In the late 70s and early 80s, Susemihl started to perform regularly with other local bands, like the "New Orleans Quarter". There was a wealth of engagement possibilities, as traditional jazzband were in high in demand in Hamburg, also for private and corporate events. This paved the way for Susemihl to consider becoming a professional musician, although he began studies at the Hamburg University in 1977, the subjects being mathematics and geography.

The first tours abroad with "Papa Tom's Lamentation Jazzband", and as guest soloist took him to Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands and Belgium. In 1977/78 he toured with Sammy Rimington, one of the leading European New Orleans style clarinet and saxophone players. This co-operation inspired him to take his first trips to New Orleans in 1978 and 1979.

In 1980 Norbert Susemihl was playing in New Orleans in a stage show about Fats Waller, produced and directed by Gretta Milochi. This enabled him to join the exclusive New Orleans Musicians Union. He stayed a whole year to absorb the New Orleans culture and lifestyle and to study how it affects and produces the music. This was the turning point in his career, having an outstanding effect on his knowledge of the music and his style of playing.

Between 1981 and 1990 Susemihl has lived and performed in New Orleans every year for 3-4 months. He came into daily contact and played with the last living old-style musicians like Kid Thomas Valentine, Percy and Willie Humphrey, Louis Nelson, Josia "Cie" Frazier, Thomas Jefferson, and Danny Barker, to name just a few. He also led his own band in New Orleans, the "Arlington Jazzband" with Raymond Burke on clarinet. He was also a member of the "Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble" giving him the possibility to explore and play the repertoire of the 20s classic jazz.

He played regularly with many local musicians of all ages, covering all styles of New Orleans Music. Other strong influences were the gospel choirs of the African-american baptist churches, as well as the Rhythm&Blues music and the young Brass Bands. Susemihl has made recordings in New Orleans with veteran legends Willie Humphrey, Father Al Lewis and CoCoMo Joe, and from the younger generation Wanda Rouzan, Kerry Lewis, Jason Marsalis and Louis Ford.

In 1986, together with pianist Gretta Milochi, he founded his own Hamburg based band: "Norbert Susemihl's Arlington Annex", a quintet that covers all facets of New Orleans Music. With this band he has been playing regularly in Hamburg and North Germany, and performing on festivals and concerts in South-Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway. The band has also recorded. Forming a real New Orleans style marching band in Hamburg was the next step: "Norbert Susemihl's Arlington Brassband" was born, playing traditional and contemporary New Orleans Street Music.

The fabulous drummers CoCoMoe Joe and Shannon Powell, as well as Fats Domino's saxophone player Elliot "Stackman" Callier and trombonist Freddie Lonzo were New Orleans guests musicians with the band on extended tours in 1989 and 1990. Shannon Powell stayed in Hamburg and was the bands regular drummer for half a year in 1990, before he returned to the USA joining the Harry Connick Jr. Big Band.

2002 saw the start of the ensemble "Norbert Susemihl's Joyful Gumbo", a Scandinavian based six-piece band, which evolved over the years and since about 2010 has intensified its touring schedule and is in high demand. The band made its first CD in 2011.

Since 2006, Susemihl's wish to bring more New Orleans musicians to Europe was initially made possible by the Maribo Festival in Denmark, which gave him the possibility to present yet another new formation of his: "Norbert Susemihl's New Orleans All Stars". In the following years, this band has performed on Festivals in Denmark, Norway, Italy, Switzerland and Malaysia, featuring New Orleans musicians

Wanda Rouzan, Louis Ford, Jason Marsalis, Kerry Lewis, Hermann LeBeaux, Orange Kellin and Charles Halloran.

Norbert Susemihl's most recent projects are a blues trio with two extremely talented young ladies from New Orleans, vocalist Erika Lewis and pianist Shaye Cohn, and a new band specially put together for the Ascona Jazz Festival 2012: "Night On Frenchmen Street" incorporating the blues trio, as well as Gregoy Agid on clarinet, Jason Marsalis on drums and Kerry Lewis on bass. Both bands also have CDs out.

Besides his own bands Susemihl has toured as a guest, or member with various bands, e.g.: Lillian Boute(USA), Lars Edegran New Orleans Jazzband(USA), Wanda Rouzan's Taste of New Orleans(USA), Andrew Hall's Society Jazzband(USA), Sammy Rimington Band(UK), Trevor Richards Trio(UK/D), Caledonia Jazzband(Norway), New Orleans Delight(Denmark), Magnolia Jazzband(Norway), Finn Burich's New Orleans Jazzband(Denmark), Maryland Jazzband(Germany), as well as with many of the new young bands in New Orleans which are very active on the Frenchmen Street Scene. He has appeared on many Jazz Festivals as a soloist. In the last decade, Susemihl has split his time between Hamburg, Denmark and New Orleans. Susemihl is considered as one of the leading trumpeters in the New Orleans Style.

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