



Hendrik Meurkens is an internationally acclaimed composer and virtuoso on both chromatic harmonica and vibraphone. Born in Hamburg to a Dutch father and German mother, he grew up hearing jazz and Brazilian music at home. He began serious study of the vibraphone at sixteen, but hearing the unmistakable sound of Toots Thielemans a few years later inspired him to purchase a chromatic harmonica and teach himself one of jazz's most demanding instruments.

Meurkens came to the United States in 1977 to study vibraphone at Berklee College of Music. While there, he developed his harmonica voice by transcribing the solos of Charlie Parker and learning to approach the instrument with the phrasing and flexibility of a jazz horn. His other defining influence was Brazilian music. In the early 1980s, he moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he immersed himself in samba, bossa nova, and choro and became a regular performer at the popular club Bar 21.

After returning to Germany, Meurkens became a prominent studio and jazz musician, recorded with European radio orchestras, toured with artists including Harry 'Sweets' Edison and Buddy Tate, and won first prize from the German Phono Academy for Jazz in 1983. His debut album as a leader, *Samba Importado*, led to a recording contract with Concord Records. He moved to New York in 1992, and albums such as *Clear of Clouds* and *A View from Manhattan* earned strong radio airplay and established him as the first major new jazz harmonica voice after Thielemans.

Across a discography of more than two dozen recordings, Meurkens has collaborated with Paquito D'Rivera, Claudio Roditi, Charlie Byrd, Herb Ellis, Jimmy Cobb, Ivan Lins, Mundell Lowe, and many other jazz and Brazilian masters. He has also composed for film, including music heard in *Dolores Claiborne*. His performances unite lyrical beauty, rhythmic vitality, and remarkable technical control. Hendrik Meurkens and Friends offers audiences a distinctive meeting of jazz improvisation and Brazilian warmth, led by one of the world's most expressive voices on the chromatic harmonica.