

Saxophonist, composer, producer and synthesizer Markus Holkko convinces with his personal and independent approach to music. His eclectic style stems from a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the several musical genres.

Markus Holkko started playing the alto saxophone at the age of nine and since then has studied at the Vantaa Music College, Oulunkylä Pop & Jazz Conservatory and the Sibelius Academy Jazz Department. He has been working as a professional musician since 1995 and he graduated from the Sibelius Academy with a master's degree in Jazz music in 2004. His biggest influences among saxophonists are John Coltrane and Charlie Parker, but he says that all kinds of music have influenced his playing and compositional style. Being different and original has always driven forward his musical thinking and actions.

His many bands include Markus Holkko Quartet, U-Street All Stars, Lightboxer, Groove Convention and Espoo Big Band. In 2002 and 2004, U-Street All Stars released two critically acclaimed albums on the Blue Note label, which were also nominated for Jazz Emma of the year. They also won the first prize in The international Jazz competition in Getxo in 2001 and Markus Holkko won the best soloist -prize voted by the audience.

Markus Holkko Quartet won the Jazz Emma Award in 2008 with the debut album 'Being Here' and was selected to do a tour by The Jazz Federation of Finland. His next release was a highly original sounding and synthesizer-laden 'From Circuits, with love' (Texicalli Records 2010). In 2011 Lightboxer received Teosto Award nomination for it's first record and it was a critical success in numerous media. They also did a tour in Finland and Estonia sponsored by The Jazz Federation.

In recent years, Holkko has focused on the Linear John project, which has released two albums on german label Agogo Records. They have been praised around the world for their originality and freshness. The album has also received a lot of radio play in Germany, France and Portugal. In addition to Finland, Linear John has performed in Germany and Los Angeles.

In 2019, he recorded all acoustic jazz EP 'East Side Up!' with local musicians in New York. It contained his own material and was released by Texicalli Records in 2021. His perpetual search for the personal style and original combinations continued with his 2023 releases 'Music for Synthesizers, Piano and Saxophone Vol 1' and 'Golden Saxophone according to Markus Holkko Vol 1' (2022)

In the beginning of 2024, Markus Holkko Quartet's new album 'Eye of the Universe' will be released on the Jazzaggression Records. This versatile ensemble shows his compositional and visionary strengths perhaps more clearly than ever. The search continues.