

## **An Interview with Júlia Karosi**

*(By Róbert Maloschik in the JazzUp section of JazzMa, 28*

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**R.M.:** Dear Juli, how many interviews have you given so far?

J.K.: This is my third.

**R.M.:** I'm really pleased to hear that you were awarded a scholarship. Could you tell us the story behind it?

J.K.: This program is a scholarship funded by the EU to promote talent, which offers a special training course but doesn't include any subsidy. At The Liszt Academy of Music, every sub-department had the chance to nominate a student each, who were then judged by an independent panel of experts. The judges evaluated musical talent as well as stage presence, appearance, and communication skills both in our mother tongues and in foreign languages.

**R.M.:** Who were the members of the jury?

J.K.: Dániel Szabó, Kristóf Bacsó and Barbara Bércesi. The competition had to be judged by a jury independent of the institution, professors of the Academy of Music couldn't have been included.

**R.M.:** What does this talent scholarship entail and what were you chosen for?

J.K.: Based on the performances before the jury, five exceptionally talented students were chosen from The Liszt Academy of Music, I was the only one from the Jazz Department and four others from the Classical Music Departments. We will be given the assistance of mentors and we get the chance to prepare our introductory materials. Ten more students were chosen apart from us, who will take part in the courses provided by the talent competition. On these courses we will learn skills that are very important for a contemporary musician but unfortunately cannot be fitted into the normal

curriculum. We will be taught languages, stage movement, basic law and will be given other helpful tips and guidance. The lessons will start soon, and the courses will be held at the weekends, in blocks. At the end of the program, probably in January 2012, the chosen students will make their appearance at a concert to be attended by well known international concert organisers and agents.

**R.M.: Were you the only one chosen from the jazz department?**

J.K.: From the five who were specially selected, who will be given the chance to prepare our introductory materials, yes. More of us will be taking part in the training sessions though; guitarist Áron Komjáti, bass guitarist Tibor Fónay and saxophonist Gergely Varga.

**R.M.: You have a musical family, tell us about them!**

J.K.: My mother is the opera singer Júlia Pászthy, and my brother is Bálint Karosi the organist, who lives in Boston. My father is not a musician, but he appreciates and loves music as well.

**R.M.: Have you always wanted to become a singer, or did you play any other instrument?**

J.K.: I started playing the piano at six and attended the György Solti music school in the 12th district for 12 years, first as a student of Mrs. Tibor Gáspár, then Ariadne Bartai. When I was ten, I started playing the violin as well. I attended a primary school which specialised in music and a special emphasis was placed on choir singing, and I played in an orchestra as well.

**R.M.: Did you enrol at The Liszt Academy of Music straight after secondary school?**

J.K.: No, I went to University and did aesthetics and philosophy, and while studying there, I got involved in singing and jazz.

**R.M.: How did jazz come into the picture?**

J.K.: My father has a huge collection of Jazz LPs and I got acquainted with the genre through listening to these for years. As a child I used to listen to the Oscar Peterson Trio, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Shirley Horn and many more.

**R.M.: where did you start learning jazz singing, who were your teachers?**

J.K.: To start out with, Gábor Winand taught me at the Etúd Conservatoire and Music School. After finishing university in 2008, I applied to the jazz department of The Liszt Academy of Music, where I was accepted to study under Ágnes Lakatos and Tamás Berki. I'm currently in my third year here.

**R.M.: I seem to remember you performing at the Jazz Talent Exchange, in Nyitott Műhely.**

J.K.: That's right, I used to take part at the very beginning. Dezső Oláh invited me along and encouraged me to sing at their jam sessions.

**R.M. How difficult was it to switch to the difficulty level of the jazz department?**

J.K.: From the point of view of attendance, the studies are difficult, there's no room for missing any classes. It's hard to find the time to rehearse and fulfil my duties as a housewife as well as attending.

**R.M.: May I ask if you're married then?**

J.K.: Yes, my husband is Bendegúz Varga, the jazz percussionist.

**R.M.: This name reminds me of Trio Minor, but now I know how he ended up in the Karosi Júlia Quartet. Who are the other members of the band?**

J.K.: Tamás Balázs is the pianist and Balázs Horváth is the double-bass player.

**R.M.: When did you set up the quartet?**

J.K.: In 2009. We actually played our first gig in Nyitott

Múhely, in February 2010, where we were celebrating our first birthday on February 3rd, a year on.

**R.M.: What's the main profile of the band and where did you perform so far?**

J.K.: We cover more and more of my own songs. I'd like the emphasis to shift in this direction, but we also do jazz standards and covers of Hungarian chansons.

**R.M.: When can we expect the first album?**

J.K.: I'm planning the studio work to start this summer, but I don't have a promotion contract yet, and haven't found a publisher interested in my music. All applicants are very welcome to have a listen at my Myspace page:

[www.myspace.com/karosijulia](http://www.myspace.com/karosijulia).

**R.M.: Good luck!**