



Pored uspešne filmske i pozorišne karijere, Ana Sofrenović je, posle susreta sa kultnom američkom avangardnom kompozitorkom i vokalistkinjom Meredith Monk, poslednjih sedam godina posvetila i istraživanju ljudskog glasa i negove upotrebe u performansu, koja izlazi iz okvira tradicionalnih vokalnih tehnika. Umetničko veče pod nazivom Glasovi (Voices) zamišljeno je kao scensko putovanje kroz različite muzičke svetove, na kome će joj se pridružiti muzičari iz zemlje i inostranstva sa kojima je u poslednje vreme sarađivala. Kroz improvizacioni džez pristup, Ana i njeni prijatelji poigraće se raznim žanrovima i vokalnim izrazima, a među raznovrsnim odabranim inspiracijama su pesme Vaska Pope, romska muzika, džez standardi iz 50-tih godina prošlog veka, islandske i balkanske uspavanke. Improvizacija kroz izraz, žanr... i sliku.

120
19:30

АНА СОФРЕНОВИЋ: „ГЛАСОВИ“
ANA SOFRENović: „VOICES“

(СРБИЈА/ИСЛАНД)

(SERBIA/ICELAND)



Ана Софреновић – вокал
Гула Торвалдсдотир – вокал
Јован Маљковић – саксофон
Миша Цвијовић – клавира
Александар Узелац – клавира
Илић – клавира
Попић – гитара
Блажковић – гитара

Ана Милошевић – костим, сценарио
Душан Новаковић – видео
Ненад Поповић – видео

гласови
вокал
као
прид
сарај
поигра
одабран
из 50-ти
Импровизација

In addition to the iconic Ana Sofrenović began in performances ambitious program musical worlds. She whom she met friend

Све наше песме су о борбама

На почетку, Софреновићева је у тишини непомично стајала на сцени док су се снимци неба пројектовали изнад ње, а тихи ветар почео да се ковитла. Тај ветар била је Ана дувајући у микрофон. Потом је њен глас, суптилно преображен електроником, започео неописиво меко оплакивање и дозивање, попут гласног дисања. Одједном схватате да је то била песма, „Ђелем, ђелем“

БЕОГРАДСКИ
ЦЕЗ ФЕСТИВАЛ 2013

Томас Конраг*

Има нечег посебног у Београдском цез фестивалу. Уметнички директор Војислав Пантић и програмски менаџер Драган Амброзић имају непогрешив инстинкт за проналажење најбољег из константно развијајуће цез форме. Директор фестивала Марко Стојановић је извор снаге којом се одржавају високи стандарди фестивала. Овај цез фестивал није међу највећим или најпознатијим у Европи (бар не још увек), али кад год га посетим чујем невероватну музику. Сваке године поново упознајем водеће музичаре из Сједињених Држава и Европе, који обично представљају важне нове пројекте. Такође ме узбуде открића уметника који су ми били непознати. Коначно, увек доживим да ме распаменти барем једна особа из Србије.

Ове године, то је постигла Ана Софреновић. Већ ме је лане задивила. Међутим, ништа није могло да ме припреми за њен овогодишњи концерт, под називом „Гласови“. Било је то мултимедијално уметничко извођење: изазовно, збуњујуће, узбудљиво, хипнотично. Тако нешто може да створи једино уметник који поседује две озбиљне вештине – глуме и певања. На почетку, Софреновићева је у тишини непомично стајала на сцени док су се снимци неба пројектовали изнад ње, а тихи ветар почео да се ковитла. Тај ветар била је Ана дувајући у микрофон. Потом је њен глас, суптилно преображен електроником, започео неописиво меко оплакивање и дозивање, попут гласног дисања. Одједном схватате да је то била песма, коју нисам познавао. Касније сам сазнао да се зове „Ђелем, ђелем“ и да је то чувена ромска песма. Музичари, један по један, или у паровима, почели су да се појављују на сцени да би хитро закуцали на удараљкама или одсвирали неку тужну ноту на клавиру, а онда би нестали. Добро познате песме смо успевали да препознамо („Poinciana“, „You Don't

Know What Love Is“ и „Don't Explain“), али је њихов темпо био тако спор – као да су озвучавале Анине личне фантазије и као да их је она сањала. „Гласови“ чине језгровит концепт и затворени круг, то је потпуно драматизована представа страсти и једно од најособенијих извођења које сам икада доживео на неком цез фестивалу.

Касандра Вилсон представила је нови пројекат „Black Sun“, са триом Harriet Tubman, бројној публици на свечаном отварању у Сава Центру. „Black Sun“ представља одступање за Вилсонову. Типичном естетском споју цеза и блуза, овог пута додала је елементе рок и поп музике, као и нови акценат на друштвени протест. Отворила је наступ са „Strange Fruit“, мучном песмом о линчовању коју је прославила Били Холидеј. Верзија коју је Касандра представила била је смртно спора и пркосна, што је дало тон остатку вечери.

И њен наступ су пратиле видео пројекције, али је избор слика произво-

де бавила темом борбе и потешкоћа у универзалном људском смислу, слике су биле јасан доказ да је главна тема њене музике била историја расизма у Америци.

Глас јој је био у сјајној форми. Сваки стих био је трансформисан њеним течним, тамним, изражајним вокалом. У трију Harriet Tubman највише се истакао њен дугогодишњи гитариста Брендон Рос: његов бенд дао је музици интригантну, звонку звучност; запаљивим соло деоницама на електричној гитари посрамио би већину рокера.

Многи Американци, делом и зато што сада имају Афро-Американца за председника, сматрају да су САД завршиле са расизмом. За Касандру Вилсон, ствари нису тако једноставне.

Овогодишњи фестивал био је посвећен пијанистима. Талентовани Ђовани Гвиди наступао је у дуету са тромбонистом виртуозом/„дивљим човеком“ Ђанлуком Петрелом. Гвиди је разва-

ком свирао Шопенову етиду, а десном веома брзу нумеру „Secret Love“. Још боље су биле богате лирске интерпретације дела славног пољског композитора филмске музике Кшиштофа Комеде, попут „Sleep Safe and Warm“ из филма „Розмарина беба“, Романа Поланског. А најбоље су биле три вртоглаве и узвишене нумере које је извео са шведским контрабасистом Ларсом Данијелсоном, који је наступио одмах иза њега, током биса колеге. (Ларсов узбудљив соло у песми „Both Sides Now“, Џони Мичел, био је један од магичних тренутака фестивала).

Немница Јулија Хулсман другачије приступа клавиру: оскудна али ефикасна, са више минимализма улази у музички простор. На сјајном новом албуму под називом „In Full View“, прикључила је свом трију британског трубача Тома Артурса који је био са њом и у Београду. Артурове продорне, двосмислене мелодије доносе нову димензију емоционалних пропо-

бубњар Зив Равиц (бубњар који ме је највише задивио на фестивалу). Трио довољно увезан да врн и узбурка, а да се не разлете у одвојеним правцима. Маестрова музика садржи квалитете који се не спајају често: интелигенцију и екстазу.

Ли Кониц са пуним правом заслужује да се назове иконом, иначе превише израбљеним епитетом. Целог живота слушао његову музику, али га нисам видео уживо до ове године у Београду. Одсвирао је диван, нежан и машовит концерт са пијанистом Деном Тепфером. Иако му је 86 година, он и даље непогрешиво звучи као Ли Кониц. Чини се као да елегантне, свеже и вечито присутне мелодије природно извиру из њега, и то готово без имало труда. Изјавио је да себе сматра „срећним што последњих 60 година свира исте песме“, од којих је многе одсвирао и у Београду, а које су све блистале: „Alone Together“, „Out of Nowhere“, „Skylark“, „Subconscious-Lee“.

Природно, није ми се сваки концерт допао. Ник Барч ме је колосално удивио. (Признајем, напустио сам концерт раније.) Вицеј Ајер ме је збунио, пошто сам одувек поштовао његову музику због интелектуалне строгасти, техничких вештина и оригиналности. У Београду је звучао нетипично репетитивно, више заинтересован за стварање сложене ритмичке силе (са врхунским бубњаром Маркусом Гилмором) него за мелодијски или хармонијски садржај. Када му није вече, Ајер може да звучи прорачунато и хладно, а његова оштра енергија се више испољава као нервоза него као страст. Понекад пожелите да вам Ајер само одсвира песму.

Атмосфера на фестивалу је наелектрисана јер су програми тако добро посећени. Простори у Дому омладине су мали, а цене карата изузетно ниске по међународним стандардима. Готово да је на сваком концерту било људи који су стајали на пролазима.

Изван Дома омладине, Цез клуб Чекаоница постао је популарно место окупљања и дружења после концерата. Једне вечери, Лешек Можцер и Шаи Маестро су се појавили у том клубу и свирали до четири сата ујутро. Петар Крстајић, 18-годишњи српски басиста, затекао се наједном у жестоком друштву Можцера и Маестровог бубњара Зива Равица, али је стоички издржао овај изазов. Последње вечери фестивала, невероватан норвешки трио Bushman's Revenge гласном свирком умало није поразбијао прљаве прозоре клуба.

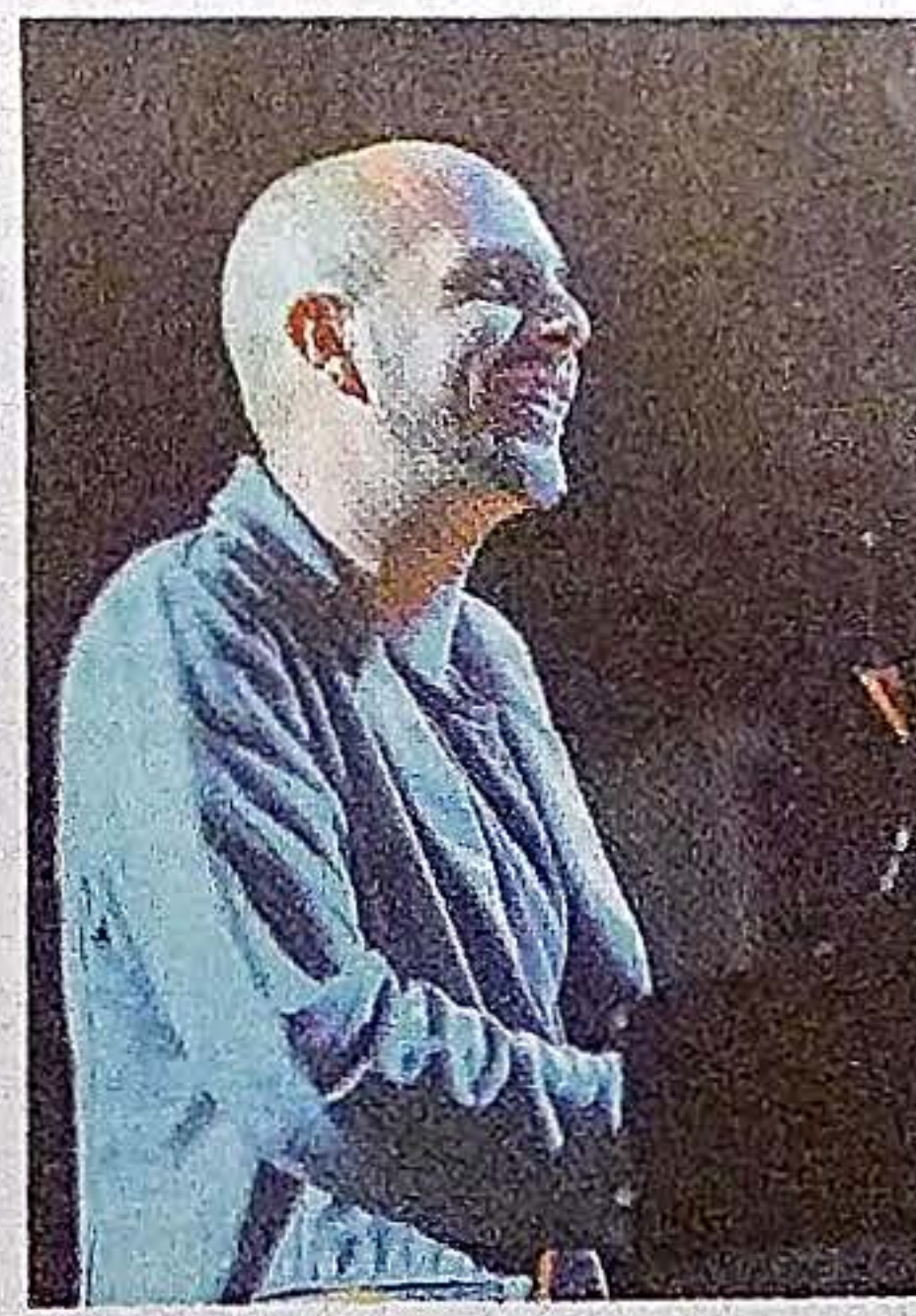
Следеће године, фестивал ће прославити 30. рођендан. Кладим се да ће горе поменута господа – Пантић, Амброзић и Стојановић – осмислити нешто посебно. Сумњам да ћу то моћи да пропустим.

Превела Јелена Хаџић

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Harriet Tubman & Cassandra Wilson



Шаи Маестро



Ана Софреновић



Том Артурс

Фото Тим Дикесон

дио потпуно другачији утисак. Старе фотографије линчовања, пијаца робова и запаљених крстова Кју Клукс Клана приказиване су изнад сцене. Вилсонова је објаснила да су све њихове песме о борбама, а потом отпевала „Overcome Someday“ и нову песму са репетитивним рефреном „I will rise up again“ („Уздихићу се поново“). Иако

љивао клавијатуру, а Петрела трубио, шкрипао и продувавао – заједно су тако стварали музику. Силно узбуђење је настало када су упловили у Елингтонову „Prelude to a Kiss“, претварајући нежну песму у комичну и хипстерску, али и даље веома срдану.

Пољак Лешек Можцер такође је прави виртуоз. Истовремено је левом ру-

зиција хармонски генијалној, готово церебралној музици Јулије Хулсман.

Пре доласка у Београд, нисам био упознат са израелским пијанистом Шаијем Маестром. Његов концерт испунили су моћни, разоружавајући и густе звуци. Талас за таласом енергије производили су равноправни извори: Маестро, басиста Хорхе Редери

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Simply Love
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She may not be the most



11/11/13

Review: Belgrade Jazz Festival 2013

Against all odds, a festival in Serbia has become one of the coolest in Europe

By **Thomas Conrad**

On October 11, 2013, an article by Vija Beamanis appeared in the *New York Times*. The title was "On the Verge: Belgrade, Europe's Latest Urban Success Story." It claimed that this "war-torn city" has emerged from the "long slumber" imposed by the "struggle and strife" of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Beamanis portrays Belgrade as a "burgeoning hub for design, culture and creativity," with boutique hotels, trendy restaurants and a new art museum.



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I just got back from there, and I don't recognize the Belgrade Beamanis describes. The Belgrade of my experience is a huge, teeming, gritty, austere city whose endless blocks of tattered gray buildings are covered in Cyrillic graffiti. That it is one of the poorest urban centers in Europe, with high unemployment and low wages, is obvious from the dress and demeanor of people on the streets. While it is true that a small new art museum, Macura, has opened on the outskirts of town, the National Museum on Trg Republike (Republic Square) has been "closed for renovation" for many years. The Museum of Contemporary Art, opened in 1965 and one of Europe's first national modern art museums, also sits closed, in disrepair. And I never saw a single trendy restaurant. You can eat very well in Belgrade, but you do it in small old family restaurants like Savski Ekspres, that serve heaping platters of grilled meats cheap.

The political situation in Serbia is still shaky. In 2012, a hardline nationalist, Tomislav Nikolić, became President. He defeated Boris Tadić, who had been viewed in the West as a progressive who could lead Serbia back to Europe. When it comes to politics, Belgrade is dominated by cynicism and conspiracy theories. Serbia was incapacitated by war, repression, isolation and economic sanctions through the 1990s. Such a society does not heal itself quickly. All sides were guilty of atrocities in the appalling, genocidal Balkan wars, but in the whole civilized world, the only place where it is not widely recognized that Serbia bears most of the blame is Serbia. Recent history is so horrific that most Serbs prefer to rewrite it or forget it. But they cannot forget it because there are still bombed-out buildings all over Belgrade, eyesores of rubble and hanging rebar. Every destroyed building I saw looked like it had not been touched since 1999, when the NATO planes hit. (Serbs who remember say, "They always came at night. Always by night.")

It is in this context that Belgrade hosted a jazz festival in late October 2013. Beamanis' *New York Times* article cites a design summit in June as an example of resurgent creativity in the city. A much better example would have been the Belgrade Jazz Festival. Its history goes back to 1971. In the '70s and '80s, Miles, Duke, Dizzy and Monk played BJF. But like everything else good in the Balkans, the festival went dark between 1991 and 2004 because of the wars. In 2005, a few members of Belgrade's dedicated jazz community, including Vojislav Pantić and Dragan Ambrosić, started it up again, from scratch, on a shoestring. By 2009, they were using venues around town like Dom Sindikata and the acoustically superb Kolarac. They were threadbare facilities (like most things in Belgrade), but held approximately 1600 and 900, respectively. The festival can no longer afford to rent such spaces. Since 2011, except for opening night, all concerts have been held in two venues in Dom Omladine, a plain building just off Trg Republike. It was originally a community youth center during the communist era.

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The two venues are Velika Sala, recently refurbished, with a capacity of approximately 600, and Amerikana, home of the midnight concerts, a funky space upstairs, painted black. You can squeeze 700 people into Amerikana if most of them stand. Pantić is now the Artistic Director of the festival. Ambrozić is Program Manager. There is a proactive new Festival Director, Marko Stojanović. These three hope to use venues like Kolarac again in the future, but in the meantime there are advantages to their current circumstances. Because the Dom Omladine venues are undersized, and because ticket prices are kept extremely low (the equivalent in Serbian dinars of \$12-\$14, \$7 for the midnight shows), BJF is a sold-out standing-room-only festival. And because everything centers around Dom Omladine, it is the place to be seen in Belgrade in late October if you have aspirations toward hipness. It is an electric scene for five days, a major hang, overflowing with the jazz faithful and fellow travelers from early evening until the wee hours. (Belgrade is like New York in one respect: It is a city that never sleeps. When you emerge from Dom Omladine at 2:30 a.m., Trg Republike and the streets are still alive.)

But the strength of BJF is the programming. While ever strapped for cash, Pantić and Ambrozić somehow always come up with a lineup that lives on the leading edges of the jazz art form. I have been to BJF for five straight years. I always reacquaint myself there with important Americans and Europeans, often when they are presenting interesting new projects. I always make exciting discoveries. And I am always impressed with at least one Serb. In 2013 it was Ana Sofrenović.

Her show, titled "Voices," was beyond a jazz concert. It was multi-media performance art: challenging, exhilarating, baffling, hypnotic. It could only have come from an artist fully functional in two disciplines, acting and singing. Sofrenović is well known in Serbia for her work as an actress in films and television. She came out on the stage of Velika Sala and stood stock still and silent. Video images of a blue sky and clouds were projected on a screen above her and a quiet wind began to stir. The wind was Ana, blowing into her microphone. Then her voice was heard, a voice subtly transfigured by electronics, a wordless soft moaning and sighing, like breathing aloud. Suddenly you realized it was a song. I did not recognize it. (Later I learned it was "Djelem Djelem," often called the Gypsy National Anthem.) Musicians began to appear on stage, alone or in pairs, to contribute a gesture (a few percussion strokes, a dark piano chord) before departing. Ana's hands, moving now, were essential to the unfolding mystery, and so was the stark, minimal stage lighting. Familiar songs became discernible ("Poinciana," "You Don't Know What Love Is," "Don't Explain"), but they barely moved. They were like achingly slow soundtracks to Ana's private fantasy. It was as if she were dreaming them. "Voices" was a closed circle, a dramatization of inner life that could not be expressed by more conventional means, and one of the most unique performances I have ever experienced at a jazz festival.

On opening night, Cassandra Wilson and her new project, Black Sun, played Sava Centar, a 4,000-seat auditorium across the Sava River from the city center. It was the fifth and last stop on their first tour, which had included concerts in France, Sweden and Macedonia. The first floor of Sava Centar holds approximately 3,000, and Wilson came close to filling it. That is the good news. The other news is that many left before the concert was over. Black Sun is a departure for Wilson. Perhaps those who left early had come to hear the Wilson of Grammy-winning albums like *New Moon Daughter*, and were not ready for Black Sun's new stark presentation, with its biting rock 'n' roll and more biting social protest.

Considering Wilson's high profile, it is notable that Black Sun is essentially a collective. It is Wilson plus a trio that calls itself Harriet Tubman, in honor of the African-American abolitionist who rescued more than 300 slaves. Brandon Ross is on guitar and banjo; Melvin Gibbs is on bass; J.T. Lewis is on drums. It is a collective but with two stars: Wilson, whose dark voice is still one of the most compelling, expressive instruments in jazz, and Ross, who was on fire in Sava Centar. He has been Wilson's guitarist of choice for many years, best known for his atmospheric acoustic sonorities. In Belgrade he played banjo, which imparted an ominous twang to the proceedings, and electric guitar, on which he took solos fierce enough to make most rock guitarists run and hide.

The concert began with a long instrumental prelude by the trio before Wilson came on stage. When she began to sing "Strange Fruit," it was electrifying. It may be the most disturbing song in the vocal jazz canon, and Wilson's version was dead slow and defiant. The agonizing impact of the song was intensified many times over by visual images projected on a screen over the stage. They were old photographs of lynchings and slave markets and Ku Klux Klan cross burnings. The tone of the evening was set, or seemed to be. Wilson's second song was "Overcome Someday," which fit the theme. But her third song was "Tomorrow Never Knows" by Lennon-McCartney, which did not.

I was surprised to learn after the concert that Black Sun had not used visual imagery on the other four stops on its tour. The photographs were put together only for Belgrade. One of them depicted something like a White Citizens Council, on the march, carrying Confederate flags, their pinched, bigoted faces familiar from newsreels of the 1960s. Familiar, that is, to an American in the audience. I can only speculate as to how a Serbian audience received and processed these images. At one point Wilson announced, "All of our songs are about struggle." She no doubt sees struggle in a larger, universal human sense, but the photographs were so gut-wrenching and specific that they precluded other histories. The images had the effect of shoving her message down her audience's throat. Her music was strong enough to carry the evening by itself. The visuals may have been a one-time experiment. Her concert would have been more focused and clear if she had used the images only on "Strange Fruit." In any case, Wilson is in excellent voice right now, looks fit, and seems energized by the possibilities of the Black Sun project.

Wilson and Sofrenović notwithstanding, a case could be made that BJF 2013 was about pianists. The extravagantly gifted young Italian, Giovanni Guidi, appeared in a duo with

trombone virtuoso/wild man Gianluca Petrella. They both play in Enrico Rava's quintet, and they both pursue their own projects. (Guidi has a beautifully understated, daring new album on ECM, *City of Broken Dreams*.) The fact that BJB brought them in as a duo may reflect economics more than aesthetics. Given today's omnipresent budgetary challenges, many jazz festivals have developed a fondness for solo artists and duos. But putting Guidi and Petrella alone together worked brilliantly, because their fearless imaginations were set free. Guidi was definitely not understated in Belgrade. He splashed and crashed across the full width of the keyboard, and Petrella blasted and squealed, and it all became music. It was a rush when they careened together into "Prelude to a Kiss," smearing and distorting the song's tenderness into something hip and hilarious and somehow still heartfelt.

Leszek Możdżer of Poland was one of the revelations of the festival. He has an album on the ACT label, *Komeda*, dedicated to the music of the great Polish film composer. In Velika Sala he played lush, swirling, intricate interpretations of "Sleep Safe and Warm" and "The Law and the Fist," from Komeda's score for the Roman Polanski film *Rosemary's Baby*. Możdżer possesses chops so extreme that, as a listener, you trust him completely and let go and just drown in his music. Sometimes he uses his technical facility for fun, to show off, like when he played one minute of Bach in a blur, or a Chopin etude with his left hand and a very fast "Secret Love" with his right. But more often he employed his skill in the service of art. On his original ballad "Incognitor," he overwhelmed his own song with glittering decoration yet retained enough of the melody to make it a stirring recurrence. Only very special pianists give the piano their own sound. When Możdżer plays it, it is a different Steinway, the notes richer, more resonant, more complex.

He has a brand new album with Swedish bassist Lars Danielsson, *Polska*, on ACT. Danielsson's quartet followed Możdżer's solo concert in Velika Sala, and when it came time for encores, Danielsson invited Możdżer to join him. They played three soaring numbers as a duo that were even better than anything in Możdżer's own set. Danielsson, by the way, is a spellbinder. The first number of his set was a long, freely wandering bass solo that became a rapt "Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell. It was one of the magic moments of the festival.

Julia Hülsmann of Germany is a pianist very different from Guidi and Możdżer: orderly, strategic, minimalist in her entries upon musical space. She released two interesting albums on ECM in 2008 and 2011 with her trio (bassist Marc Muellbauer, drummer Heinrich Köbberling). Her new ECM album, *In Full View*, adds British trumpeter Tom Arthurs, who was with her in Belgrade. His melodically conditional, ambiguous lines bring new dimensions of emotional suggestion to Hülsmann's rather cerebral music.

I did not know the Israeli pianist Shai Maestro at all before Belgrade. His concert had enough sweeping power to lift you right out of your chair, even long after midnight in Amerikana. Wave after wave of irresistible energy emanated from three co-equal sources: Maestro, bassist Jorge Roeder and Ziv Ravitz, the most maniacal and exciting drummer of the festival. It was a trio tight enough to seethe and erupt without flying apart. Maestro's music has qualities you do not often encounter together: sharp intelligence and sheer ecstasy.

Two pianists who disappointed were Nik Bärtsch (with his trio Ronin) and Vijay Iyer (with his critically acclaimed trio of bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore). Bärtsch was a colossal bore. (Full disclosure: I left when the bass clarinetist, who calls himself Sha, began to use his horn to create a click track.)

Iyer's performance was puzzling. I have always respected his music for its intellectual rigor, technical skill and originality. Perhaps the context of Belgrade worked to his disadvantage. Players like Guidi, Możdżer, Hülsmann and Maestro may never achieve the renown of Iyer. They may never be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship, which Iyer received a month before his appearance in Belgrade. But they are all, in their various ways, profoundly *pianistic*. In Belgrade Iyer mostly approached the piano as a percussion instrument. He was oddly repetitive all night. He still made surprising note choices, and his dynamics included spikes in unexpected places. But he often stayed with chord cycles and figures and single notes for so long that they dissipated whatever tension they generated. He seemed more interested in creating complex forms of rhythmic force than in exploring melodic and harmonic ideas. In this endeavor he had a powerful ally in Gilmore, who can hold a riveting, insidious pattern patiently while Iyer and Crump juxtapose contrasting metrical alternatives. Together they generate a formidable, unusual thrust. An Iyer concert is never going to be less than meticulous and clever. But on an off night, his continuous cryptic calculations sound a little cold, his energy nervous, his leaps spasmodic. Sometimes you wish Iyer would just play you a song.

I have heard Lee Konitz's music all my adult life but had never seen him live until Belgrade. It was a moving experience. He played a gentle, luminous, whimsical concert in Velika Sala with pianist Dan Tepfer. At 86, he still sounds like Lee Konitz. When he operates an alto saxophone, it is as if fresh, elegant melodic variations flow from him, almost without effort. He announced that he considers himself "fortunate to have been able to play the same songs for 60 years." He played some of them in Belgrade, and they glowed: "Alone Together," "Out of Nowhere," "Skylark," "Subconscious-Lee."

This year an off-site venue, Jazz Club Čekaonica (which means "meeting room") became the festival's after-hours hang. It is on the seventh floor of a near-derelect building near the Sava River. The entrance to the building is spooky and dark. The ride up in the elevator is spookier. You lack confidence in the regularity of elevator inspections. Every floor that goes by is more covered in graffiti than the last. But once you reach the seventh floor, the club is a simpatico place to hear music. There are tall windows that would provide lovely city views if someone ever washed them. But clean windows might interfere with the ambience of Jazz Club Čekaonica. Leszek Możdżer and Shai Maestro showed up one night and jammed until 4 a.m. An 18-year-old Serbian bassist, Peter

Krstajić, found himself in heavy company between Moždžer and Maestro's drummer Ziv Ravitz, and held his own. On the festival's last night, Bushman's Revenge (Even Helte Hermansen, guitar; Rune Norgaard, bass; Gard Nilssen, drums) played the most violent version of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" I have ever heard. They threatened to solve the issue of the club's dirty windows by blowing them out. It was a perfect way to end a festival like this one. Bushman's Revenge is from Norway, but they play music as hard and edgy as the mean streets of Belgrade.

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news

Stan Tracey - 1926-2013



Jazz breaking news: Lee Konitz and Ana Sofrenovic bring fresh sounds to Belgrade Jazz Festival

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This year's **Belgrade Jazz Festival**, the 29th edition, pulled off the remarkable feat of being one of the best of recent years, yet on a budget that was almost 40% less than that of five years ago. Judicious programming (and it has to be said a lot of good will on the part of the artists) ensured that the 17 shows over the five days of the festival were filled with an extremely interesting mix of music.

The festival was launched at the 2,800-seater Sava Centre with two contrasting concerts. Firstly trumpeter Bert Joris with the RTS Big band and then **Black Sun** featuring **Cassandra Wilson**. The RTS Big Band – as much an institution in Serbia as the BBC Big band is here, played a selection of music composed and arranged by Joris – including the madcap tune Joris wrote celebrating his childhood hero's of Star Trek – Warp Factor 9. Black Sun played the same set we had seen the week before in Skopje, here in this massive auditorium it lacked the immediacy it had in that much smaller venue and the disappointing sight of hundreds of fans leaving after only a few numbers did not help. The excellent audio-visual accompaniment to the music was an added bonus but I fear the majority of the audience had come to see a different show entirely.



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WORK EXPERIENCE

For the rest of the festival the concerts are based in the centre of Belgrade at the Dom Omladine youth centre – which has two concert halls, exhibitions spaces, cafés and bars. It played host to two shows a day at 7.30pm downstairs in the larger hall and two midnight shows in the slightly smaller upstairs hall. The Serbian fusion band Eyot have developed quite a following in mainland Europe and their tight polyrhythmic groove was the perfect appetiser for a set by **Lee Konitz** (playing acoustically, pictured above) with pianist **Dan Tepfer**. Konitz (who had managed to arrive in Belgrade without his sax, playing one borrowed from a music school student) was in excellent form and he and Tepfer played a totally relaxed set, bouncing ideas off each other, singing included when Konitz wanted to expand the melody.

The midnight shows featured a storming set from **Gianluca Petrella** (trombone) and **Giovanni Guidi** (piano) – Petrella probably one of the best exponents of the trombone around and Guidi the cornerstone of the kinetic sound. **Yuri Honing's Acoustic Quartet** with Wolfert Brederode on piano, ended the evening in splendid fashion – his use of pop songs as the basis for interpretation his trademark, his almost unique sax sound, downward spiralling solos and Joost Lijbaart's effortless drumming perfect for Brederode's melancholic piano.



The opening double bill of two Serbian performers at totally opposite ends of the musical world was the offering for Saturday night. Opening the show **Fish in Oil**,



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reviews

Jason Rebello



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SUBMIT

an interesting electric septet playing fusion based grooves, were followed by the totally unique **Ana Sofrenovic** (pictured above) and her 'Voices' project. This is an exploration of vocal sounds (at first she was just the wind and the rustling of the trees) and then songs accompanied by a film projection performance that puts Sofrenovic in the spotlight on the front of the stage. Musicians come and go, but this is her show – an actress as well as singer, she holds the attention with her voice and her almost hypnotic aura. Let's hope Sofrenovic can bring her one-woman multi-voice show to the UK soon as it's utterly unique.

The two midnight concerts rounded off the Saturday perfectly. **Julia Hülsmann** is the quietly rising star of ECM and her new CD with **Tom Arthurs** is simply superb. Arthurs has grown so much musically since his move to Berlin and this gig with Hülsmann is probably his finest period so far – his playing and writing outstanding –and live he almost steals the show from the pianist, his trumpet playing at times brash and squeaky but then sensitive and melodic – it's well worth catching them on tour.

The final music of Saturday night came from **Nick Bartsch's Ronin** – the lateness of the hour perfect for his hypnotic almost trance like music and minimalist light show. Saxophonist/bass clarinetist Sha a menacing figure on the dark stage and Bartsch (all in black robes as usual) adding to the almost Halloween feeling of the show. The ebb and flow of the music and the slow build to climactic soundscape's keeping the huge crowd baying for more into the small hours.

Sunday night was interesting as it showcased three pianists in very different settings. Polish piano star **Leszek Moźdżer** opened with a solo set of breathtaking ability and invention – at one point playing a Chopin prelude with his left hand and 'My Foolish Heart' with his right to create a brilliant new piece. He is every bit on a par with the Mehldau's and Taylor's of the jazz world.

I saw **Lars Danielsson's** (pictured below) excellent project Liberetto, last year with Tigran on piano at Jazz a Vienne so it was interesting to hear another young pianist, Israeli **Yaron Hermon** taking the piano stool. Danielsson's material – electro groove with a very lyrical edge and whilst Tigran used boundless energy, Hermon's approach is more considered; yet nonetheless compelling. His interplay with John Parricelli (guitar) was excellent – Danielsson himself is a very interesting bassist and the complexity of his material never got in the way of some stunning soloing and group interplay.

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To cap off a brilliant show Mozdzer, who played in a previous incarnation with Danielsson, came back for a couple of duo numbers with the bassist to the delight of the audience. The midnight show was courtesy of another Israeli pianist, Shai Maestro. An altogether more relaxed and traditional approach to the piano trio with long and lyrical passages interspersed with some beautiful improvisation.

Later on at the Jazz Club Cekaonica both Mozdzer and Maestro along with drummer **Ziv Ravitz** (from Maestro's trio) could be found jamming with local musicians till gone 4am – all three enjoying the chance to have some fun on the road. The festival ended on Monday with a brilliant concert from the **Vijay Iyer Trio** – the playing was simply superb and Marcus Gilmore on drums just gets better and better. Back at Cekaonica the festival wound down (or up I should say) with an ear shattering set from Danish power trio **Bushman's Revenge** – who struck a chord with Iyer who was seen getting the CD after the gig!

Next year the festival reaches its 30th edition – the managing team of Marco Stojanovic, Dragan Ambrozic and Voja Pantic have some great plans for this celebration including the possibility of putting together an 'All Star' band, featuring some of the biggest names who have played at the festival since the first show back in 1971. The festival is always over the last weekend in October so make a note in your diaries now – it promises to be something special.

– Tim Dickeson (story and pictures)

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Review: Skopje and Belgrade Jazz Festivals



Bob Weir finds plenty to enjoy at the 32nd Skopje Jazz Festival and the revived Belgrade programme, featuring Vijay Iyer and Ana Sofrenovic

Skopje is rapidly striving for identity as the capital of Macedonia which emerged so recently from the break-up of Yugoslavia. There are even more central area statues than I encountered two years ago and rebuilding is on a massive scale. Stability in these turbulent political and economic times comes in the unchanging Turkish quarter and notably with Oliver Belopeta's 32nd annual jazz festival.

The five-day programme (17-21 October) with three concerts each



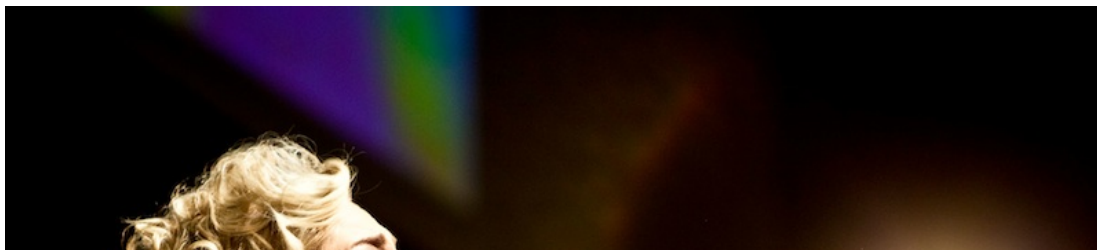
night was dominated by top-flight US groups ably supported by well-chosen bands from across Europe, Israel and Brazil. One night was devoted to Balkan music. The opening session had two outstanding UK attractions and the presence of the young and amiable British ambassador who takes pride in having introduced professional snooker to the country. Evan Parker



with Slovenian percussionist Zlatko Kaucic got things rolling with a free-improv programme marked by long passages of sinuous, sustained brilliance and virtuosic use of circular breathing and multiphonics. There is a danger, as new sensations come along, of such exciting and experienced veterans being taken for granted, at home if not abroad, but in this form Evan is playing as well as ever. Get The Blessing, the first of several rock-influenced ensembles, wear their quality and skill lightly but their lyrical electronic grooves on craftily arranged originals were highly entertaining.

The Norwegian duo of singer Sidsel Endresen and guitar monster Stian Westerhus played a diverse set, roving across Joni Mitchell-like folk, Weimar-era jollity, haunting SF cinematic soundscapes and spirituals, and all played with astonishing technical skill by both participants. John Abercrombie's Quartet followed to play from their new ECM album with a fine display of interaction and rapport and thrilling extended solos from the leader and pianist Marc Copland. Israeli trombonist Reut Regev's R*Time provided lively, funky fun at the midnight session.

Balkan Fever featured the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra with three renowned folk musicians on well-known folk-jazz and film themes to the delight of a partisan crowd. Guitarist Nicola Conte's influential blend of acid-jazz and bossa nova with a fine Italian sextet was hugely enjoyable at midnight.



Solid jazz virtues were reintroduced next night by the endlessly inventive Roscoe Mitchell on reeds with superb support by Hugh Ragin (tp) and Tyshawn Sorey (d, tb, p). This was free-improv at its best by absolute masters. Cassandra Wilson surprised many people with a



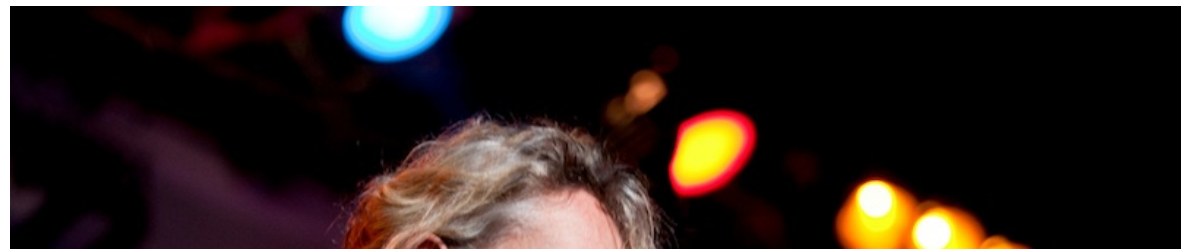
break from her usual programme of standards and blues. Her Black Sun project, playing as a fully integrated singer/electric guitarist with the Harriet Tubman Trio, was a beguiling, contemporary take on black roots music in all its forms. Trumpeter Peter Evans (ex Other People Do The Killing) closed the night with astonishing technique at crazy-fast tempos and with a touch of Balkan gypsy trumpet to delight the locals.

Perhaps the best came on the last night with the inspired pairing of Ibrahim Maalouf's Illusions and Dave Holland's Prism. The Lebanese

trumpeter used a heavy-metal rhythm section and three other trumpeters who employed the leader's signature extra valve for exotic Middle-Eastern micro-tonal flavour. They played barnstorming anthems which threatened to lift the concert hall roof, balanced with quietly evocative reveries of Ibrahim's Beirut childhood. Dave Holland's supergroup (Kevin Eubanks (elg), Craig Taborn (kyb) and Eric Harland (d)) gave us the concentrated essence of jazz with the blues at its centre. Each player held interest over long solos on mostly new music. The presentation was restrained to avoid any distractions from pure jazz at its finest. Rob Mazurek and Sao Paulo Underground closed this thrilling festival in suitably genre-bending style.

Belgrade is a large cosmopolitan capital buzzing with energy and artistic activity (there are more bookshops and art galleries in the centre than any other place I know). The ninth edition of the revived jazz festival (24-28 October) presented a very appealing programme, despite severe budget cuts, with tickets sold out for nearly every show. There were two to four concerts each night with lots of supplementary attractions.

The Serbian Radio & TV Big Band celebrated their 65th anniversary with an exhilarating opening concert on Friday featuring the trumpet and challenging arrangements of Bert Joris from Belgium. Cassandra Wilson with the Harriet Tubman Trio then reprised



the Skopje Black Sun project with perhaps a little less intimacy at the large Sava Centre, although the innovation of back-projected old and rare photos of slavery and emancipation did intensify the meaning of the songs remarkably well.

Saturday started with the Eyot quartet, one of several exciting fusion bands on the programme. Lee Konitz (*pictured above right*) followed accompanied by Dan Tepfer (p) for a relaxed exposition of his favourite songs. His expression when he recognised a photo of his 25-year-old self (63 years ago) on the festival poster was a delight. The Italian Gianluca Petrella (tb) and Giovanni Guidi (p) duo Soupstar played with great freedom and excitement with constant reminders of the jazz trombone tradition from Tricky Sam onwards. The Yuri Honing Acoustic Quartet from the Netherlands featuring the saxophonist/composer leader and highly talented pianist Wolfert Brederode performed adventurous, eclectic originals and rock covers to great acclaim.



The popular local group Fish In Oil opened on Sunday but I found their mix of electric Ribot-Waits-Zorn a mite fragmented and derivative. What followed was one of the surprises and intense delights of the whole festival. Singer/actor (famous in the Balkans) Ana Sofrenovic (*pictured above left*) was here last year with a straightforward set of standards and Serbian evergreens. But this time she had a completely brave and original approach. She used her considerable vocal and dramatic talents to the full for a conceptual sequence of very diverse and slowly evolving material (original song suites, Billie tribute, cod-swing etc) linked by hushed passages of avant-garde ambient vocalising. Her show divided the audience and provoked more post-concert discussion than anything else this year but it is an idea that can be developed to make a compelling attraction for future concerts and festivals. The Julia Hulsman Trio (*Hulsman pictured above right*) from Germany with newly joined Brit Tom Arthurs on trumpet and the Swiss Nik Bartsch's Ronin brought things down to earth with nicely contrasting ECM music.

Sunday was the other outstanding night, but this time consistently throughout the three concerts. This was due

to the remarkable quality of three pianists - Leszek Mozdzier (Poland) playing solo and the Israelis Yaron Herman with the Lars Danielsson Libretto quartet and Shai Maestro in a trio. I knew the abilities of Yaron and Shai from other festivals but Leszek was a revelation. His prodigious technique was used with fine sensitivity to create a very individual style for interpretations of Chopin, Komeda, Chick Corea and eloquent standards. An encore sequence of duets with master bassist Lars Danielsson was equally thrilling.



After this, the closing night was a bit of an anticlimax. The Portuguese duo Julio Resende (p) and Maria Joao (v) offered Fado And Further but to my ears it was more Further than Fado. Resende was too technical and emotionally detached for the genre and Joao's eccentric presentation, despite a remarkably flexible voice, was distracting. The Vijay Iyer Trio (*Iyer pictured left*) raised the standard with some mesmeric grooves for a rousing finale to the festival.

Post-concert visits to the Cekaonica jazz and Vox blues clubs prolonged enjoyment socially and musically (a 4am finish was typical). Standout sessions at Cekaonica, atmospherically located high in a semi-derelict printing works with spectacular views over the city and Danube, included gifted Serbian pianist Vlade Maricic jamming with members of the RTS Big Band and a visit by Leszek Mozdzier and Shai Maestro letting their hair down on hard-swinging bebop classics. Vox, with good local bands and a mass of blues memorabilia on display - now including a selection of JJ photographer Tim Dickeson's portraits of blues legends - is always a treat. There were interesting exhibitions on the local Association of Jazz Musicians, the RTS Big Band, the ACT music label and a wonderful display of large photographs on cloth from the Ivan Grlic Serbian Jazz, Bre! Project, which deserve to be more widely known. The Stankovic Music School Jazz Section was also involved (the festival has always been strong on encouraging young players).

Both festivals appear to be in good hands for the future. Skopje's Oliver Belopeta, with urbane efficiency and attention to detail, has the knack of assembling well-balanced programmes of on-form established and rising stars, year on year. Belgrade's organisational triumverate of Marko Stojanovic (festival director), Dragan Ambrozic (programme director) and Voja Pantic (artistic director) already have exciting expansion plans to mark the 10th anniversary. The websites to monitor for future news are www.skopjefazzfest.com.mk and www.belgradejazzfest.org.

Photos by John Watson www.jazzcamera.co.uk

Photo of Vijay Iyer by Rita Pinkse

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