

TAMPERE

BY ANDREY HENKIN

PHOTO BY MAARIT KYTÖHÄRJÄ



Ricky-Tick Big Band and Julkinen Sana

The Tampere Diaries begin on a chilly, overcast Friday in the southern Finland town, which once harbored Vladimir Lenin and, for the past 34 years, has done the same for an array of artists as part of its Tampere Jazz Happening (Oct. 29th-Nov. 1st). In an era of festivals using the term jazz as a marketing ploy, TJH remains committed to as wide a definition of the art form as possible, wildly different acts following one another on the stage of the Old Customs House (the Finnish acts across a small square at the ski-lodge-esque Telakka and late-night sets at Klubi's night club stage).

Each night featured a 'big-name' act as the closing performance. Ginger Baker's Jazz Confusion, the British drummer's project devoted to muscular takes on jazz standards, suffered from lethargy on the second night while Carla Bley's trio with electric bassist Steve Swallow and saxophonist Andy Sheppard, which closed the festival, never emerged from a narrow bandwidth of placid beauty, becoming one-dimensional. But the first evening's Ricky-Tick Big Band and Finnish rap trio Julkinen Sana (Paleface, Redrama and Tommy Lindgren) was a wonderful surprise. While the concept is not new and the band's soloists underwhelming, that is just nit-picking. For over 70 minutes, the Old Customs House, chairs removed, turned into a dance party. This correspondent is a lover of the Finnish language and to hear it 'spit' by three very different rappers was simply fabulous.

The rest of Friday's program displayed the aforementioned variety. Mats/Morgan Band, the co-led quartet of Mats Öberg (Nord electro keyboard and harmonica) and Morgan Ågren (drums), is the completely unironic love child of several eras of Jan Hammer. Stefan Jernstål alternated between a second Nord Electro and guitar while bassist Gustaf Hielm kept things chugga-chugging along through the varied terrain. The band lurched between prog-rock, industrial metal, synth-pop, alt-country and even circus music in lengthy pieces, which were convincing because of Öberg's sincerity and Ågren's precision. This was followed by the international trio of Cuban pianist Omar Sosa, Indian drummer/percussionist Trilok Gurtu and Italian trumpeter Paolo Fresu in a set that often felt over-rehearsed and usually left Fresu in the background between the irresistible Sosa and immovable Gurtu. The evening's late night set was tenor saxophonist/bass clarinetist David Murray's Infinity Quartet (pianist Orrin Evans, bassist Jaribu Shahid and drummer Hamid Drake) featuring guest hip-hop poet Saul Williams. While both components were accomplished—Evans is an excellent covalent foil for Murray's exuberance—it felt like people playing next to, rather than with, each other.

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KRAKOW

BY KEN WAXMAN

PHOTO BY SUSAN O'CONNOR WWW.JAZZWORD.COM



Peter Brötzmann

Krakow's Kazimierz district, which includes Poland's oldest standing synagogue building and architecture dating mostly from the 18th century, was once a center of intellectual ferment and more recently known for its large concentration of bars and restaurants. But it is unlikely the area witnessed such an open display of power and emotion as took place during Peter Brötzmann's four-day residency at the Alchemia Club during Krakow Jazz Autumn (Nov. 5th-8th).

Billed as the German reedplayer's special project, one performance also took place in the soft-seated auditorium of the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology, situated on the banks of the Vistula River, which snakes throughout the city. Unlike the somewhat cramped Alchemia, Manggha gave the players more leg—and more importantly—elbowroom, but the quality of the sounds remained the same.

Whenever Brötzmann, 74 and with 50-plus years of recording and touring, rears back and ejaculates a sound, his tone is instantaneously identifiable whether on tenor or soprano saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet or tarogato. Over the course of the residency, he worked in a variety of settings, from duos to a sextet, facing each situation uniquely, whether restrained and chesty balladic tones or reed thrusts so raw they suggested molten lead. His associates ranged from peers like American trumpeter/saxophonist Joe McPhee, Swedish drummer Peeter Uuskyla and American bassist William Parker and mid-career players like British drummer Steve Noble, American drummer Hamid Drake and Swedish tuba player Per-Åke Holmlander to even younger associates such as Norwegian drummer Paal Nilssen-Love and Texan-turned-Glaswegian pedal steel guitarist Heather Leigh. All had previously worked with Brötzmann; only a few with one another. But despite the stage sometimes looking like the arrival and departure gates of a busy international airport, almost every set followed astutely planned flight paths.

Leigh, with whom Brötzmann had played only a few times, was a new challenge. Using effects pedals to add a synthesizer-like ostinato to her 12-string laptop, Leigh's fretless narratives seemed to be the place where Stockhausen and Speedy West meet. As her reverberations coalesced into stinging Hendrix-style guitar flanges or pulsating bass guitar-like bounces, Brötzmann turned from repetitive renal lowing on clarinet to a warm bagpipe-like sound nestled passionately among her tremolo tones. Joined by Noble during another set, subtle cymbal coloring added the third ingredient, resulting in comfortably head-swaying swing.

McPhee and Brötzmann, especially when backed

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EXIT ZERO

BY JOEL ROBERTS

PHOTO BY RICHARD CONDE PHOTOGRAPHY



Wynton Marsalis

For a weekend each year in November and then again in May, the Exit Zero Festival takes over the bucolic Jersey Shore resort town of Cape May and turns it into a jazz mecca. This year's fall event (Nov. 6th-8th) was the biggest and most eclectic in the festival's four-year history, presenting artists from a wide variety of jazz and non-jazz genres and adding a large new concert venue, which allowed some big-name bookings.

The biggest of those names was the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO), under trumpeter Wynton Marsalis' direction, which filled the Schmidtchen Theater, located just outside of Cape May's downtown, but easily accessible by free shuttle buses, with a packed Saturday night crowd.

Marsalis and his 15-piece ensemble offered one of their patented jazz history lessons, going decade by decade from the '20s through the '50s, covering Duke Ellington and Count Basie before moving onto Dizzy Gillespie's ridiculously fast "Things to Come", with parts that Marsalis described as "impossible to play", though he and the band did just fine. The evening's highlight was a performance of "Moody's Mood for Love" featuring saxophonist Ted Nash's elegant rendition of James Moody's original solo, followed by a cheeky turn on the famous vocal version by trombonists Vincent Gardner and Chris Crenshaw. This was not one of the JLCO's more imaginative setlists, sticking perhaps a bit too close to Jazz 101, but the real joy of this group is the sheer power of its sound and overall excellence of its members and both of these were showcased to fine effect.

Friday night in the same concert hall belonged to drummer Terri Lyne Carrington's The Mosaic Project, a much more contemporary group covering everything from Charlie Parker to The Beatles in styles ranging from avant garde to neo-soul. Vocalist Jaguar Wright made a strong impression on an old Nancy Wilson tune, "Imagine This", before giving way to R&B legend Valerie Simpson, who offered a moving take on "God Bless the Child" as well as some of her own compositions written with late husband Nick Ashford.

Some of the festivals best shows were held at the beachfront Cape May Convention Hall, including a dynamic afternoon performance by Marc Cary and his Harlem Sessions group. The acclaimed keyboard player led a rotating lineup of more than a dozen young musicians, singers, poets and even a tap dancer through a wildly entertaining and creative set of ultra-hip soul, funk and hip-hop flavored jazz. Cary, on electric keyboards, and his horn-heavy band created a late-night party atmosphere, playing engaging originals, like the catchy "Harlem River Drive", as well as tunes by everyone from George Duke and Pharoah

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ready to feel this way. But I do feel there is so much more music happening now with younger musicians playing creative music. It's extremely exciting. There's so much out there I can't even listen to it all. It keeps me awake at night, trying to check out something new. Young musicians in jazz are merging all these different styles and that's exciting. Jazz was always a music that was moving forward. You have some players that look at it like more like a classical music, something that you repeat, and I think that's important too, to bring an awareness to great music that was done how ever far back you want to go, but it's just as important to acknowledge the energy of what's happening now. At my age, I'm kind of at a crossroads: I really dig the new stuff and I'm really interested in finding out more about the old stuff; it's exciting, it's inspiring. So, I think you have to balance all that out. I think it has to do with your personality: maybe your conscience would like to constantly hold on to what you know. The people that have mentored me, Jack DeJohnette and Wayne Shorter, people like that, they're always looking for the new thing, they're always moving forward. They inspire me. I can't be less progressive than them. [laughs]

TNYCJR: Since around 2010, with the Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Festival, followed by the Mosaic Project and the ACS Trio, you are in ensembles consisting of all women.

TLC: I don't really have the answer to the women in jazz issue. It's very sensitive to me. I haven't gone through what a lot of women have. I haven't had any problems in my career, for the most part. Of course, there's always going to be something, how we feel something was done unfairly, but, for the most part, I've had a really great career. There are people that don't have that kind of experience and it's real to them and I always want to be sensitive to that. On the other hand, I understand the thought process of, just what you said, highlighting women in jazz or other areas that draw more attention to it. It's kind of like the same question about Affirmative Action and how people have mixed feelings about that. I know I have not wanted to be considered in a sub-group of any sort, just simply a musician. Either you think I'm good or you don't. You have to bring awareness to any minority situation if there are people that are not aware. But I do feel that these days, in general, people are becoming more aware of women's abilities to do things in male-dominated fields. Is it equal or completely fair yet? No, I'm sure, but I think the awareness is where it's not so shocking to see a woman doing something in a male-dominated area and I think that's a great first step to hopefully getting to a point where you don't have to have organizations that focus on women. But I don't feel it will ever be exactly equal, I just don't. Maybe it's just an aggressive thing to play jazz, maybe there's an aggressive nature to it. I know there is on the drums.

TNYCJR: Is any of the intention of these all-women ensembles to address this or is it just about the music?

TLC: It was really simple for me, one day I looked up and I was playing with a lot of women. I had a quartet gig and I called Geri and Esperanza and Tineke Postma. There was a quartet gig in Israel and I just called them because I was hearing their sound. I didn't think about their gender and when that moment hit me I said, "Oh, this is something to celebrate now" and I felt like I wouldn't have been able to do that 20 years earlier. So, that was the seed for me for The Mosaic Project and then I just kept adding sounds. It was just a celebration, kind of that simple. It was not as much of a political statement, maybe, as some people thought about it. The second Mosaic Project is out now, because there

were people I wanted to work with but ran out of time and space and all of that on the first one. Also, I tried to keep the first one focused on the acoustic side of jazz and there were other female instrumentalists that I loved playing with that focus a little bit more on groove-oriented music or electric-based jazz. I wanted to include that but couldn't do it all with the first one. The new CD [*The Mosaic Project: LOVE and SOUL*] came out in August, with Natalie Cole, Chaka Kahn, Ledisi, Chanté Moore, Jaguar Wright, Lalah Hathaway, Oleta Adams, Paula Cole, Lizz Wright, Valerie Simpson and Nancy Wilson. It's a CD I'm very proud of.

TNYCJR: How important is it to own your art in order to help insure your financial success?

TLC: When you're younger, you may not be able to do that because not everybody knows who you are and everything. I think when you're older you have to think about that and you have, hopefully, more money to invest in yourself. As soon as I understood that I need to invest in myself, my career took off. It was a nice, direct outcome. I think more and more the mindset of other people financing you and your product has changed. I make my albums myself and I partner with a label. I hand them a finished product and I license it to them, which is very different than just having a record deal. When you license you own your product and you license for a certain amount of time. That's my model and it works for me. It takes my own financial investment, as well as time. The more time I've invested in myself, my career started to do better. So, I'm a big believer in that. ❖

For more information, visit terrilynecarrington.com. Carrington is at Village Vanguard Dec. 15th-20th. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:

- Terri Lyne Carrington—*TLC and Friends* (CEL, 1981)
- Mulgrew Miller—*Work!* (Landmark, 1986)
- Gary Thomas—*Till We Have Faces* (JMT, 1992)
- Terri Lyne Carrington—*Jazz Is A Spirit* (ACT, 2001)
- Terri Lyne Carrington—*Structure* (ACT, 2003)
- Terri Lyne Carrington—*Money Jungle: Provocative in Blue* (Concord, 2012)

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instrumentalist does, Lynn brings together the best of both spheres. Lynn has a Norma Winstone-influenced voice, and Ms. Winstone returns the favor by singing on Lynn's lovely "Upon the Hill". Gareth Lockrane's *The Strut* has nifty cover art combining the arty/cubist Prestige Records-in-the-'50s style with Batman—stylistically it's soul jazz (or groove jazz, for younger readers) with some interesting variations on the palette. It's vividly imaginative yet full of Saturday night strut as any Johnny Hammond or Big John Patton session.

So, despite the (usually justifiable) angst many musicians and music devotees have about the music biz, it's good to know that someone is fighting the good fight and scoring several victories along the way. Janisch's Whirlwind label personifies the dictum "If you want something done right, do it yourself", taking care of business and making available some super-fine singular sounds for global consumption, and isn't that a heart-swelling success story we can all enjoy? ❖

For more information, visit whirlwindrecordings.com. Artists performing this month include Samuel Blaser at Nublu Dec. 10th, Ibeam Brooklyn Dec. 11th-12th and 15th with Max Johnson and Cornelia Street Café Dec. 13th; Joel Harrison at Roulette Dec. 1st; John O'Gallagher at Roulette Dec. 1st with Joel Harrison; Jochen Rueckert at Cornelia Street Café Dec. 10th with Lage Lund, 12th with Guillermo Klein and 16th with Randy Ingram and Bar Next Door Dec. 15th with Peter Brendler; and JC Sanford at Roulette Dec. 1st with Joel Harrison. See Calendar.

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The second day's afternoon segment was a stroke of brilliance. The Thing—saxophonist Mats Gustafsson, bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love—were invited to perform, but not together. Gustafsson improvised unaccompanied on baritone, tenor and slide saxophones, working with a different logic than other solo performers—small chunks of sound (like rubbing his stubble against his reed) rather than lengthy threads. Some of his pieces were named for Finnish words describing esoteric skiing conditions. The audience was reminded that music is the sound of a person battling with an inert piece of metal but Gustafsson usually won. Nilssen-Love's Large Unit was an hour of bombast from the full 10-piece group (featuring leading Scandinavian lights such as trombonist Mats Ålekint, tuba player Per-Åke Holmlander and alto saxophonist Klaus Holm), leavened by smaller groupings no less intense. The band's closing "Culius" featured brassy fanfares, groovy cinematic surges and a closing drum battle between the leader and Andreas Wildhagen. Håker Flaten's Austin-based The Young Mothers, in what was the second hearing for this reviewer, worked more cohesively, as the sextet (saxophonist Jason Jackson, trumpeter/ MC Jawwaad Taylor, guitarist Jonathan Horne, vibraphonist/drummer Stefan Gonzales and drummer Frank Rosaly) stitched together free jazz, hip-hop, punkish metal with fewer seams showing.

The evening portion featured alto/soprano/ baritone saxophonist Roy Nathanson as a guest of French group Papanosh, playing the music of Charles Mingus; and Colin Stetson in duo with violinist Sarah Neufeld. Papanosh revived Mingus' burbling swing without being slaves to his forms—a bass/inside piano duet on "Los Mariachis", for example. Nathanson showed his other side in a Beat-style poetry recitation on waiting for the B Train in the snow and his baritone melted butter on "Funeral Boogaloo". Stetson's remarkable technique on tenor and baritone saxophones and paper-clip contra alto clarinet (mic'd in a secret recipe) in tandem with Neufeld's string minimalism created stunning soundscapes. There was classical rigor, tribal exhortation, industrial barrage and folksy chant across 8 pieces and 60 minutes, never less than full control of every breath and bow swipe.

The two penultimate sets of the festival showed why it is worth a trip overseas to catch bands that will never come stateside. Life and Other Transient Storms is trumpeter/flugelhornist Susanna Santos Silva (Portugal) and alto/soprano saxophonist Lotte Anker (Denmark) with the Swedish "rhythm section" of pianist Sten Sandell, bassist Torbjörn Zetterberg and drummer Jon Fält. The group played two pieces, 30 and 20 minutes respectively, demonstrating the fragility of free music. In the first the group coalesced immediately, Silva and Anker combining like chickens fighting over seeds or wrapped in each other's textures, Sandell attentive to every nuance, bass and drums limning the detail of every peak and valley. But the second had less character and several missed endings with a flaccid fade into silence. Silva is a revelation in person, with a mature control of extended techniques. Estonian alto saxophonist/clarinetist/vocalist Maria Faust presented her Sacrum Facere suite, featuring another international band: Kristi Mühling (kantele, a type of dulcimer, adding a mystical component), Emanuele Maniscalco (piano), Francesco Bigoni (clarinet), Ned Ferm (tenor saxophone, clarinet), Tobias Wiklund (trumpet), Mads Hyhne (trombone) and Jonatan Ahlbom (tuba). Despite so much brass, the music was gentle, solos were part of through-composed structures, whether waltz-like, funereal, sacred or avian and Faust soloed only once but every fiber of her being was on display for each diaphanous moment.

For more information, visit tamperemusicfestivals.fi/jazz