

NIGHT OF THE JAZZ IN PARADOX REALIZED IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY

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Savina Yannatou.

After the Night of Poetry, the Night of the White Screen, the Night of the Pop Music, the Night of the Classical Music, the Night of the Kaap and even the Night of the Night, it was unavoidable that there would be a Night of the Jazz. Yes, it's here. On Saturday, 28 November it broke loose on 8 Dutch stages. Paradox was one of them.

This Tilburgs' Night was indeed realized in a very unexpected way. The evening was opened by the Greek singer Savina Yannatou and her group Primavera en Salonico, who gave an striking concert.

GOURMET

Savina Yannatou is part of the circle of musical gourmets. She already filled 4 albums at the prestigious ECM label with her singing, but to say that she has gained world fame would be an overstatement. Her latest album, **Songs of Thessaloniki**, was the basis of the concert in Paradox. The CD contains songs from the late 19-hundreds and the early 20th century. They all are connected to the city Thessaloniki which at the time was a melting pot of various peoples: from Bulgaria, Turkey, the Middle-

East and many more. Savina Yannatou and her six-man ensemble have processed all these influences into their almost unprecedented music.

The power of Savina Yannatou & Primavera en Salonico hides in the extraordinary gift to bring all the ingredients from the so very different cultures in an extremely authentic way. The only one reading from paper was the singer and she may be forgiven: to learn the languages of the many different countries represented would demand lifelong study. Her musicians played everything by heart and what is more important: the centuries old music pieces were immersed into free improvisations, which created an unyielding connection with the present and a (western) world which they had never known. Violin, nay, percussion and above all the voice of Savina Yannatou made intense demonstrations of this. The singer measured up to voice artists as Meredith Monk and Diamanda Galas. And that is not insignificant.

Savina Yannatou sang about daily matters. About the great fire of 1917 which left the city center of Thessaloniki in ashes; about food which one doesn't know how to cook, about beauty for which one would die. But also about Irish soldiers who came to fight in Greece during the First World War. And die of course. Because, whatever way you look at it, the songs presented by Savina Yannatou & Primavera en Salonico are all marked by homesickness, longing, melancholy as well as a passion for life. It seemed as if these elements had been carved into the appearance of the singer and her musicians. They appeared sad, lived-through, touched by a life that can be hard as granite.

IMPRESSIVE

That was the visual side of the concert. The musical side was impressive. How beautiful can an accordion sound in this traditional music, how exciting a nay, how sauntering a qanun and how hopeful an oud? Add to that a guitar, double bass and amazing percussion and imagine that with this instrumentation various parts of the world are being honored. Then you end up with Savina Yannatou and her so impressive sextet. Who brought music from Bulgaria, Armenia, Ireland, Serbia, the levant, Macedonia and Greece, as well as the culture of the Sephardic Jews.

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