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Home General news Business Sports Outlook Muse Brunch Spectrum Database Horizons Motoring Realtime Back issues Archives World news Videos

News

- Breaking news
- General news
- Business
- Sports
- Outlook
- Muse
- Brunch
- Spectrum
- My Life
- Database
- Horizons
- Motoring
- Real Time
- Perspective
- Asia Focus
- Education
- Gadget news
- World news

Web Services

- e-newspaper
- Easy English
- Read Thai news
- Frontpage print
- The Magazine
- Allied printers
- Horoscope
- Teen interest
- Funny VDO
- Travel votes
- Find jobs
- Archives
- Back issues
- Hotel reservations
- Post weather
- Weather forecast

Classified

- Autos
- Education
- Property

Outlook >> Wednesday October 01, 2008

Article search

PREVIEW

And all that jazz

JENNIFER PARKS

Jazz has always struck a chord in Bangkok, the reason why it has always had a strong presence in Bangkok's International Festival of Dance and Music. On the 10th

anniversary of the festival, acknowledging Bangkok's

historic relationship with the genre and to thank the audience for their support, four exciting groups grace the line

-up. Each group has its own perspective on the genre, pushing the boundaries and taking jazz to new heights. On the list are Lua Hadar and Twist band (San

Francisco), James Morrison and the Group (Australia), the G-Strings (Germany) and Bconnected (Switzerland).



October 6 presents a double bill of Lua Hadar and Twist followed by the James Morrison Group. First up is Lua Hadar and Twist with an intriguing take on jazz. A world

jazz vocalist, Lua Hadar offers refreshing but passionate musical creativity. Their music



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 keeps progressing in unexpected ways.

A native New Yorker from a musical family, Lua Hadar has performed as an actor and singer all her life: She moves from stage to cabaret to jazz club with ease,

switching vocal genres or languages just as easily. Her unique musical skills have classical and jazz roots, combined with a remarkable facility and love for Romance

languages, including French, Italian and Spanish. Lua's travels and the resultant cultural exchange have produced a cosmopolitan mix of original, international and

standard jazz tunes "twisted" in a surprising fusion by Hadar and her musical director, pianist and arranger, Jason Martineau. Combine the talents of Hadar and the six

-piece ensemble Twist and you have pure magic on the stage.

Lua tours often with her genre-bending band Twist, to rave reviews. When not touring, Lua Hadar and Twist are based in San Francisco, frequently appearing on the

vibrant entertainment scene there and in Los Angeles. In 2000, Lua sold out a solo concert produced by the Centro Culturale Teatro Camuno, co-producers of the

Shaman to the Showman festival, along with Festival Club Tenco and the late songwriter and TV producer, Sergio Bardotti. She then co-founded a trio called the

Kitchenettes in 2001. The trio, at times described as "the Andrews Sisters on acid", were a huge hit. In 2003, her trio won awards and praise at the Italian National

Festival of Comic Songs and Songwriters: From the Shaman to the Showman, in Italy's Vallecmonica.

Hadar has recorded four CDs, the most recent being Lua Hadar with TWIST. Her earlier releases include Unexpected Broadway, solo with pianist Sheldon Forrest;

Dining at the Banquet, with the Kitchenettes vocal trio; and It's About Time, solo with the Jason Martineau Jazz Trio. In addition she has also created, produced and

performed three solo cabaret shows, garnering the critics' praise.

The second half of the evening belongs to James Morrison and the Group from Australia. Ray Brown called this master multi-instrumentalist "the genius", while Dizzy

Gillespie labelled him "one of the best". A critic raved, "Even more impressive than Morrison's massive technique is the way he builds wonderfully melodic solo

masterpieces," while another wrote paens to his "towering virtuosity". By anybody's standard, James Morrison is a virtuoso: A brilliant technician on trumpet,

trombone, euphonium, piano and others. In any year James Morrison performs over 200 live engagements with everything from a symphony orchestra to a duo, in an

equal variety of styles.

A musician of startling originality, Morrison is a major jazz figure in Australia (winning the Mo award as Australian Performer of the Year and the Ricky May Performer

of the Year award). He is also the recipient of the Order of Australia. In 1992, '93 and '94 James headlined a critically acclaimed world tour with the Ray Brown Trio that

covered Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Switzerland, Malaysia, France, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Germany. He has appeared internationally with his own

group and as soloist alongside Wynton Marsalis, Frank Sinatra, Cab Calloway, Woody Shaw, Whitney Houston, Dizzy Gillespie and the Philip Morris Superband.

James has numerous recordings to his credit including Jazz Meets the Symphony with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lalo Schifrin. His latest is a DVD,

On the Edge. His earlier recordings have included small group sessions with Buster Williams, Herb Ellis, Adam Makowicz, Al Foster, Jeff Hamilton and three recordings

thus far with the legendary Ray Brown. Expect James Morrison and his group to shake Bangkok's jazz foundations.

James Morrison will be accompanied by the accomplished vocalist Emma Pask. Morrison calls her "the greatest gift to Australian Jazz vocals in the past decade". Her

talent was spotted by James Morrison when she was just 16. While Emma's voice and style are unique, and individually her own, her performances are reminiscent of

the classic era of jazz, when swing was top of the charts.

The line-up, besides James Morrison (trumpet) and Emma Pask (vocals), includes John Morrison (drums), James Muller (guitar), Philip Stack (bass) and

Blaine Whittaker (saxophone).

For another dose of jazz the festival offers another double bill on October 12: The G-Strings from Germany followed by Bconnected from Switzerland.

The first part of the evening belongs to the G-Strings, a quintet that has not accepted the boundaries set by classical music: They explore their classical instruments

and give them a new voice. They treat the wooden bodies of their instruments as percussion instruments, creating a new repertoire. The programme is in a jazz format

that is built on arrangements of tangos, jazz standards, rock and pop classics and originals by Astor Piazzolla, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Didier Lockwood, Mother's

Finest, Sting, Jan Larsen, Stefan Pintev, Rodrigo Reichel and Frank Skriptschinski.

The quintet was founded in 1993 by Stefan Pintev (violin) and Rodrigo Reichel (violin) who write both the arrangements and originals. Also in the line-up are Frank

Skriptschinski (double bass), Jan Larsen (viola) and Christopher

Franzius (Violoncello). Their collective talent has encouraged them to systematically play against the

establishment and their innovative crossings have been celebrated in concert halls and in the press, both by classical and jazz audiences. Their programmes create

exciting musical neighbourhoods between chamber music, jazz, pop and tango nuevo, challenging common ways of listening. In their chamber music style, the string

players create jazz, pop and rock, mixing it with tango and the freedom of jazz. The G-Strings have played with the likes of Jose' Carreras, Jon Lord (Deep Purple), Nils

Landgren, Luis di Matteo, Michael Nyman, Rene'e Fleming and Christoph Eschenbach. The five musicians who form the quintet create fresh spaces and enter unknown

dimensions, so that each performance becomes a new experience. They have performed at the Montreaux Jazz Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the Shanghai Music

Festival as well as in Riga, Novosibirsk, Tonhalle Dusseldorf, Westport/Technics Jazzport Hamburg, and at "Jazz in Hamburg", among many others.

Their first studio album, released in 1996, centred on a string portrait of the "King of Tango" Astor Piazzolla. Their second was a mixture of jazz/rock/pop classics and

new arrangements. On this disc, musical milestones erected by The Dregs, Mother's Finest, Steely Dan, Blood, Sweat and Tears, the Singers Unlimited, George

Gershwin and Duke Ellington were re-explored along with hits by Incognito and Jamiroquai.

The evening ends with an electrifying performance by Bconnected Jazz Band from Switzerland. Founded in 1994 by the guitarist Eugene Montenero, Bconnected has an

infectious on-stage energy as it melds electronic, world, funk and jazz. In November 2007, their seventh album Tabula Rasa affirmed the band's desire to explore new

horizons by introducing sonorities from Asia and North Africa.

The band has played as one for 14 years but has continued to form new connections. Because of this open-mindedness, Bconnected is in a perpetual state of evolution

while keeping its roots in the tradition of jazz.

The band has toured extensively and played in all parts of the world from Lausanne to Shanghai. They have made their presence felt at prestigious festivals such as the

Montreux Jazz Festival, Tabarka Jazz Festival, Willisau Jazz Festival, Dimajazz de Constantine, Shanghai Grand Theatre and Shanghai Jazz Festival.

All in all there's plenty for the lovers of jazz this festival. Make sure you are there.

Monday, October 6, 2008: Lua Hadar and Twist Jazz Band from San Francisco; James Morrison and the Group from Australia.

Tickets: 1,500/1,200/1,000/800/400 baht.

Sunday, October 12, 2008: G-Strings from Germany; Bconnected Jazz Band from Switzerland. Tickets: 1,500/1,200/1,000/800/400 baht; tickets are available at Thai

Ticket Major, 02-262-3456.



Prev 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 Next



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