



JAZZ NOTES, a Source of Quotes

The Jazzmandu Reporter engages in informal chats with musicians, meets with Jazzmandu participants, jazz fans and music enthusiasts and collects a few interesting Jazz Notes before and during the festival.



16th October 2011 –A few minutes before he got into a little warming up jam together with Nick Aggs and Benoy Rai, the guitarist of The Cadenza Collective, the Jazzmandu Reporter talked to Navin Chettri, Jazzmandu founder and organiser. Since its inception in 2002, the Jazz himalyan festival has gained an enviable international reputation.

Jazzmandu Reporter: Jazzmandu is almost an institution here in Kathmandu and it has contributed to place Nepal on the international jazz map. You live in the USA, so can you tell us how Jazzmandu is perceived over there? Do people in the US know about jazzmandu?

Navin Chettri: Absolutely, yes, they do know it. They perceive it as “jazz in the Himalayas”, and it is very fascinating for them. I went to the New Orleans jazz festival, one of the biggest in the world. They invited me as a panelist at a conference called Sync Up where they invited world artists. We were the panelists, and the musicians there asked questions about how to organise and run jazz festivals. That was huge because it got the word out about Jazzmandu as an International festival. There was also a radio interview at WWOZ, a big Jazz station in New Orleans, where I spoke about Jazzmandu. Now we are trying to start an affiliation with the New Orleans Jazz festival. There was another instance where the DC Jazz Festival expressed interest in having a partnership with Jazzmandu. Also musicians have been spreading the word, just by word of mouth, so lots of musicians know about it now, and they want to play here. We have tons of applicants every year who are interested in playing at Jazzmandu. One other thing has happened that was kind of unplanned, we didn’t do anything about it, didn’t really think about it. There has been some travel agencies around the world featuring Jazzmandu in their tours. The festival is now an attraction for tourists who want to check out jazz in the Himalayas. That is why they are coming, that is the draw.

Jazzmandu Reporter: This year is the 9th edition of the festival. Looking back, how would you summarize the evolution of Jazzmandu up to now?

Navin Chettri: It has definitely become bigger in the sense that more people know about it, we don’t have to explain what is jazz anymore, we don’t have to answer “*yo jazzmandu bhaneko ke ho?*” People know about it, they are anticipating it every year, like our big Nepali festival of Dashain. We have a few other goals we are accomplishing slowly. Jazz education for instance, and the goal of spreading peace and compassion through music. We are also getting tourists to come to Nepal, showing them that Nepal has more than

trekking and rafting to offer, that culturally this place is rich with music and arts. There are more jazz schools opening now, and young musicians getting into jazz, so it's great. Just not having to explain what jazz is has been nice. Also we've attracted more musicians for the festival, and the quality aspect has been improving. We are trying to improve the quality of production and the quality of music every year. We bring new artists every year, expanding the festival, getting a variety of artists every year so several styles of jazz are represented.

Nick Aggs and Benoy Rai were getting restless in the background, eager to get jamming with their friend so, the Jazzmandu Reporter let Navin go for their first jam of the year between friends.

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