



22 October 2011

**JAZZ BAZAAR**

Surya Nepal Jazzmandu escaped the city today, moving to an outdoor venue at the Gokarna Forest Resort for the Jazz Bazaar. Under the shade of giant trees, the lineup of all of this year's Jazzmandu artists delivered stellar performances all afternoon and into the night, culminating in a spectacular jam session.

The day started with Gandharva, a quartet of traditional Nepali musicians on maadal, saarangi, and baansuri who presented several lively Nepali folk tunes. Shyam Gandharva was grateful for the opportunity to play to an appreciative crowd, stating that, *"Often there is not respect for our tradition."*



He also expressed his concern over the decline of Nepalese traditions. *"Gandharvas used to be in every corner of the country, but nowadays few people like the Gandharvas' music. There are no travelling musicians in our villages today. We fear our ways will be lost."* Visiting Jazzmandu artists welcomed the chance to hear traditional Nepali music. *"It was great to start with a band like Gandharva. It gives us the real feeling of being in Nepal,"* stated Swiss musician Daniel "Cicco" Ciccone.

The showcase of local talent continued with All My Friends, a young jazz trio invited to play at the Jazz Bazaar after winning the Jazzmandu Jazz For The Next Generation

band contest. Kiran Shahi, Abhishek Bhadra and Ian Eustis especially impressed the audience and the other musicians with some of their original compositions, reminding everyone of the tremendous potential of Kathmandu's young jazz artists.



To further encourage the development of local talent, Jazzmandu is organizing private lessons for the band members with the visiting musician of their choice on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October.

Swiss visitors bconnected came next with complex compositions of layered rhythms and melodies, using great dynamic contrasts and frenetic solos to create their distinct sound. The band's cohesion was especially apparent in a passages of intricate interplay between Xavier Nussbaum on the soprano and "Cicco" Ciccone on the congas.



Frontman Eugene Montenero thanked the Kathmandu crowd for their enthusiasm. *"It is a great honour for us to be here. Thank you for your welcome,"* he stated.

Window Seat, the latest arrivals at Jazzmandu straight off their flight from Mumbai, took the stage next.



The quartet blended racy vocals from Suman Sridhar with aggressive rhythmic work from drummer Lindsay D’Mello and bassist Sonu Sangameswaran. Tala Faral, who is back at Jazzmandu for a second time, drove the band on with superb solos on the tenor sax and Moog synthesizer.

The Robin Lal Eastern Classical Trio came next, with renowned Nepali tabla player Robin Lal leading a 40-minute improvisation alongside Bina Shrestha on sitar and Nagendra Lal on bamboo flute.



The trio’s ethereal sound blended with the buzz of cicadas in the Gokarna forest set the perfect mood as afternoon moved into evening.

Jazzmandu veterans Cadenza Collective threw the evening into high gear, getting the crowd to their feet and dancing. Led by Navin Chettri, the musical mastermind behind Jazzmandu, the band’s catchy rhythmic licks and a deep rhythmic groove proved irresistibly danceable. Australian saxophonist Nick Aggs, back at Jazzmandu for a fourth time, led the audience in a

chorus of his song ‘Do You Love?’, reminding everyone of Jazzmandu’s mission to spread “Music for peace and compassion.”

Window Seat’s bassist Sonu Sangameswaran was impressed with the festival’s ethos, stating, “*We can not only connect with the audience, but also with other musicians. This is great!*”



The young Swedish band Neighbourhood were up next, and they kept the party going in style.



Playing original compositions from band leader Kristian Persson, Neighbourhood’s endearingly brash style continued to win fans. The band’s three-piece brass section, continue to surprise with their ability to infuse creativity and freshness into their melodic lines.



Headline act Cuban League took the stage last, with the crowd already primed and begging for more. Yunion Terry was superb on the upright bass, orchestrating the group's Latin rhythms with his robust yet playful sound, and complementing the rhythmic base from the group's visiting percussionists. Axel Tosca Laugart joined in on the piano. Axel's comping demonstrated a distinct hip-hop sensibility that added another rhythmic layer to the group, while his impressive speed on his solos kept energy levels at maximum.



Xiomara Laugart, Axel's mother and a living legend in Cuba, soon joined them on stage, lending her voice to several Latin favourites. Xiomara's captivating stage presence and impeccable ability to play the crowd soon had the audience in raptures. Sensing the crowd's energy peaking, she invited other musicians to the stage to jam.

Even after a full day of spectacular performances, the final jam session was undoubtedly the highlight of the show.



The crowd screamed, swayed, danced and jumped as all the day's artists took the stage,

taking turns on their instruments. The crowd and the musicians fed off each other's obvious elation to create an atmosphere that left even veteran musicians in awe. After an ecstatic end to the concert, audience members could barely find the words to describe what they had just experienced. Still breathing heavily, music fan Kishor Maharjan could think of only one thing to say: "More musicians like this please. More!"

Jazzmandu 2011 Reporter  
*Roman Gautam*