



23 October 2011

AFRO-LATIN JAM

After a euphoric day of music at Gokarna on Saturday, the Jazzmandu party continued today with the Afro-Latin Jam at Hotel Shangrila. The musicians, many of them still buzzing after an unforgettable closing jam at Gokarna, immediately brought back the spirit and energy of the previous evening.

Cuban bassist Yunior Terry and his compatriot Axel Tosca Laugart on the keyboards were joined by drummer Jake Bloch, an unexpected but welcome addition to the program. Just recently back in Kathmandu at the end of a trek, Jake happened to hear that his jamming partner Yunior was in town and was invited to join the band on stage. The trio warmed the crowd up with several swinging jazz pieces, Axel especially impressive with his lightning fast work on the keys and some impromptu dance moves just off stage. They



Keyboards virtuoso Axel Tosca Laugart

were joined by Australian saxophonist Nick Aggs for a few solos before the band switched styles, launching into distinctly Latin rhythms with the help of "Cicco" Ciccone of Swiss band bconnected on the congas. Other Jazzmandu artists soon joined them on stage, trying to upstage each other with great solos and occasionally all coming together for familiar passages from favorite jazz standards. The brass section from Neighbourhood were joined by Nick Aggs and saxophonists Tala Faral of Window Seat

and Xavier Nussbaum of bconnected, while other musicians from all the bands took turns on the drums, keyboards and bass. Local musician Ian Eustis, bassist for Jazz for the Next Generation band contest winners All My Friends also joined the mix, taking over on the bass from Yunior Terry to show that he can hang with the best of them.

Cuban singer Xiomara Laugart then stepped onto the frenetic stage, and despite a sore throat (soothed by a swig of whisky from the flask of a kind audience member) soon got the crowd on its feet and dancing with another rousing rendition of the popular Cuban song *El Manisero*. As the feast of solos continued, Xiomara continued to play the crowd, recapturing the jubilant spirit of the previous night's jam in Gokarna as the musicians and the audience spurred each other on with irresistible energy.

The musicians' amazing reserves of creativity kept the jam going for another hour, rounding out almost two and a half hours of music in the intimate lounge at the Shangrila Hotel. Even after hours of entertainment, the audience couldn't get enough. "The time just disappeared. It seemed to be over so quickly," said Jessica Green, an American jazz enthusiast. "It felt like we had just started."

Jazzmandu 2011 Reporter
Roman Gautam