

EASTERN EYE

MILCHO LEVIEV (Piano)
PANTELIS STOIKOS (Trumpet/Kaval)
YIOTIS KIOURTSOGLOU (Bass)
MARC HALBHEER (Drums)



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ABOUT EASTERN EYE

Eastern Eye unites three of the most prominent representatives of the Balkan jazz-scene and Swiss drummer Marc Halbheer. The outstanding Quartet plays a fascinating combination of jazz and the music of southeast Europe.

Award winning pianist, composer and arranger Milcho Leviev is known as the “Godfather Of Balkan Jazz”. During his outstanding career, innovation and brilliant ability as a pianist led him to work with jazz-titans like Don Ellis, Art Pepper, Dave Holland, Roy Haynes, Billy Cobham or Peter Erskine.

A pioneer in integrating the folkloric tradition of his country into modern styles of music is the Greek bass player Yiotis Kiourtsoglou. He influenced a lot of musicians in his region and might be the most recorded Greek bass player.

The stunning trumpet and kaval player Pantelis Stoikos is a discovery for all that did not hear him yet. The personal sound of the young Greek musician is touching and comes across with great authenticity. Critics have called him “Miles Davis of the Balkans”.

An open mind, flexibility, refined articulation and great sense for dynamics characterize some of the qualities of Swiss drummer Marc Halbheer, who originally initiated this Band. His collaborations with Mathias Ruegg’s Vienna Art Orchestra or the world big band TienShanSwiss Express led him to festivals and concert halls around the globe.

The debut CD of Eastern Eye “Live at Moods in Zurich” was recorded in March 2011 and has been released in February 2012 on Textit Music.

MILCHO LEVIEV (Piano)

**MILCHO LEVIEV IS DEFINITELY ONE OF TODAY'S JAZZ GENIUSES
(DON ELLIS DOWN BEAT, 1974)**



He studied composition and piano in Sofia (Bulgaria). His professional career started as a composer at the theater of Plovdiv (Bul), the city where he was born.

During the sixties he directed the big band of the national Bulgarian radio. Through his innovative arrangements, combining traditional Bulgarian folklore and jazz, he became known as the “Godfather of Balkan Jazz”.

Leviev also was a soloist and directed the Sofia symphony orchestra of Sofia (Bul), founded the Band Simeon Jazz Shterv '65 and played on festivals like Montreux, Prag, Sofia a.m.

In the early seventies he emigrated to in Los Angeles (USA). He started working as a composer arranger and pianist for Don Ellis with whom he stayed for several years. His busy schedule also included touring with with Billy Cobham, Carmen McRae, Bill Holman, Roy Haynes, Airto Moreira, Flora Purim a.m.

With Art Pepper he toured around the globe and recorded several albums. He was musical director for Lainie Kazan and led the band Free Flight with drummer Peter Erskine.

With Dave Holland he recorded the Duo album “Up And Down” and went on the road. Mainly in Europe, he played a large number of concerts as a Soloist.

Milcho Leviev also was teaching jazz composition at the University of Southern California (USC) and gave master classes at many jazz institutes around the world.

He received various honorary doctorates.

Leviev also composed music for symphony orchestra, chamber music, and wrote for film.

PANTELIS STOIKOS (Trumpet/Kaval)



The young trumpeter and kaval player was born in Florina in northern Greece.

During the nineties he left his hometown to study trumpet, theory and counterpoint at the conservatory in Thessaloniki. He joined the Florina Brass Band, performed with the Trio Balkano and founded the Akritiko Trio.

At the end of the decade he became a member of the Interbalkan Orchestra that unites some of the most important musicians of the Balkan region.

Pantelis Stoikos created his own, very personal style of interpreting the traditional music of his country. His sound is gentle, yet full of life and his presence on stage is very authentic. He is a natural improviser and integrates perfectly into a Jazz environment.

One important inspiration for Stoikos is the legendary Bulgarian clarinet player Ivo Papasov. In his band he also plays for many years.

For concerts he travelled in Europe, USA, Asia and Australia and played with Ivo Papasov, Petar Ralchev, Theodosil Spassov, Ferus Mustafov, Okay Temiz, Vangelis Karipis, Yiotis Kiourtsoglou, Kostas Theodorou u.v.m.

Pantelis Stoikos is a discovery for the ones that hear him for the first time. More than once, he has been called „Miles Davis of the Balkans“.

YIOTIS KIOURTSOGLOU (BASS)



He was born in Kozani, a small town in the northwest of Greece.

At an early age he got interested in music and started playing guitar and bass as an autodidact. When he was eighteen, he moved to Thessaloniki (GR) to study harmony and theory with Theo Kapilidis.

His open minded attitude toward different musical influences, without ignoring his roots in the musical tradition of his region, helped to develop his distinct sound, tremendous virtuosity and his authentic touch on the bass.

During the late eighties he spent a year in Los Angeles (USA) to study with masters like Gary Willis, Bob Magnuson, Putter Smith or Karl Schröder. During that time he also met his longtime musical peer Marc Halbheer.

Upon his return to Greece in the beginning of the nineties, he soon became the first call bass player in Athens (GR). He performed with almost all the known musicians of his country and probably is the most recorded Greek bass player.

He started the group Iasus, founded the up until now active trio Human Touch and toured with the Trio Exit.

For many years he is performing with the famous Greek poet, singer and composer Dionisis Savopoulos and works with the Armenian Singer and Oud player Haig Yazdjian.

He toured internationally with Peter Erskine, Billy Hart, Billy Cobham, Milcho Leviev, Interbalcan Orchestra, Alkinoos Ioannidis, Trio Exit or was soloist with the Symphonie Orchestra of Athens. Kiourtsoglou also wrote music for film, theater, dance and his projects.

MARC HALBHEER (DRUMS)



He was born in Zurich/Switzerland.

Soon it showed that his main area of interest was in music. The fascination for rhythm was obvious and during his early youth he discovered the passion for Drums. He continuously developed his skills and became a master on those instruments.

In the late eighties, Halbheer spent three years in Los Angeles (USA) where he studied with Ralph Humphrey and Ed Man, both members of the legendary band of Frank Zappa. He had opportunities to work with jazz-, latin- and popbands and played a lot of clubdates in southern California. During that time he also met his longtime musical peers Yiotis Kiourtsoglou (GR) and Lior Yekutieli (IL) with whom he founded the Trio Exit.

Upon his return to Zurich (CH), Halbheer became a busy drummer on the Swiss scene. He influenced and initiated a remarkable number of projects. An important part of his activity became the development of the drum department at the Jazz School Lucerne (CH) where he has a professorship and keeps teaching with great results.

In his artistic work, Marc Halbheer consequently follows the multiple aspects of music. He is interested in the stiles of different cultural backgrounds. While working with Greek musicians he became familiar with the music of the Balkans.

Touring with the TienShanSwiss-Express - this World Big Band assembled 20 artists from Kyrgyzstan, Khakasia (southern Siberia), Mongolia and central Europe gave him the opportunity to explore Asian traditions while. The successful appearances of the TSSE include concerts on festivals in Europe (a.m. Paleo Nyon, Forum 2004 Barcelona) and travelling through Central Asia and Mongolia.

Marc's history includes touring and recording internationally with Mathias Rüegg's Vienna Art Orchestra, TienShanSchweiz-Express, Arild Anderson, Stacy Rowles, Frank Strazzeri, David Angel, Milcho Leviev, Fernando Saunders, Trio Exit, Christy Doran, Heiri Känzig, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Martin Tillman, Ambient Groove Artists, Gotthard, u.v.m.

VIDEO



Eastern Eye "Live at Moods in Zurich"

Featuring: Milcho Leviev (p)
Pantelis Stoikos (tp/kav)
Yiotis Kiourtsoglou (b)
Marc Halbheer (d)

www.youtube.com/TextitMusic