

Here musicians jammed on swinging standards such as "Caravan" or "Round Midnight." On one memorable night it was fascinating to hear a Norwegian tenor saxophonist playing with an Irish pianist, an Italian bassist and a Finnish drummer. National identities were swallowed to allow the jazz session to function successfully. Yet within their own bands, these same musicians sought to create original music that was both part of a universal language of jazz and a singular expression of individual identity, often drawing on elements from their own national culture.

Identity is important in Europe. With so many countries crammed into a relatively small continental space, difference matters. More so in a globalizing world that raises fears about the loss of cultural anchors. So it is only natural that cultural differences be preserved in jazz. Oddarrang from Helsinki, for example, produced music of beguiling beauty and melancholy that looked over its shoulder to their national musical hero, Sibelius. Virtuoso pianist Matther Bourne's surreal humour could only come from the country that gave the world Monty Python while Sean Carpio's drumming with the Dublin based band Togetherness seemed to owe as much to the great jazz drumming legends of the past as the Celtic masters of the Bodhrán.

And given it's possible that the very first string quartets came from Austria and Germany in the 1600's, it is perhaps inevitable that the inheritors of this great tradition should see no incongruity in adapting its conventions to jazz. The Radio String Quartet from Vienna have brought the string quartet into the 21st century with an exploratory approach that embraces the music of the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

In fact, the more you probed beneath the surface of the music at 12 Points! the more it seemed to be shaped, at least in part, by the particular national, cultural, folkloric or classical traditions that have surrounded these musicians since birth. Being born and raised in Oslo, for example, is a completely different experience to being born in London, Paris or Rome. It has helped shape their musical personalities and they use it to assert *their* identity and their place within the global jazz community.

Tags:

0 RESPONSES SO FAR

There are no comments yet...

LEAVE A COMMENT

Name:

Email: (It will not be published) Optional

Website: Optional

Comment:

[NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP](#) [WRITER CONTRIBUTIONS](#) [CREATE A WEBPAGE](#)

[CONTACT US](#) [ABOUT JAZZ.COM](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [TERMS & CONDITIONS](#)