

BEIJING JAZZ WEEKEND GUIDE

CHINA DAILY

Italy's best musicians will blow away jazz fans with their special silky sounds. reports

Italy has no shortage of serious and accomplished jazz players, even though the sounds heard in Beijing's clubs and small venues tend to be the avant-garde variety.

That the Italians can play straight-ahead jazz as well as anybody else was amply demonstrated at the Italy Jazz Weekend Opening Concert, held at The Imperial Granary on Thursday. It marked the opening concert for Italy Jazz Week as also for the whole jazz series in Beijing.

Manomanouche brings together musicians of various nationalities and musical backgrounds, united under the banner of Gypsy music. Manomanouche plays a fusion of swing, folklore and Italian melody with an improvisational approach. In addition to new arrangements of the works of Django Reinhardt, Manomanouche performs standards, valzer gipsy musette and original compositions. Despite its acoustic instrument base, the Manomanouche live experience is one that audiences don't forget easily.

This is also first time Italian jazz is being presented at The Imperial Granary, which was rebuilt in 1409 as the only surviving granary of its kind and is currently used as a venue for private events and weekly traditional Kunqu opera performances. Special acoustic effects created by the trapezoid-shaped wall and the sloped roof has won the praise of numerous musicians and sound engineers.

Over the next two months, Matt Brubeck from the US and David Braid from Canada, The Core Norway and Blood Drum Spirit will strut their stuff at the Imperial Granary jazz Series. This jazz festival lasts until June.

The Italian Jazz Weekend events is being sponsored by The Time Arts Jazz Series which has presented a wide range of performers from Europe and North America since November 2005 such as four of America's finest folk musicians (now known as The Sparrow Quartet), The Steve Koven Trio - one of Canada's most exciting jazz groups - and the latest Mark Solborg 4's brand of guitar-driven contemporary jazz. The series aims to introduce to a wider audience the various forms of jazz and related music.

Apart from the foreign jazz gigs lighting up Beijing's stages, domestic jazz musicians and bands are also ready to show their interpretation of this music.

The Beijing Nine Gates Jazz Festival, now in its ninth year, will be held from May 23-28, 2008, drawing thousands of mostly young fans to see 11 foreign and Chinese jazz acts perform in Beijing.

Tonight, Peking University Hall 北京大学百周年纪念讲堂

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