

Jazz fest notes

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that coursed between the artists was intense, yet they played with great ease and fluidity, Rubalcaba especially. Mercurial drummer **Eric Harland** hung on every note, propelling the rhythmic flow while adding subtle eddies of percussion. Bassist **Dave Holland** at once anchored and floated on the music. His meditative "Veil of Tears", with Middle Eastern touches, brought the evening to an elegant close. The Monterey Quartet is an instant-classic act, playing with the maturity of long-time musical friends and the excitement of a new outfit.

THE SPIRIT OF Django Reinhardt hovered over the first couple of days of the festival. On opening night (June 26) at Performance Works, the Quebec City-based trio the **Lost Fingers**—named in honour of the *jazz manouche* guitarist's missing digits—thrilled a capacity crowd with a show full of musical wit and panache. Most of the material came from the band's hot debut recording, *Lost in the '80s*, which takes pop songs of the Reagan era and gives them the full Django-esque swing treatment. "Careless Whisper", tagged by guitarist **Byron Mikaloff** as "a great piece of cheese", received a fast-tempo face-lift, as did Céline Dion's similarly

curdlike "Incognito". But some songs came from the trio's new album *Rendez-Vous Rose*, such as Belgian songwriter Plastic Bertrand's 1977 hit "Ça plane pour moi", suitably jazzed up with the flair of his compatriot Reinhardt. The Lost Fingers double-retrospective approach works brilliantly.

On June 27 as part of Gastown Jazz, Halifax septet **Gypsophilia** overcame lowering clouds and spattering raindrops to get the crowd at the steam clock dancing and cheering. The band performed original compositions that blend a series of rootsy styles for dancing—mainly Reinhardt's hallmark swing, vintage New Orleans jazz, tango, Balkan, and eastern Mediterranean musics.

Audience members were at first shy to shake a leg; there were few takers for bassist **Adam Fine**'s mid-set invitation to get up and move to his "Jewish Dance Party", but the gradually accelerating, then swiftly decelerating, klezmer rhythm soon proved irresistible. From that point on, Gypsophilia had the crowd in its collective pocket and was clearly inspired. The appeal went beyond music. Dressed in sartorial styles ranging from the '20s to the '60s that reflected influences on their songs, the musicians of Gypsophilia were also visually striking, and guitarist-frontman **Ross Burns** proved a genial presenter, tossing T-shirts to a forest of raised hands.

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