



joint hosting Toussaint's band this evening springs a pleasant surprise in that respect. Hideaway is a swish but unpretentious bar/dining venue that importantly puts the music first; jazz musicians are already spreading the word about its top notch sound acoustics and roomy surroundings. It now devotes evenings to young left-field jazz bands as well as the more traditional. With Soweto Kinch's clean-sounding guitarist Femi Temowo depping for regular pianist Andrew McCormack and cub drummer Chris Draper coming in for Troy Miller, this gig turned out to be a different kind of set from that which you can hear on the CD. For two sets they mixed modern standards from Wayne Shorter and Milton Nascimento with originals and golden oldies such as 'These Foolish Things' and 'Green Dolphin Street'. Although the band could have done with coming out of their comfort zone a tad more, there were still some impressive all round contributions. Of course, Toussaint (above) has the extra pedigree to give you something a bit special every time, but also notable was drummer Chris Draper's springy, driving swing, demonstrating a lot of talent and presence for someone still living in digs at Birmingham Conservatoire. Toussaint liked to play off Draper's crisp fills and gave a graceful yet full-blooded display, always far more interested in group dialogue than showboating. Let's hope Hideaway goes some way to putting live jazz back on the map in south London. *Selwyn Harris*

Large and Loose

LIPA, Liverpool

It's been 20 years since the influential British big band Loose Tubes last congregated to play their off kilter and proudly idiosyncratic music together. Although mentioned less in the press these days, the legacy of this group is hard to underestimate with members such as Django Bates, Julian Argüelles and Mark Lockheart having played such a vital role in shaping the UK jazz scene of today. Original bass player Steve Berry now resides in the north west and teaches at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts where he leads a fluid and impromptu orchestra of students in the mould of his old band knowingly entitled Large and Loose. Aiming to rekindle some of the old magic they were joined on this occasion by fellow Loose Tubes alumnus Iain Ballamy on saxophone for a special one off gig. In his characteristically upbeat way Berry directed the 23-piece band through a set of joyous and often chaotic tunes,

which included several of his own compositions as well as some choice standards reworked with the tight but manic arrangements that Loose Tubes are so fondly remembered for. The standard of playing from all the performers was particularly high and certainly reflects the promise of the emerging Liverpool jazz scene. Pat Metheny's 'Are You Going With Me?' was a particularly challenging affair but guitarist Dan McIntire matched Iain Ballamy's soaring soprano solo with one of both maturity and passion. It was Berry's Miles Davis-influenced composition 'Almost All Blues' that packed the biggest punch of the night though. Drenched in Ellingtonian horn breaks, and densely packed Latin rhythms, the tune was as explosive and ecstatic as anything Loose Tubes every put out.

Chris Ackerley

Keith Tippett, Julie Tippetts, Louis Moholo-Moholo and The Minafric Orchestra

Turin, Italy

Six years on from their first performance together in Puglia, these guys seem to improve with age. It's like the band has grown into this music – no longer a frantic dash to the finish line, they now take their time and enjoy the journey, and what a fine band this is. How often do you find an orchestra so brim full of exceptional soloists? Dudu Pukwana's 'Mra' opens with its repeating riff and leads into Keith Tippett's filmic 'Thoughts To Geoff' with some beautiful trumpet from Vito Mitoli on the former and some graceful ensemble work on the latter. It's amazing how wonderfully the four female voices blend with the instruments and provide new and surprising colours. Led by Julie Tippetts, they can be both dark, as on the Ligeti-like opening of 'Dedicated To Mingus', or siren-like, as on the seductive 'Cider Dance'. They add layers of sensuality to an already rich feast. From Roberto Ottaviano's lovely soprano on 'Whispers For Archie's Chair' to Lauro Rossi's trombone on Harry Miller's 'Traumatic Experience', the musicians' affection for these songs runs deep indeed. With two drummers, Louis Moholo-Moholo and the excellent Vincenzo Mazzone, they hit like a whirlwind and sweep you away as the tension builds through Miller's 'Dancing Damon'. Tippett's 'September Energy' with its liberationist lyric from Julie Tippetts best sums up the values behind this project and, as this leads into the ANC's anthem, the feeling is a personal one of shared humanity. They close with Mongezi Feza's 'You Ain't Gonna Know Me 'Cos You Think You Know Me', a hymn to a departed friend and comrade and a forceful statement of intent that draws the audience further in. I could feel my fists clench, not in anger but simply with the intensity of it all.

Duncan Heining

Harold Budd, Robin Guthrie And Eraldo Bernocchi

Genoa, Italy

Pretty, innit? Guthrie grinned as he gazed about him. Like his guitar playing, this was something of an understatement. Because he and his colleagues, long time piano associate Budd and their new acquaintance Bernocchi on laptop and keys, were playing beneath a starry violet sky in a Genoan grotto with giant statues of river gods smiling benignly upon them. Pipistrelles circled, moths glistened, red wine blushed. It was as dreamy a setting as dream music could dream of and the trio largely rose to the occasion. I say largely, because this most ethereal of music is also prey to perturbations of the ether, or, as we're in Italy, screaming sirens from across the street. Such interpolations didn't always fall congenially upon Budd's romantic, spare piano, or the sea drifts of Guthrie's guitar. When a fire alarm sliced the gig through "was that you?" Guthrie asked of Bernocchi who had spent the night generating a series of squeaks, groans and musical ectoplasms from his Apple Mac it seemed as though hell had trashed the music of the spheres. But the show must go on, and credit to Guthrie for providing an endless array of harmonic shifts and textures against which Budd's bewitching piano could nestle. There was also a rare treat of a solo Budd encore that thrilled the knowledgeable, intense audience. But the best moment came after the lights went up and Budd, who hasn't quite minimised himself out of existence, whispered a Waylon Jennings song in the ear of the pretty young lady who had joined him at the keys. Well, this is Italy, after all. Perhaps Budd and Guthrie weren't as equally harmonious with Bernocchi, but this was only their second gig together, and his electronica at least provided the sandy grit in the faultless pearl that gave the evening an edge. With a recording due shortly on Giacomo Bruzzos intriguing RareNoise label, there is a rich potential in this trio, with Bernocchi's mischievousness a fascinating counterpoint to the others' airy wistfulness. *Andy Robson*

Jazzkaar

Tallinn, Estonia

Distortion was largely the order of the day during the handful of concerts that I caught at the start of the fortieth edition of Estonia's premier jazz event. Many musicians seemed to have an aversion to sound that could in any way be described as pure. Danish drummer Karsten Mathiesen got busy with anything from a dust sheet to a drill in his search for novel tonalities during a one-man show in the city's Design And Architecture Museum that was big on humour as well as technique; Estonian singer Vaiko Eplik used all manner of effects to turn his vocals into the kind of molten, electric power chords that suggested he'd paid close attention to Chick Corea's adventures in the land of the Moog, and French trumpeter Jean Louis mangled his timbres so extensively

by way of a furiously deployed pedal board that when he did play open horn it was as if another player had somehow ghosted on to the stage. At times it was glorious in its energy, at times tedious in its excess, and although there is a clear talent at work, the drums-double bass trio that Louis led needs more direction if it is to take its rock-edged brew beyond the confines of Erik Truffaz-as-angry-young-man. It was, indeed, the gentle, folk-edged tonalities of two local saxophonists, Villu Veski and Kristjan Mazurchak that provided the highlights of this opening salvo of the festival. The former appeared in a "Nordic" ensemble at the beautiful Jaani church and explored anything from what sounded like ancestral Scandinavian songs to tango while the latter combined gracefully with two guitarist-vocalists, Laura Junson and Erko Niit, to create a melancholic but charming set in which arrangements were full of both subtlety and flourish.

Kevin Le Gendre

Stéphane Kerecki Trio featuring Tony Malaby

Pizza Express Jazz Club, London

Although small in stature, French double bassist Kerecki has a big sound, and if that invites comparisons with a certain Charlie Haden, then that should not overshadow the richness of Kerecki's original writing and arranging for a trio – drummer Thomas Grimmonprez and tenor-soprano saxophonist Matthieu Donarier – whose finesse and power are substantially upped by the presence of American Tony Malaby, playing the same reeds as Donarier. Showcasing material from their latest album *Houria*, the ensemble skilfully negotiates the space in which highly melodic composition stokes the same emotional fire as folk music, often by way of concise, floating themes that often extend into intricate structures in which changes of tempo and meter induce a tension that is both seductive and edgy. Kerecki is a rock-like presence right in the centre of the stage between the two horns, often anchoring the music with a drone-like figure, the circularity of which is visually signalled by the way he pivots his bass back and forth in time with his phrases. Rhythmically and texturally, north African and Asian classical music pervade some compositions, and if an echo of Henri Texier's soundtrack to *Les Remparts D'Argile* can be clearly heard, then the plaintive throb of Ornette Coleman's 'Lonely Woman', with all its fraught tanpura undercurrents, isn't far behind. That said, the combination of Malaby and Donarier in the front line goes some way to giving the band real character. The use of close and wide harmonies is very effective, especially on the ballads, some of which are deliciously languorous, while the contrast between Malaby's heated growl on tenor and the more pinched tone of Donarier is also worthy of note. Tough-sounding yet by no means lacking in sensitivity, Kerecki's ensemble has the potential to take its place among the big names in contemporary small group jazz.

Kevin Le Gendre