

## Vision 24

Roulette Intermedium, Brooklyn, US  
Founded in 1996, Vision festival is the New York free jazz community's annual jamboree, exploring the connections between music, visual art, dance and poetry. This year's celebrated artist is the legendary drummer Andrew Cyrille, who curates the opening evening of duo and trio performances, playing with Haitian drummers, poets, dancers and video artists. His drumming is at its most subtle in Lebroba, his trio with Wadada Leo Smith and Brandon Ross, who replaces Bill Frisell. They fold themes from their 2018 ECM release into a continuous set, with Cyrille's swirling brushes leaving the space wide open for the raw ache of Smith's trumpet and Ross's slow burning, occasionally volatile, guitar. In the closing set, Cyrille does not so much temper Peter Brötzmann's roaring tenor as highlight its bluesier shades.

Following Cyrille's duo with saxophonist Kidd Jordan, the latter explains that he was not improvising, but rather playing with the drums. There's a melodic quality

## Istanbul Jazz Festival: Vitrin Showcase For Contemporary Music From Turkey

Various venues, Istanbul, Turkey  
Now in its third year, the Vitrin Showcase For Contemporary Music From Turkey kicks off the annual Istanbul Jazz Festival. The opening night's line-up features variations on a jazz theme, including the competent jazz-rock of Efe Demiral and his band, the avant garde stylings of Can Tutuğ Trio and the charming seven-piece No Land. But it soon becomes apparent that the inevitable problem with fitting many acts into a tight schedule, across different venues, is that it's impossible to get a taste of them all.

The venue for the first concert on the second day is inspired: the Şerefiye Sarnıcı, part of the city's large underground network of water reservoirs. Built around 1600 years ago and newly restored, it is now used as an exhibition space and provides a cool (in all senses) backdrop for a quartet featuring the Sol clarinetist Ramazan Sesler. Coming from a long family line of musicians specialising in festivities and weddings, Sesler's instrument soars and swoops, enhanced by the room's natural reverb, while his fellow musicians on qanun, darbuka and oud at once back him up with almost telepathic precision and solo beautifully when required.

Later that evening the pace picks up as 21 concerts await, spread over eight different venues in Kadıköy, a bustling district on the Asian side of the city. Drone-pop singer Ekin Fil performs with an array of effects pedals on a table before her and an electric guitar stationed on her lap. Her set begins with some gently echoing guitar work with slow-motion synth pulses before her beguiling,

to Cyrille's drumming which brings out the swing in Jordan's playing, along with some disruptive squalls. At 84, Jordan is the festival's oldest performer, and while he alludes to health problems, he reiterates his commitment to keeping the idiom alive.

In addition to Cyrille's Lifetime Achievement, the festival honours departed elders. Kidd Jordan reconvenes Creative Collective, with Hamid Drake drumming in place of the late Alvin Fielder. There's a spiritual intensity to their set, with Jordan segueing into a John Coltrane quote via gutsy tenor honks. Alto Gladness features three former students of Cecil Taylor: Jemeel Moondoc, Idris Ackamoor and Bobby Zenkel. Their compositions have a puckish energy, grounded by William Parker and Gerald Cleaver's rock solid grooves. Douglas R Ewart's Bamboo Constellations for Joseph Jarman begins with an Art Ensemble style procession of musicians and dancers. A beautiful set unfolds, full of unusual tonal colours from cor anglais, bassoon and shakuhachi. In DD Jackson's tribute to Hamiet Bluiett, James Carter's brawny baritone is offset

ethereal vocals come to the fore. In another track, staccato keyboard lines underpin echoing guitar melodies set to delicate abstract visuals,

Movement between venues makes it possible to only catch the final piece from Volkan Incuvez's *Kün* performance in a small church. As I enter, an expressive ney, an end-blown flute that has been in use in the Middle East for millennia, is soloing over a backdrop of baritone vocal drones and the effect is mesmerising. Later a quartet of neys join together and, coupled with the hall's acoustics and deep mauve lighting, the audience is further drawn into a calm, meditative stillness.

Nusaibin, playing at nearby Moda Kayıkhane, is a different prospect altogether: starting as a four-piece but soon expanding to seven musicians on stage, many of the band are playing hand-held tar drums with the addition of electronics and a didgeridoo. The pulsing basslines, synchronised drumming and occasional vocal samples (in one instance the distinctive, urgent strains of folk legend Selda Bağcan) create infectious dancefloor-friendly grooves that energise the crowd while a welcome breeze drifts in from the nearby waterfront.

Over at the Moda Stage, Gaye Su Akyol emerges with a dazzling, theatrical glamour, her sparkling costume enshrouded by a silver gossamer cape giving the impression of a benevolent fairy queen. Traditional Turkish melodies mix with psychedelia, surf rock and pop sensibilities, creating the perfect backdrop for Akyol's distinctively elegant vocals. Her rapport with the audience is easy and immediate, and despite having played in the city only weeks earlier, the crowd react like it's a long awaited homecoming appearance.

brilliantly by altoist Darius Jones's braying drones and sour tonalities.

There are very fine sets from masters like Amina Claudine Myers, Rob Brown, Whit Dickey, Marty Ehrlich, Matthew Shipp, Marc Ribot and Ingrid Laubrock, but younger artists deserve highlighting here. Kris Davis's January Painters trio with Parker and drummer Jeff 'Tain' Watts is outstanding. The Canadian pianist's elegant constructions form a beautifully icy contrast to the rhythm section's fluid funk, although she introduces sly bluesy riffs later in the set. Her inside piano work and preparations introduce new elements to the music, from gossamer EBow tones to koto-like prickles. Guitarist Ava Mendoza brings spicy avant rock moves to a saxophone quartet, while Tomas Fujiwara's 7 Poets trio featuring vibist Patricia Brennan and cellist Tomeka Reid create a vivid chamber music full of bright melodies and warped clouds of tone.

Melvin Gibbs and Stephon Alexander's God Particle premiere a new work "Ogodo Quanta" which explores the similarities between theoretical physics and African

cosmology. After a momentary blowout, Gibbs calls the band off stage, clearing the space for Total Sound Immersion's gongs and bowed glasses. The group is gradually reintroduced, with David Pleasant's knee-slapping spoons routine stealing show. Doom-funk basslines are lifted by African percussion and neon jets of EWI: inspired Afrofuturism.

In addition to performing with God Particle and the glorious Heroes Are Gang Leaders, saxophonist James Brandon Lewis leads The Unruly Quintet. Propelled by Warren G Crudup III's relentless James Brown grooves, the group season their torrential free funk with touches of post-rock, drum 'n' bass and Charlie Haden influenced Americana. Lewis's muscular tenor is matched by Jaimie Branch's fizzy spurts of trumpet, while guitarist Anthony Pirog brings shoegaze textures and punk grit. In his closing remarks, Lewis emphasises the importance of community and continuity, and his thrilling music embodies that, nodding to tradition while charging into the future.

Stewart Smith



Gaye Su Akyol

Lalalar, a trio consisting of guitar, electronics, bass and vocals, follows. Singer and bassist Ali Güçlü Şimşek, fresh from performing in Gaye Su Akyol's band minutes earlier, proves to be an engaging frontman and the crowd again react with an energetic fervour. If new wave, rock and electro were all to collide on a dancefloor, Lalalar could well be the result, and the band end the night on a high.

The next day, after an illuminating panel discussion investigating how more Turkish acts can be booked internationally (most agree that further building the infrastructure within the country is necessary for artists to become more "export ready") the next concert awaits, this time at the large UNIQ auditorium. Aydın Esen Group, consisting of influential jazz keyboardist and composer Aydın Esen, drummer Tommy Campbell and bassist Greg Jones, play a set that includes an unexpected ten minute solo by Campbell involving the

rhythmic squeezing of an array of squeaky toys of different pitches and timbres which lends a humorous interlude to proceedings. Joining the group later, the radiant vocals of Esen's wife Randy K add brightness and sparkle.

There are several more shows the following day which conclude the event, including the pyrotechnics of microtonal guitar duo Tolgahan Çoğulu and Sinan Ayyıldız and the smouldering slow-builds of jazz trio Töz at the Salon venue, and Barış Demirel's genre-hopping Barıştık M1 project and the jazz-funk flavours of the Turgut Alp Bekoğlu Love Jazz Quartet in Beykoz Kundura, a disused shoe factory now used as a film studio.

While some of the music may have felt a little hit and miss (an inevitability when there are over 30 concerts to digest), it's surely only a matter of time before more of Turkey's emerging artists will be seen on stages around the globe.  
Shane Woolman