

The Checkout (/programs/checkout)

The Checkout Spotlights Modern Turkish Musicians at The Istanbul Jazz Festival

By SIMON RENTNER (/PEOPLE/SIMON-RENTNER) • 8 HOURS AGO



(/www.wbgo.org/sites/wbgo/files/styles/x_large/public/201911/montage.png)

Eda And, Baris Demirel, and Gaye Su Akyol

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

When I landed in Turkey last summer for the 26th Istanbul Jazz Festival (<https://caz.iksv.org/en>), I knew I was arriving at an ancient crossroads — where East meets West, old meets new, and culture still thrives in dazzling convergence.

What I didn't expect is how Istanbul constantly reminded me of New York City: the sheer density of the place, its relentless energy, its occupants rushing about the sprawling metropolis.

Turkey's best minds and finest talent move there much as they do in New York, with the same desire to one day accomplish their hopes and dreams. Visitors like myself are lucky to bear witness to what can only be described as a vibrant collision of sounds and traditions.

Get a glimpse of modern Turkey and its brilliant sounds of jazz and beyond on *The Checkout*.

Today's edition of *The Checkout* will explore that heady abundance, as Istanbul Jazz Festival curator Harun Izer guides us through its Vitrin Showcase (<https://caz.iksv.org/en/vitrin-showcase>): four days of concerts for international presenters to discover talent not often exposed to Western audiences.

We begin our tour with trumpeter Barış Demirel, whose sound is sometimes compared to the Franco-Lebanese jazz superstar Ibrahim Malouf, for his quarter-tone brass inflections. On his original composition "Babamgil," Demirel adapts a folkloric dance rhythm from his countryside and fashions it for a Western-style jazz combo.

Our next composition, "Milky Way," likewise evokes the future and the past — in this case, 13.8 billion years ago, courtesy of Volkan İncüvez, who plays the end-blown Ney flute. His cosmic "Kün" project, which translates as "big bang," evokes the mystery of the beginning of everything.

Then we'll hear two modernists, Cava Grande and Gaye Su Akyol. The former, whose given name is Tan Tuncag, is an electronic artist staking his claim in the rave sounds sweeping Western Europe at large. And Akyol is a singer-songwriter who creates her own brand of futuristic psychedelia — while connecting to songs once performed in the grand palaces of the Ottoman Empire.

The episode ends with two young experimental improvisers: cellist Gülşah Erol and the award-winning pianist-composer Ada End, who both give us a taste of what modern jazz sounds like in Turkey today.

As you'll hear, the Vitrin Showcase aims to spotlight its local talent across wide spectrum of music not limited to jazz. The only goal of these modern Turkish music-makers is to create something original, works that reflect its complicated homeland and brilliant chaos.

Checkout Vitrin Playlist in chronological order:

- Sahara, Islandman feat. Barış Demirel a.k.a. Barıştık Mı, Sarah (Music For Dreams)
- Babamgil, Barış Demirel a.k.a. Barıştık Mı feat. Efe Adnan Demiral, Ali Tolga Tohumcu & Tibet Akarca (Lin Records)
- Big Bang, Volkan İncüvez, "KÜN" (Lin Records)
- Milky Way, Volkan İncüvez, "KÜN" (Lin Records)
- Vessels, Cava Grande, Ghost/Vessels (Santima Records)
- Meftunum Sana, Gaye Su Akyol, İstikrarlı Hayal Hakikattir (Glitterbeat Records)
- New Life, Gülşah Erol, Rising with the Music of Spheres
- Nine Eight Blues, Eda And, Augmented Life (Z Ses Görüntü)

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Volkan İncüvez

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