

The Nordanians

A steaming triple engine from Amsterdam North, the hottest part of town

When Oene van Geel (viola), Mark Tuinstra (guitar) and Niti Ranjan Biswas (tabla virtuoso) played together for the first time there were immediately fireworks, roaring u-turns and cinematic tearjerkers. Then they started writing songs together based on traditional ragas, smashing funk and delicate chamber music. This gave them a great new impulse on stage for even more interaction and improvisation and made them build a rocking live reputation.

They love to play with the three of them but they also play with special guests from around the globe such as Fraser Fifield (whistle / pipes), Jorg Brinkmann (cello), Maarten Ornstein (bass clarinet), Theo Loevendie (sop sax), Druba Ghosh (sarangi), Bruno Ferro Xavier da Silva (bass guitar), Barbara Schilstra (vocals), Bao Sisoko (kora) and Benedicte Maurseth (hardanger fiddle).

In 2013 the Nordanians did an extensive theatre tour with 'Mama Moesa', a piece by Herman van Baar. It featured Marko Bonarius on bass and actress / singer Nadia Amin.

Their first cd 'Tabla Rasa' was released in 2011 and gave them a lot of exposure in the press and gigs in the Netherlands and abroad. In the fall of 2014 the new cd with smashing new songs will be recorded.

Press quotes:

"A three-headed monster with the lightness of a ballerina. With great precision they play the most complex rhythms and intricate breaks. (...) Acrobatic trios in an organic coherence."

De Volkskrant

"Trio with an unusual line-up, but also a special energy, linked to a subtle and inventive musicality."

VPRO Jazzlive

"A very logical sounding mix of Indian and western improvisation, tough funk sounds and electronic effects (Decimeters), humorous country blues with scat(Tumbleweed) and contemporary classical music with Nordic (Nordanian) landscapes. Intelligent and challenging in this minimal line-up is the way they work with space in the music. Suddenly the violin screams punkish in Nasty Nordanian and intersects with the guitar in the frantic fingers of the best tabla player of our country. Wow, live this will be a blast!"

Armand Serpenti, Trouw

"The final show of the afternoon, before another trade dinner—this time at

Zouthaven, one of Bimhuis' restaurants—was The Nordanians, a trio comprised of violist Oene van Geel (who also performed earlier the same day with the intrepid Zapp 4 string quartet, whose forthcoming recording tackles the music of Radiohead), guitarist Mark Tuinstra and tablaist Niti Ranjan Biswas. Fans of guitarist John McLaughlin's longstanding East-meets-West explorations will be somewhat familiar with The Nordanians overall space, though what this trio does is more like a funky Shakti, blended with occasional electronics and, in contrast to McLaughlin's deeper spirituality, a greater sense of levity...humor, even."

"Set up with van Geel stage right, Tuinstra stage left, and Biswas center stage on a riser towards the back, communication was key as the three maintained strong eye contact throughout the showcase set. Tuinstra may not be the legend that McLaughlin is, but neither was he a slouch, playing a more conventional rhythm guitarist role at time, something McLaughlin rarely does with Shakti, where he remains more closely aligned with Indian music's linear nature. That said, when it came to soloing, Tuinstra kept up with the clearly virtuosic van Geel, who has clearly studied Indian music and nailed its microtonal nature. In addition to being a fine tablaist, Biswas also performed Konnakol (Indian vocal percussion). A set highlight came when, with Biswas doing Konnakol, both Tuinstra and van Geel joined him, with something that, at times, approached Konnakol but other times was more akin to scat. The three built to a climactic pitch only to resume on their instruments to tremendous applause. Like Kapok the previous evening, The Nordanians made clear that serious music could also be fun."

John Kellman, All About Jazz