

Michel Sajrawy Yathrib

Text

YATHRIB – the name of a city, also called Medina, a five-day foot march from Mekka. And accordingly, the second most holy city of Islam, being the home of the grave of Mohammed, which lies in a magnificent mosque.

YATHRIB – fertile oasis, about 200 km land inwards east of the Red Sea. Surrounded by the wild foothills of the Hijaz massif. Home of Arab and Jewish tribes. Melting pot of these cultures.

YATHRIB – Debut album of MICHEL SAJRAWY, of a man and virtuoso guitarist, who like no other unites seemingly insurmountable differences with his vita and with his music..

YATHRIB – These are Jews, Muslims and Christians, who together create a sound experience, a music, completely at ease and far removed from any issues of faith or differences – be it on stage or in the studio – who will surely remain unparalleled for a long time to come.

MICHEL SAJRAWY – was born and grew up in Nazareth, Galilee, in the north of Israel. As a Christian „Arab“ with an Israeli passport, he still feels mostly like a Palestinian. In an environment bubbling with conflicts, MICHEL SAJRAWY begins his musical education already as a child – for him the best possibility from the start to take a good look at the diversity and the inevitable conflicts involved in the extremely different cultural and religious circles.

Since then, for MICHEL SAJRAWY music has been a gift and a medium of expression for total being – the source of all knowledge...

After extensive studies in Nazareth and London (and quite a few awards later...), SAJRAWY is today a furious guitarist, composer, producer and last but not least sound technician, whose musical ambitions are to reconcile the jazz of western culture with the „Makamat“ of the Arabic Middle East and Schoenberg's avant-garde, and this in the most exciting way possible, driving this highly characteristic tone colour to perfection.

His fellow musicians, who MICHEL SAJRAWY unites for YATHRIB on stage and in the studio, deliver the tremendously shimmering presence of his compositions and arrangements through their virtuosity and sensitivity in their playing together, as well as with their culturally contrary roots.

His regular quartet members are: Valery Lipetz on the E- and double-bass; Ameen Atrash, who masters every nuance between rock and ethnic music styles on his drums, and Darwish Darwish, the newest and youngest member of the band who was declared by the Egyptian Opera to be "the best oud player of the Arab world" in 2003.

On YATHRIB, they are supported by top-class guest musicians like Kayed Silawi (tabla), Leonid Barshtak (violin, viola), Etamar Doari (jarra) and Bashir Asadi (violin).

With all the technical polish, musical virtuosity, compositional extravagance and finesse of the arrangements, MICHEL SAJRAWY'S YATHRIB never lacks that special something that lets music become a permanent impression: Soul!

Very, very carefully and yet powerfully, guitar and oud approach a sensitive topic with „Father“, without getting tied down in sentimentality...

Spiritual Oasis“ kidnaps, seduces, lets desire begin to sprout – and never denies that „Oasis“ at the same time implies barrenness and loneliness.

With „In Memory of Om Kalthoum“ the musicians manage to vividly recall the life and career of an exceptional musician whose exact year of birth was never known, whose career began in Cairo in the twenties and first ended with her death in 1975...

If Om Kalthoum enchants with her voice – Yathrib put us under a spell with their instruments and the incomparable energy of their music!

YATHRIB, electrifying and saturated with vibrating emotion, full to the brim with life