

THE IRISH TIMES

Mon, Apr 14, 03

Reviews

Bojan Zulfikarpasic Trio, *John Field Room*: The fourth concert in the Improvised Music Company/Jazz Architects' Series on the jazz piano trio unveiled, in Bojan Zulfikarpasic, one of the finest jazz pianists yet heard in the run. Serbian-born, French-based, he led a fine trio with similarly disparate origins; his extraordinary bassist, Olivier Sens, is French, and his highly capable drummer, Tony Robeson, comes from Madagascar.

Together they made some exhilarating music. Unsurprisingly, it also reflected the cultural diversity epitomised by the players. The first set alone contained, besides three originals by the pianist in *The Joker*, *Groznan Blue* and *CD-ROM*, and one, *D.H.Stuff*, by the bassist, Zulfikarpasic's own arrangements of a Turkish piece, *Cecen Kizi*, by Tanburi Djemil Bey, and a Bulgarian traditional melody, *Bugarski Waltz*.

The trio showed its worth in what was basically a straight-ahead first set spiced with unusual time signatures which, however they might have seemed exotic initially, were handled with constantly swinging aplomb.

The catalyst was invariably Zulfikarpasic. His time, touch and facility were remarkable, as was his sense of drama, contrast and dynamics. Most of all, he had such a vast well of personal ideas to draw on that he never seemed at a loss for inspiration; as a result, his solos were a constant delight.

Equally responsive in what is clearly a working group were his colleagues. Sens is a great player, with a big, full sound, incredible technique and time, and a sure feel for the group needs; add to that the ability to solo superbly and you have the complete jazz bassist. And Rabeson, less spectacular than the others, was ideal for the rich mixture provided by his partners.

The second set pushed the boundaries out somewhat further. Frequent use of vamps allowed them to play around even more freely with ideas and time, developing and releasing tension; Zulfikarpasic's *Allergia*, with its beautifully graded ending, was a case in point. A night to savour.

By Ray Comiskey