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Lackenbauer

VAN DJANGO: Nuits de Paris

GIUSEPPE PIETRAROIA
Conductor

VAN DJANGO
Cameron Wilson, violin
Budge Schachte, guitar
Finn Manniche, guitar
Brent Gubbels, bass

October 1, 7:30 pm
Royal Theatre

October 2, 2:30 pm
Royal Theatre

“Blue Moon”

Richard Rodgers & Lorenz Hart

“I Wonder Where My Baby is Tonight”*

Gus Kahn & Walter Donaldson

“Rue Fir”

Cameron Wilson & Finn Manniche

“Swing 39”*

Stéphane Grappelli & Django Reinhardt

“Stompin at Frankie’s”* *Cameron Wilson*

“Chanson de Cowboy” *Finn Manniche*

“Smoke on the Caravan”* *arr. Van Django*
(Deep Purple / Ellington/ Williams & Palmer
/ Grieg)

“Impromptu” *Django Reinhardt*

INTERMISSION

“A Fist of Beethoven” *arr. Van Django*

“Valse de la Fée Verte”* *Brent Gubbels*

“Shine”*

Cecil Mack, Lew Brown & Ford Dabney

“Jammin’ with Liam” *Budge Schachte*

Black Orpheus* *Luiz Bonfá*

“Sweet Georgia Brown”

Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard & Kenneth Casey

*Pops Series generously
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• **Devi & Robert Jawl**

* Van Django solo features
Orchestral arrangements by Cameron Wilson
& Budge Schachte

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Van Django: Nuits de Paris

For music lovers, the name Django is inextricably linked to the Belgian-born, French jazz guitarist of the 1930s and '40s: Jean “Django” Reinhardt (1910–1953). He has been regarded as one of the greatest guitar players of all time, and the first important European jazz musician to make a major contribution with jazz guitar.

It was at the Hôtel Claridge in Paris, in 1934, that Django Reinhardt teamed up with violinist Stéphane Grappelli to form the Quintette du Hot Club de France. The unusual instrumentation—violin, plus a lead guitar, two rhythm guitars and bass—was built around the free-wheeling improvisatory music that Reinhardt had learned as a child from itinerant musicians within his Manouche clan, one of the Romani communities of Indo-Aryan origin, traditionally nomadic throughout Europe. His untimely death at the age of 43 coincided with changing tastes in popular music. Guitar groups gravitated to Rock 'n' Roll, jazz splintered into any number of sub genres, and the “Hot Club” sound drifted out of favour.

But it never disappeared! By the late 1960s, a new wave of interest was forming. Festivals began to spring up in tribute to the legendary guitarist. Moreover, Django's collaborator, Stéphane Grappelli, was finding an entirely new audience, in jazz circles to be sure, but also with a crossover audience in a series of popular EMI recordings with classical violinist Yehudi Menuhin. Those albums became the gateway to an eclectic range of styles, and a soundtrack to a century of jazz standards, pop hits and reinvented classics. Since the early '90s, the swinging Hot Club-style has come to be known as jazz manouche, referencing Django Reinhardt's Romani roots.

In a musical community as rich as the West Coast, it is only natural that like-minded musicians would coalesce around a blend of jazz, pop and classical styles. Van Django was formed in 1998 by Cameron Wilson (who was a member of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra for 17 years and continues as an extra) and guitarist Budge Schachte, supported in the early days in a trio formation by VSO bassist David Brown. The group expanded to a quartet when fellow guitarist (and cellist) Finn Manniche came on-board and the role of bassist was passed on, first to Laurence Mollerup and subsequently to Brent Gubbels. The current roster has been going strong since 2007, through countless concerts, festival appearances, national and international tours, and recording projects.

Discrive, the CBC Vancouver programme hosted by Jurgen Gothe, proved to be an incubator for an audience with eclectic tastes. It was through *Discrive* that many listeners got to know and appreciate the wit, humour and musical invention of Cameron Wilson as both a performer and arranger. Those who go looking may encounter Van Django in all kinds of settings—from a jazz club to a sidewalk café, for a fundraising house concert and at the concert hall. Today, the Victoria Symphony is pleased to meet up on a common ground of great music played with verve and panache.

So what's in store? Some Jazz standards (“Blue Moon,” “I Wonder Where My Baby is Tonight,” “Sweet Georgia Brown”); a few original tunes (“Rue Fir,” “Chanson de Cowboy,” “Jammin' with Liam”); of course, some Hot Club classics (“Swing 39,” “Impromptu,” “Shine”); a film score favourite (*Black Orpheus*); a medley, and even a shake of the fist from Beethoven. As Cameron Wilson has proclaimed, «Vive le jazz manouche, mes amis!»

Giuseppe Pietrarroia,

Associate Conductor

Giuseppe Pietrarroia is Associate Conductor for both the Victoria Symphony and Pacific Opera. As a guest conductor he has been engaged by l'Orchestre Métropolitain, Orchestra London, Vancouver Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Hamilton Philharmonic, Okanagan Symphony, Regina Symphony, Kingston Symphony and Thunder Bay Symphony.

His extensive opera engagements with Pacific Opera include productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La traviata*, *La bohème*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Norma*, *Rigoletto*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La cenerentola*, *Tosca*, and *Let's Make an Opera / The Little Sweep*. In addition, he has conducted productions for l'Opéra de Montréal, l'Opéra de Québec, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Edmonton Opera, Opera New Brunswick, Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Program, and l'Institut Canadien d'Art Vocal.

With Victoria Choral Society, where he was Music Director for seven seasons, Maestro Pietrarroia conducted performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Mass in C minor* with the Victoria Symphony, a choreographed production of Orff's *Carmina Burana* in collaboration with Ballet Victoria, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*, and the Duruflé and Fauré requiems.

Maestro Pietrarroia has recorded a CD with soprano Marie-Josée Lord and l'Orchestre Métropolitain for the ATMA label, which won a Felix award granted by l'ADISQ and was also nominated for a JUNO award.

Giuseppe Pietrarroia is the recipient of the George and Jane Heffelfinger Pacific Opera Victoria Artist of the Year Award and the Canada Council's Jean-Marie Beaudet Award in Orchestral Conducting.

Van Django

Van Django's music is well-rooted in the jazz tradition of 1930s Paris France, as exemplified by the Romani-Belgian guitarist Jean "Django" Reinhardt, who formed the Quintette du Hot Club de France along with violinist Stéphane Grappelli. Beyond that it's all pure blue-skying; flights of dazzling fancy, driving rhythms and boundless creativity, featuring original compositions and arrangements including humorous mash-ups wearing their eclectic influences in full regalia. Since the group's formation in 1998, they have toured extensively in Canada as well as international forays to the US, Europe and China.

The group has had repeat performances at Djangofest Northwest (DFNW) in 2008–2016 sharing the stage with luminaries such as the John Jorgenson Quintet, the legendary jazz manouche guitarist Romane and many others.

Van Django's four CDs include *Tiptoe Trip*, *Waltz in the Shape of a Tree*, *Hotel Europe* and a Christmas CD with special guests titled *Cool Yule*. The members have been well received and played on many radio stations including; CBC, RDI, Espace Musique, NPR and Lyric FM in Ireland.

Perhaps Nick Lehr, former director of Djangofest Northwest, summed it up best describing Van Django when he said, "In an increasingly crowded niche, Van Django is a standout act. With a clever mix of contemporary standards, classical ditties, rock homages and solid originals they effortlessly whip the audience into a joyful frenzy. Attending a Van Django concert is the most fun you can have sitting down with your clothes on."