

Jazz breaking news: Gwilym Simcock Dazzles With Anglo-American Supergroup At Bergen Nattjazz Festival

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His plane might have been struck by lightning on the descent to Bergen airport earlier in the day but suitably refreshed later and raring to go pianist **Gwilym Simcock** was on fine form last night in the night club setting of Sardinien in the high-powered company of fellow Brit, the reclusive guitarist **Mike Walker** and American stars, electric bassist **Steve Swallow** and drummer Adam Nussbaum.

The band had only come together days before but already the tricky charts provided by the band members, whether negotiating the reimagined changes of a well worn standard or expanding dramatically on new material, seemed to pose no problem to the quartet. Walker was mightily impressive on his own tune 'Laughlines' and his broad Northern accent when he spoke to the crowd was as refreshing as it was impressive on his devastating Scofield-like lines.

Nattjazz is a celebration of Norwegian and international jazz and continues until 5 June. One of Norway's great hopes, the trumpeter **Mathias Eick** followed Simcock on to the Sardinien stage later with a two-drummer quintet which produced a moving, anthem-like swell of sound illuminated very impressively by electric bassist **Audun Erlien**.

Over on the bigger stage there was a rare show by the father of Ethio-jazz vibesman **Mulatu Astatke** (with British trumpeter **Byron Wallen** impressing in his band) who delighted the audience with a very mellow, rhythmical set which featured Mulatu's unique music, some of it based on Ethiopian church music from the film *Broken Flowers* which was also screened at the festival. A true one-off.

Roy Hargrove completed the evening with his current quintet, perhaps not his finest group, but looking dapper and blowing hard he was complemented excellently by the tart-sounding alto player Justin Robinson.

Stephen Graham