

# Around the World in a Spin

Recent releases from far-flung musicians

Last month, we highlighted spinworthy CDs by Oregon musicians. Now let's broaden our horizons.

## Americas

Eugene can claim some credit for the ascension of the most exciting composer since John Adams: Helmuth Rilling commissioned one of **Oswaldo Golijov's** first major large-scale works, *Oceana*, for the 1996 Oregon Bach Festival, where it outshone everything else. I heard it again at last year's Ojai Festival in Southern California, performed by the Atlanta Symphony, and this luminous Bach-meets-South America cantata certainly holds up as more than just a prelude to the Argentine-born, Boston-based composer's millennial masterpiece, *La Pasión según San Marcos*. The Atlantans deliver (augmented by the original lead singer, the radiant Luciana Souza) on this first recording (Deutsche Grammophon), too, although I wish they'd also used the original chorus: the incomparable Schola Cantorum of Caracas. The divine Dawn Upshaw displays her usual magnificence here in Golijov's hauntingly beautiful *Three Songs*.

On *etudes4violin&electronix* (Thirsty Ear), another transgressor of barriers between postclassical and other contemporary music, the charismatic Haitian American violin virtuoso **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, enlists composers as diverse as Philip Glass, Ryuichi Sakamoto and Peter Gordon plus DJs Spooky and Scientific to create a powerful, if sometimes wrenchingly polystylistic, showcase that should entice fans of electronica, jazz and others with adventurous ears.

Another Haitian New Yorker, **Erol Josué**, conducts voodoo ceremonies in the city, and casts a musical spell on his debut album, *Régléman* (EMI), which combines traditional tunes with electric guitar, sax, synthesizers and plenty of percussion in a funky, danceable stew. Still another New Yorker with Caribbean roots, **Jose Conde**,

deploys salsa, son and other Afro-Cuban rhythms from his ancestral homeland on (*R*)*evolucion* (Mr. Bongo Records).

## Africa

Those Cuban rhythms sprang from Africa and later re-crossed the ocean in a 1930s rumba revival. Legendary Congolese guitarist **Papa Noel** recently visited Cuba to experience the sounds that so entranced him in childhood, and his *Cafe Noir* (Tumi Music) employs both Cuban and Congolese musicians in a gorgeous, funky yet smooth mother and child reunion.

Since moving to Paris's hothouse African music scene, Ivory Coast's **Dobet Gnahore** has earned comparisons to Zap Mama's Marie Daulne for her powerful voice, charisma and feminist songs. The slick, buoyant pan-African sound and sweet harmonies of her new CD, *Na Afriki* (Cumbancha) should win her a deservedly broad audience. **Zap Mama's** own new album, *Supermoon* (HeadsUp) leans toward a commercially appealing soul groove; they play Portland's Aladdin Theater on Sept. 1.

Another Afro-diva, **Nawal**, hails from the Comoros Islands, where Bantus mixed with Indonesians and various Muslim groups to create a unique cross-pollinated culture. Nawal also spent a lot of time in France, and her new album, *Aman* (nawali.com), has an engaging Afro-pop breeziness that floats on her Djangoesque guitar lines.

You can hear the legacy of his legendary father, Ali, on **Vieux Farka Toure's** self-titled debut disk on World Village, but you can also hear a lot more electric rock guitar and other Western pop influences like reggae. Still, with fellow Malian Toumani Diabate on kora, plus plenty of other traditional instruments like Guinea flute, njarka spike fiddle, talking drum, banjo-like ngoni and kourignan (scraper), Afro-beat purists won't mind. For a rootsier, bluesier Malian experience, grab *Aman Iman: Water is Life* (World Village), the mesmerizing new CD



by **Tinariwen**, the Tuareg nomads-turned-rock-performers who have been winning fans like Robert Plant, Carlos Santana and Justin Adams.

## Middle East

After growing up listening to classic rock, Brooklyn's Basya Schechter left her Hasidic family to hitchhike through Africa and the Middle East, learning instruments and musical forms in Turkey, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Israel. She returned to New York equipped with plenty of Arabic and other influences as she explored her Jewish musical roots. It all comes together beautifully on *Haran* (Oyhoo), her group **Pharaoh's Daughter's** fifth disk. Similar rock and Middle Eastern influences mark the **Idan Raichel Project**, the Israeli band whose self-titled disk on Cumbancha appeals to rockers as much as world music fans. To really get back to old world roots, check out *Music of the Ancient Sumerians, Egyptians & Greeks* (North Pacific) by the Portland duo **De Organographia** (Philip Neuman and Gayle Stuwe Neuman) who study music composed between 1950 BC and 300 AD, craft appropriate instruments (lyres, kithara, pandoura, double reed pipes, flutes) and play it in as authentic a style as they can. It works as music as well as musicology, a fascinating glimpse into the well-springs of Western music.

## Eastern Europe

Thanks to the UO's world music series, Eugene gets plenty of Balkan and Gypsy music exposure. So does New York, where **Balkan Beat Box**, a musical mini-UN (Jewish, Balkan, Arabic, Syrian, European, Moroccan musicians), has forged a danceable cross cultural music machine out of brass, guitars and electronics; their *Nu Med* (JDub) is a perfect party album. So is *Teknochek Collision* (Barbes Records), by another brassy NY nonet, **Slavic Soul Party!** Even wilder is the Romanian Gypsy (Roma) brass band **Fanfare Ciocarlia**, whose percussive *Queens and Kings* (Asphalt Tango) has their *Borat* cover of "Born to Be Wild" — the tamest of the album's blistering dance tunes.

## Asia

To chill down from all these rip-roaring rhythms, how about some meditative sounds? Oregon's own koto mistress **Mitsuki Dazai's** limpid *Autumn* (North Pacific) covers Japanese composers from the 20th and 17th centuries as well as contemporary Portland master Tomas Svoboda and Dazai herself. The bamboo flute of Mumbai's **Radha Prasad**, accompanied by tabla master **Swapan Chaudhuri** conjures an incantatory atmosphere in the ragas on *Glimpse of Eternity* (North Pacific). **Pandit Prasad** also accompanies the compelling singer **Veena Pani Rastogi** on her alluring *Union With The Divine* (North Pacific). Another Indian-born vocalist, **Kiran Ahluwalia**, grew up in Toronto's Indian community, but her parents were ghazal (Indo-Persian musical love poem) singers, and she studied with master Punjabi singers in Mumbai and Hyderabad; her new album, *Wanderlust* (Times Square), continues her crossover course, this time weaving in some lilting Portuguese fado influences. And you can hear and see the reigning queen of fado, **Mariza**, on a stately new live CD/DVD, *Concerto em Lisboa* (Times Square). Born in Mozambique, she lives in Portugal, which means we're back in Europe, completing this spin around the musical world. **EW**

**AUTUMN MUSIC SERIES**

**George Winston**  
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22  
7:00PM DOORS

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORT OF FOOD FOR LANE COUNTY BY BRINGING A DONATION OF CANNED FOOD TO THE CONCERT

**kathy mattea**  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 25  
7:00PM DOORS

**DAVID WILCOX**

**GREG BROWN**  
FRIDAY OCTOBER 12  
7:00PM DOORS

1010 WILLIAMETTE STREET • ALL AGES WELCOME  
TICKETS AT TICKETWEST • CHARGE BY PHONE 1-800-992-TIXX

**THE AVETT BROS.**  
Hillstomp • Alela

**wowhall**  
Friday August 31  
291 WEST 8TH AVE • 7:00PM DOORS • ALL AGES  
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER • CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502

**That1Guy**  
Tuesday September 18  
77 WEST BROADWAY  
7:00PM DOORS • 21 AND OVER  
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER  
CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502

**ERIC CHURCH**  
**wowhall**  
Sunday October 28  
291 WEST 8TH AVE  
7:00PM DOORS • ALL AGES  
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER  
CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502

**RYAN MONTBLEAU BAND**  
& Marcus Eaton  
Monday November 19 John Henry's  
77 WEST BROADWAY • 8:00PM DOORS • 21 & OVER  
TIX AT TICKETMASTER • CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502

[www.SquarePegConcerts.com](http://www.SquarePegConcerts.com)