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## Excellent concert in cathedral was calm before storm

Loud show in Tent was hard on ears

By STEPHEN PEDERSEN Arts Reporter

THURSDAY NIGHT at the Atlantic Jazz Festival went from the sublime, Dinuk Wijeratne's trio in The Cathedral Church of All Saints, to the ridiculous, L'Orkestre des Pas Perdus in the Mainstage Tent.

In between was the passion-power of the Sicilian Jazz Project, headed by Toronto guitarist Michael Occhipinti, also in the Tent.

Michael Occhipinti's Sicilian Jazz Project is an astonishingly vital and salient new sound in the jazz spectrum. With Occhipinti on guitar and his brother Roberto on string bass, Louis Samao on accordion, Ernie Toller on saxes and bamboo flutes, Barry Romberg on drums and Dominic Mancuso on vocals and mini-bass, the band played original jazz pieces based on the styles of Sicilian folk music.

The variety of sound combinations took the ear by storm. Toller's soprano sax and Simao's accordion created a super-reed sound, rich and throaty and wonderfully in your face. Michael Occhipinti is one of jazz guitar's most outstanding melodic players. He has mastered not only his instrument and its possible musics, but the unteachable art of simplicity where each note tells volumes.

Roberto's firm work on the bass lines, coupled with his colouristic work with bow added another variety of spice to the sound. Romberg was ideal in support, always there but never fighting for the spotlight.

But Mancuso is the real sound of Sicily. His voice is robust and passionate and he wails in such a way as bring expressions like "Sicilian blues" into mind, and also to suggest how close in temperament and expressive style all the music from the rim of the Mediterranean Sea is, though also very different.

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