

DJANGO PROJECT

YOSHI'S

7-31-04



Went with the Significant Other to Yoshi's to catch a bit of the Django Reinhart celebration. Arguably the world's best guitarist today, Dorado Schmitt of Paris, France, held forth with his son Samson playing rhythm. Ludavic Beyer, also of Paris, supplied accordion. For a while we were transported back to another time, and I half expected to see Sam Beckett chatting with Sartre at a table wreathed in smoke from those harsh, unfiltered Galouise cigarettes before running off into the night of Occupation and Resistance.

This was the music that held together during the worst times the world has seen after all, when inhuman Concentration Camps charred the bones of thousands and millions of innocent people.

Composer and jazz performer Dorado Schmitt was born in St. Avold, in Lorraine "France" May 29th 1957. Thanks to a family of musicians, Dorado was immersed in traditional music from childhood, especially Gypsy jazz. His father introduced him to the guitar at the age of 7, and showed him the music of the Django Reinhardt. Under this influence, Dorado improved his style by playing all the music of the gypsy master, even the most technical solos, in order to perform the Django style perfectly. His father also initiated him into the violin which Dorado plays with expressive feeling, although by his teenage years, his preferences began to lean towards the pop/rock music played of Santana or Jimmy Hendrix. His tastes clashed with the influence of his father and with the Great Django's music, whose style he studied in minute detail by playing all of his songs.

In 1978, Dorado returned to his roots when he formed the *Dorado Trio* composed of Gino Reinhardt playing the double-bass, Hono Winterstein playing the rhythmic guitar.

That night at Yoshi's, Dorado riffed with single flatpick through a hundred variations, with crossovers, harmonics, hammer-ons, and blazingly fast cross-picking but modestly understated himself to allow the world class accompaniment to solo, especially the popular Carter. Dorado's work can be found on solo CD's and on the soundtrack to the movie *Latcho Drom*, a documentary about gypsy music.

Brian Torff supplied bass until James Carter restructured the entire evening with demolition sax and clarinet that brought the house down for every

piece. For encore, they completely tore apart and deconstructed the old chestnut "Constantinople", rendering the tune into a thousand fragments of iridescent glass before deftly dropping back into the melodic line to close. This was jazz and it was jazz at its improvisational best and deservedly earned two standing ovations.

The diamond found in the mine this evening was Carter with his soulful sax playing which added a fresh jolt of juice to the gypsy style.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1969, James Carter began playing saxophone at age 11, first recorded with a Detroit student ensemble in 1986 and, by 1991, had recorded with legendary trumpeter Lester Bowie on *The Organizer* and contributed to the 1991 collection *The Tough Young Tenors*. Mastering a family of reed instruments, from soprano to contrabass saxophones to contrabass and bass clarinets, James Carter mesmerized the jazz world after arriving in New York City in 1988 to play under the auspices of Lester Bowie.

Carter has performed, either live or in the studio, with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the late Julius Hemphill, Ronald Shannon Jackson, the Charles Mingus Big Band, soprano Kathleen Battle, Aretha Franklin, David Murray, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Ginger Baker, Sonny Rollins, and many others. He appeared in the 1994 PBS telecast of "Live At Lincoln Center" and portrayed saxophonist Ben Webster in Robert Altman's 1996 film, "Kansas City."



You could have been there, but the place was sold out for the festival,
from Thursday through Sunday for both shows each night.