

Marike van Dijk: Blending Musical Languages

Jan 29, 2015, 9:17 PM ET

By [TROY MCMULLEN](#)

On a recent night at the Blue Note, the venerable Manhattan jazz club, the assembled crowd of aficionados and well-heeled tourists gathered to catch one of the genres emerging stars. Saxophonists Melissa Aldana, the young, award-winning Chilean, predictably dazzled fans with a hard-toned, unsentimental sound that has increasingly come to define her performances.

Yet those lucky enough to catch the opening performance may have been just as impressed. Less heralded but equally talented, alto saxophonist [Marike van Dijk](#) forcibly steered her band through a sonically ambitious set of original compositions that impressed the crowd.

"I was just honored to be among such a great group of performers, but honestly a little bit nervous as well," van Dijk says of the Blue Note show. "There's a energy you feel when you take the stage there and it really energized me."



Kees Muizelaar

A Dutch native who studied music at the Rotterdam Conservatory and the Conservatory of Amsterdam, van Dijk, 32 years old, is part of an expanding group of young, international performers making their mark in New York's jazz scene. Though she spent her twenties shuffling between the U.S. and Europe working and studying music composition, van Dijk has now settled in New York and about to release her second full length album, "The Stereography Project."

The new release, on Brooklyn Underground Jazz Records, features eleven tracks that cycle through a generous amalgam of richly complex compositions and collaborations. The album's charm is found on tracks such as "The End" and "I Am Not a Robot" an opening salvo that uncorks a playful yet determined energy and sets the tone for the entire 8-track set.

"The new record really brings together all things that I've learned and honed over the past five years," van Dijk said recently at Threes Brewing, a bar and event space in Brooklyn's Gowanus

neighborhood that occasionally hosts Improvisational jazz performances. "It's kind of a combination of the cultural and musical influences that have taken hold of my life the past few years."

The backing band on the album represents an array of young, award-winning touring musicians including Grammy nominee Alan Ferber on trombone and Ben van Gelder, a Monk Competition semi-finals, on Bass clarinet and alto sax. Two of the album's more lucid tracks feature singers Defne Sahin and Ruben Samama, who offers a rich and delicate voice on "She's Leaving Home ." In all, more than ten musicians perform on the record, employing instruments from the flute, bass, and piano to drums, violin, and cello.

"I seem to gravitate towards larger ensembles, because I love all the sounds and the chords and the different colors of the instruments,' van Dijk says. "I love the challenge of putting together the right sounds and the right chords."



Courtesy of Kees Muizelaar

Van Dijk began playing saxophone at age eleven and joined a classical orchestra a year later. An affinity for eclectic collaborations eventually drew her to big bands and away from classical music, she says. "I felt drawn to 'that other music', meaning other than classical." She eventually landed at Rotterdam and Amsterdam conservatories to study jazz and took up the saxophone.

"I mainly focused on the sax, but slowly gravitated more towards composition," she says. "I started my own quintet and started writing music."

Those early collaborations produced "Patches of Blue," her first full-length album in 2010. Inspired mostly by her love and life in New York, the record employed a curiosity and energy that would eventually become her trademarks.

"The months I spent in New York back then are still some of the most musically inspiring for me," she says. "Everytime I walked out the door onto Riverside Drive I could feel the tremendous energy that really served as incentive to write and compose music for that album."

"The Stereography Project" is set for release on February 24, 2015. Marike van Dijk performs at St. Peter's Church on Sunday March 15, 2015. Follow her at:

<http://www.marikevandijk.com/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChlwjSp4qb4>