## Theodosii Spassov Trio Live in London

Theodosii Spassov, kaval, duduk, melodica, vocals Rumen Toskov, piano, keyboard Hristo Yotsov, drums, percussion





"Jazz stands for freedom. It's supposed to be the voice of freedom: Get out there and improvise, and take chances, and don't be a perfectionist - leave that to the classical musicians."

Dave Brubeck

In memory of Rumen Toskov (from Fiamma & Ivo)

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- Vesta 10:34
- Gurbet Mohabet, Mayna 12:53

All works composed by Theodosii Spassov

Live at the South Bank Centre, London, 30 June 2002

Theodosii Spassov, kaval, duduk, melodica, vocals Rumen Toskov, piano, keyboard Hristo Yotsov, drums, percussion

Design and Photography by Ivo "Kuker" Christov, Bulgaria, http://ivochristov.com

#### An Extraordinary Live Performance

#### A Few Words From...

It was an exciting concert. Our trio consisted of Theodosii Spassov – kaval, vocal, duduk; Rumen Toskov – piano, keyboard and Hristo Yotsov - drums, percussion. It took place in the legendary Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. The hall was packed. The event was organised perfectly, thus we were in a mood of harmony and inspiration. We played for an hour and a half. We were more than happy to give away our talent and present the Bulgarian music in our way. The people who came to see and hear us really enjoyed it. The Bulgarian audience was proud to have the chance to share something belonging to the most profound core of Bulgarian music, with their English friends. I felt the event as deeply emotional and unique at the same time. Luckily it was recorded and we can hear it again after so many years, feeling the same joy and excitement.

Theodosii Spassov

As part of the audience, I was very lucky to be there to share such a beautiful, heartfelt concert. My husband Ivo was the promoter. I remember he ran away on the same day in search of some MINI-DISCs, as soon as he listened to the trio rehearsing: there were all the signs that something exceptional was about to happen. He was right in his intuition. The Queen Elizabeth Hall was full, with people waiting outside in search of a spare ticket. As soon as the concert started, the Bulgarian audience was enthralled, as we all were. There was some magic in the air that evening, all the elements converging towards the perfect event, inspiration, joy, elation.

#### Fiammetta Tarli

This concert was a special night, probably one of those special concerts that happen few times in a lifetime. Looking back, I can say that I am very happy I have organised the aig at the South Bank in London for the Theodosii Spassov Trio. We were offered a last minute cancellation by the South Bank and the concert was on Sunday, the 30th of June 2002. We realized why we were offered the concert at the last minute: it was the day of the Football Word Cup Final. When we understood, it was a bit of a heart-stopping feeling. It could have been a disaster for the box office. In fact it wasn't, We had a SOLD OUT performance. We were not planning to record the concert, but after listening to the rehearsal, we wanted to. But it was a Sunday, and the only thing available in the hall for recording was a mini-disc recorder to be plugged in the mixer. It was obviously not ideal, but we did not have a choice. At 5pm, I took a cab and went in a search of few blank mini-discs. I found some just 10 minutes before closing time. I returned to the South Bank 15 minutes before the beginning of the concert. The quality of the recording itself is not what we would like a recording to be, but it has a very meaningful story behind it. It is very important because this is one of the only three recordings available of this Trio. For me is a privilege to publish this recording, despite its shortcomings, also because it features the pianist Rumen Toskov who is no longer with us. He died at the age of 41 on the 22,07,2010 from a Lymphoma. The news was given to me, while I was fighting with Leukaemia in London, by Hristo Yotsov, who visited me at Hammersmith Hospital in September 2010. I was shocked and very sad. This recording is dedicated to his memory with, the wish and hope that medicine will be able, in the future, to help cure such diseases.

Ivo Varbanov

#### Theodosii Spassov - Kaval (Bulgarian wooden flute)

The Grammy Winner (with Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares, 1994) Theodosii Spassov was born on March 4th, 1961. He began his early training on the kaval at the Kotel Music School and The Academy of Music and Dance in Plovdiv/Bulgaria. The kaval, an eightholes wooden "shepherd" flute, is one of the oldest instruments in Europe, rich in tone and technical possibilities. Theodosii Spassov has developed his own unique style of playing the instrument by synthesising traditional folklore with jazz, fusion and classical music. For over 20 years Theodosii has toured all over Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Australia, Canada and United States. In 1994, his performance with Sofia Women's Radio Choir was awarded with a Grammy award for Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares. In April of 1995, Newsweek magazine recognised Theodosii Spassov as one of the most talented Eastern-European musicians in its "best of the East" article, noting that "Spassov... is not merely surviving the post-communist cultural wasteland. He has actually invented a new musical genre."

Theodosii Spassov has contributed to 20 CDs, four of his own, which have been noted worldwide. He has composed and performed numerous film scores including a French-Bulgarian feature film Granitza, (The Border) 1993, Besides, he recorded themes for films by Italian composers Carlos Siliotto and Ennio Morricone, entitled An Italian Story and The Breakout of the Innocent. At the fourth European Jazz Night, Theodosii Spassov was a featured performer along with other jazz musicians, including Wynton Marsalis. At home in Bulgaria, Theodosii Spassov is a national figure and a musical hero, and was recently honoured with the Music Artist of the Year award. He is the Artistic Director of the worldrenown Philip Koutev Ensemble Of Music, Drama And Dance, He has played with Jazz Linia, Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares, Trio Bulgarka, National Radio Sofia Orchestras, Ivo Papazov, Yldiz Ibrahimova, Vesselin Nikolov, Milcho Leviev, Acoustic Version, Dave Liebman, Dimitrios Vassilakis, Andy Sheppard, Jamey Haddad, Albert Mangelsdorf, Mark Johnson, Trilok Gurtu, Kazumi Watanabe, Glen Velez, Rabih Abou-Khalil, Matt Darriau, Boyan Zulfikarpasic, Dionisis Savopulos, Paul McCandless, Glen Moore, Billy Cobham, Ennio Morricone, The Monte-Carlo Philharmonic, the Leipzig Radio Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra.

With his trio, Theodosii Spassov performed in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, Holland, India, Israel, Japan, Nepal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.K., the U.S. and of course in Bulgaria. The last performances of the trio occurred in a Japan tour in 2009.

Hristo Yotsov graduated at the State Academy of Music in Sofia with Dobri Paliev. He has played with the Simeon Shterev's Focus Quartet. In 1985, he formed Acoustic Version with Anthony Donchev winning the same year First Prize and Best Solist Prize at the International Jazz Competition in Hoeilaart, Belgium. In 1986 they were awarded with the Young European Jazz Artist's Title at the Fifth European Jazz Competition in Leverkusen, Germany. Since then he has performed all over the world with Acoustic Version and also with other artists such as Tommy Smith, Andy Scofield, Milcho Leviev, Alexia, Reiner Winterschlagen, Yildiz Ibrahimova, and Adam Pierontchik. He has recorded more than 20 LPs and CDs.

Rumen Toskov - Rupeto (1968 – 2010) was born in Samokov, Bulgaria in a family of musicians. Since an early age he showed a lively interest in music, and started playing the piano at the age of 6. At the age of 14 he entered the Sofia Music High School, studying with Stefka Matanova. During his studies he showed his interest in jazz. He completed his studies at the Sofia Music Academy, with Anthony Donchev. His multifaced talent showed not only as a jazz pianist but also as composer for theatre and cinema, writing the soundtrack of the first independent Bulgarian movie Mila from Mars.

He has worked with all the major Bulgarian jazz artists such as Theodosii Spassov, Hristo Yotsov, Anthony Donchev, Hilda Kazassian, Stoyan Yankulov, Vassil Petrov, Miroslava Katzarova, Vesselin Vesselinov – Eko.

The first collaboration with Theodosii Spassov is dating back in 1993 at the Aquarium Jazz Club in Warsaw. He toured extensively with the Theodosii Spassov Trio between 1998 and 2010, with a last tour of Japan in 2009, culminating at the Blue Note Club of Tokyo. With his untimely death, the Theodosii Spassov Trio ceased its activity.

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