



BIRÉLI LAGRÈNE BIOGRAPHY

Biréli Lagrène is a "phenomenon of the guitar" (dixit John Mc Laughlin). Revealed at the beginning of the 80s, the child prodigy knew how to cross brilliantly the cap of the maturity, asserting himself from day to day as a more and more inescapable musician in the world of the guitar and in that of the jazz, where it looks henceforth like reference.

The history begins in Alsace, within the community gipsy, where Biréli is born in 1966, of a family of musicians. Introduced very early by his father, then by his brother, very young Biréli surprises by his precocity. More of one, and not the slightest, will meet themselves under the charm. So of Matelot Ferré, companion of Django Reinhardt, whom the interpretation of the young prodigy will impress.

Django, he is, during these years, "the Biréli's big affair" Biréli reproduces note by note all the chorus of his "master"

« *When I was a kid, I used to put on the record again and again, until I succeeded in re-doing him. Afterwards, I understood that respecting the great guitarist was worth much more than imitating them...* »

With Biréli, the virtuosity never goes indeed without the coolness of the inspiration. It is the big lesson that he retains of Django, who bursts during his first albums.

"Routes to Django", first of all, which is published in 1980, soon followed by "Biréli Swing '81", then by "Biréli Lagrène 15", trilogy in shape of "free manifesto", according to the etymology of the word "gipsy" ("free man").

As well the jazz, for Biréli, becomes confused with this original freedom, "a freedom which has no limits". "Django helped me to go and see what's happening elsewhere", explains Biréli.

If Biréli is at first a child of Django, if the flow of Wes Montgomery or George Benson did not miss to mark him, in the passage, with their indelible imprint, it is thanks to Jaco Pastorius and to Weather Report that he owes a big part of his musical emancipation. From 1986, the one who already rubbed himself to partners of the tempering of Stéphane Grappelli or Larry Coryell dashes "in lost body" in the adventure of the fusion, multiplying the experiences and the meetings. Hesitating even a moment on the instrument to be adopted (under the influence of Pastorius, Biréli became a redoubtable bass player). It is finally the guitar which requires him definitively, for a research period when he builds up himself a dazzling style, while showing exceptional faculties of adaptation, supported by the talent of an improviser which places him among the biggest. One finds him so beside John Mc Laughlin, beside Paco de Lucia, beside Al Di Meola, beside Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, for Cream's reformation, with Stanley Clarke, Miroslav Vitous, Lenny White, Mike Stern... without counting two albums live which he registers with Pastorius himself.

In the bend of the 90s, the album "Acoustic Moments" constitutes a beautiful synthesis of this route and as a break, before the consecration of the classicism, which Biréli will obtain by playing the standards, with one "Live in Marciac" (1994) greeted by the criticism. This entry of the guitarist on the label Dreyfus Jazz coincides with an always-wider recognition on the national and international scenes. "Django d'Or" in 1993, Victoires de la Musique in 2001 for "Front Page", one "power trio" formed with Dominique Di Piazza and Dennis Chambers who records for Universal, Victoires de la Musiques again in 2002, crowning the success and the popularity of "Gipsy Project".

At 35 years old, having "strolled" on almost all the fronts of the modern guitar, having had a dialogue with some of the best hexagonal jazzmen (Didier Lockwood, Richard Galliano, Sylvain Luc...), Biréli Lagrène, at the top of his art, decides indeed to take up with the music of its previous history. It is in the boldness of this incredible bet, between virtuosity and depth, that Biréli, wild and subtle, lively as the flash of lighting, succeeds in being today, making a success of replaying Django's music while staying himself. Appearing again in this respect, in the spirit as well as in the letter, as one of most brilliant heirs of the "master". "Gipsy Project and Friends" second album was engraved by this forming of shock, celebrates so with happiness the anchoring in a tradition that Biréli possesses on the fingertips.

To congratulate a carrier without any false note, Dreyfus Jazz edits a double album. The first one *Djangology* has been recorded with the german WDR Big Band, with whom Biréli Lagrène shined during IAJE (International Association for Jazz Education) pretigious ceremony, which took place in New York on January 2006.

The second « *Solo – To Bi Or Not To Bi* » is exclusively composed of solo performances, recorded in live. In other words, we listen only intense moments during whom improvisation is the best and the surprise at the paroxysm.

An exceptional double album which marks 40 years of one of the greatest current guitarist, which was awarded the Django D'or "Musiques sans Frontières" 2007.

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In 2007, for the album with the Gipsy Project "Just the way you are", Biréli joined forces with his faithful companions, Diego Imbert (double bass), Hono Winterstein (rhythm guitar), Franck Wolf (soprano, tenor saxophone) and the great André "DD" Ceccareli on drums.

Bireli Lagrene releases a new album on October 2008, with a new electric band, including the young prodigy Hadrien Féraud (bass), Damien Schmitt (drums), Michäel Lecoq (keyboards), Franck Wolf (saxophone), DJ Nanga (sampling & scratching)