



The **Jammin' Juan** marketplace is a three-day off-shoot of the long-running prestigious Jazz à Juan festival. Seven groups daily have just 35 minutes to impress an audience of industry professionals, including directors of some of France's many jazz festivals. Each afternoon there's a buzzy atmosphere and every evening two more bands play full sets in concert. Of these, the **Philippe Villa Trio** creates a warm Mediterranean glow playing some of the bandleader's piano-led compositions. The next night festival patron, English jazz singer **Hugh Coltman**, who's made a career in France with his original songs, has the audience on its feet. Soul and hip hop artist **Sly Johnson**'s equally dynamic performance also gets the closing-night crowd dancing.

The showcases, though, are the heart of the event. Binker and Moses impressed last year. This year French bands are joined by groups from Sweden, Luxembourg and Canada performing a wide range of jazz. On day one Paris-based **Ryoko Nuruki & Afro Nippon**'s combination of the former's Japanese heritage with African rhythms sometimes echoes early Abdullah Ibrahim. The almost all brass **SuPerDoG** play nearly all King Crimson numbers. Starting with a New Orleans marching-band version of '21st Century Schizoid man' they show just how can these labrythine pieces can be twisted into a jazz style.



Marthe are a fiery and soulful quartet merging traditional Greek music with contemporary jazz. The outstanding band of day one, though, is the **Grégory Ott Trio**. Their superb ensemble playing, with its fine interplay between piano and double-bass, is highly reminiscent of Phronesis.

Day two's showcase highlight comes at its begining, with ex-saxophonist, now bittersweet singer, **Kevin Norwood's Quartet**. Rather than performing as a singer and his side-men, this is a unit which pushes all in the same propulsive direction. They also take some risks. The **young LynX Trio** are a promising jazz guitar-led band who go from dreamy to power playing. **Bakos**, are a strange inclusion: a heavy metal duo who turn out to be a breath of fresh air, storming through seven songs in furious style and charming the audience.



The final day is also the richest. **Youpi 4tet**, a beguiling flute and harmonica-led troupe, are buoyed by a driving rhythm-section which gives them a muscular grove. Sweden's **Corpo**, with six albums under their belt, have a warm edge to their Nordic cool and a sophistication that on the day is matched only by the punchy performance of the also very experienced Canadian **Jean-Pierre Zanella** and his quartet. The guitar and trumpet championing **Anthony Jambon Group**, and the lively Parisian funk band **Ishkero** definitely show some promise, but it's the thrilling, spine-tingling trumpet and flugelhorn playing of Montreal's **Rachel Therrien Quartet** that suggests Jammin' Juan might have uncovered a big jazz star of the future.

– Colin May

– Photos by OTC Antibes Juan-les-Pins (Philippe Villa Trio; Grégory Ott Trio) and Colin May (Youpi 4tet)