

A long story preceded the making of *Swinging Macedonia*: the story of a young jazz trumpeter from Yugoslavia who came to Frankfurt in 1955. Mangelsdorff, Greger, Edelhagen, Clarke-Boland, these were all the European stages of his career as trumpeter, composer and arranger. In 1961 he successfully launched his career in the USA. Dusko Goykovich had arrived. The Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, Herb Pomeroy, Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman, those were his stages in the US. In the summer of 1965 he appeared for a final time with Woody Herman at the Comblain-la-Tour Festival in Belgium. Exhausted by the hard life on tour he founded a jazz club in Cologne, Dusko's Jazz Studio, modelled on Ronnie Scott's in London.

I first met Dusko Goykovich in January 1966 as we were both returning after a concert on the way back from Recklinghausen to Cologne, and had no trouble finding conversation. What do musicians do when they meet? They speak about records. I asked him about his. He had made many recordings as a sideman, but his dream of recording his own music with his own ensemble under his own name had so far remained a dream. No longer: Here is *Swinging Macedonia* – a dream realised in pressed vinyl. We felt that a combination of jazz and folk would make a record of interest not only to musicians, as folk has been a constant inspiration for jazz musicians from Folk-Blues to Coltrane and Albert Ayler. Folk rather than Baroque, a collection of ten tracks, eight of them composed and arranged by Dusko Goykovich. We agreed on the supporting musicians via a considerable telephone bill – each musician came from a different country. The pianist and composer of the frenetic and orgiastic *Macedonian Fertility Dance* was Mal Waldron from Rome, where he had been working with the singer Lilian Terry. He had been Billie Holiday's last accompanist, had worked with Eric Dolphy and Charles Mingus and written film scores for Dizzy Gillespie. The highly original energy of his improvisations, the sensitivity of his accompaniment, the angular, almost edgy harmonies of his playing all make him one of the jazz piano greats.

Eddie Busnello on alto sax is a musician's musician, one known almost only by other musicians. He must be one of the most underrated jazz musicians in Europe; he had worked with Kenny Clarke and Don Byas, and up to 1961 with Kurt Edelhagen, but his come-back had been a mixed success and nobody seemed to know where he lived. We finally located him in the Aartshertoginnenstraat in Oostende.

The rhythm section was peerless in Europe: Peter Trunk from Frankfurt, the only German in the group and now bassist with Kurt Edelhagen, and percussionist Cees See from Baarn in the Netherlands both had kept Klaus Doldinger's Quartet swinging. Peter Trunk has become one of our great jazz hopes since his sensational record with Lucky Thompson on soprano sax.

The most recent Critics Poll in the jazz journal *downbeat* named Dusko Goykovich the best European jazz trumpeter. The same poll gave top billing to another member of this group: tenor and soprano sax and flute player Nathan Davis from Paris – beside Dusko the main soloist on this record.

The title track, *Macedonia*, is in bouncy 5/4 time. Together with the dreamy *Bem Basha* it was composed while Dusko was studying at Berklee and has much in common with Dizzy Gillespie's *Manteca* and Woody Herman's *Caledonia*. Nathan Davis's solo on tenor sax is particularly notable. *The Gypsy*, featuring Eddie Busnello, is the only standard included. Vittorio Eduardo Busnello regards this version as a rare jewel among jazz ballads. The remaining tracks were all written specifically for this album. *Old Fisherman's Daughter* is a slow waltz and contrasts Dusko's melancholic muted trumpet with Nathan Davis's cascading flute accompaniment. Eddie Busnello chimes in with a yearning alto solo before a flute cadenza brings the piece back to the tonic and to a close. *Jumbo Uganda* is a brilliant tour of South West Africa, a souvenir of the last world tour on which Dusko accompanied Woody Herman. His trumpet break is inimitable. *The Nights of Skopje* again features a muted trumpet; in a moderate 5/4 time, it illustrates memories of nights in the Balkans. *Saga Se Karame* is perhaps the most interesting track of the album in musical terms, although no one quite knows what the title means. A chorale-like opening leads via a flügelhorn solo into a world of oriental sounds before Nathan Davis closes the piece with a slightly surreal soprano solo.

Balkan Blue and the cheerful *Wedding March of Alexander the Macedonian* finally feature solos by all three wind players. The members of the group always regretted not having further projects to keep them together. The music that was recorded on those two final days of August in 1966 is a blend of melodies and rhythms that places it somewhere between Skopje, Boston, Cairo and Uganda – it is a musical odyssey, it is *Swinging Macedonia*. Perhaps a little of the relaxed but nevertheless concentrated atmosphere of the studio will come across through your speakers.

Nathan Davis wrote the finest compliment to all participants after his return to Paris: "This is one of the best dates I've ever made".

-Eckart Rahn, producer
Original liner notes, autumn 1966
Translation: Béla Hartmann

Postscript, 47 years later:

Duško Gojković (Serbian Cyrillic: Душко Гојковић; born 14 October 1931) is a Serbian jazz trumpeter, band leader and composer. His birthplace Jajce, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, is now in a new nation, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Peter Trunk passed away on New Year's Eve 1973 in New York City.

Cees See passed away on December 19th, 1985.

Mal Waldron passed away on December 2nd, 2002 in Brussels, Belgium.

Nathan Davis (born 15 February 1937 in Kansas City) is Professor of Music at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Eddie Busnello played with the Italian jazz fusion ensemble Area in the 1970s; his whereabouts are unknown.

The Gypsy was recorded by just about everyone, from Frank Sinatra to Charlie Parker and Quincy Jones. But despite its seeming to sound like a typical jazz standard, it was written by British orchestra leader and accordionist Billy Reid in 1945. It was misspelt on the original LP as *The Gipsy*.

The recording was used in around 1970 by the German Philips label; the combination of contemporary poetry and jazz was highly popular at the time. The LP *Benn: Lyrik + Jazz*, poems by Gottfried Benn, spoken by the actor Hans-Dietrich Zeidler, stayed in print for quite a long time, having been one of the best-sellers of the genre.

The original vinyl version, designed by the German magazine *twen* to be included as vol. 58 in their series *twen-serie*, a co-operation with the German Philips label, has sold for more than \$1,200 on Ebay. *Swinging Macedonia* has been recognized by many as the seminal album in the development of Balkans Jazz. The re-issue was supervised by the original producer, Eckart Rahn. He was working at the music department of the German short-wave service Deutsche Welle in Cologne at the time of this recording. He now leads – as he has done since 1968 – the art music label celestial harmonies in Tucson, Arizona, one of the oldest independent music companies in the world.