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Live From Brussels: Naima Joris, Sonico & Schroothoop



Photo credit: Nathan Pissoort



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Art Base
October 4, 2020

Around two hours later, back in the centre of Brussels, the Art Base venue presented Sonico, a local ensemble devoted to the modernised tango music of Argentina. This joint is just across the street from the Belgian Comic Strip Center, and has the character of an intimate art gallery, but is also heavily devoted to music. Small tables were spread around the space, with wine, beer and Greek spirits being vended. The amplification was just at the right level, and the audience was arrayed at small tables in front of the players, drinking in the warm acoustic ambiance.

Sonico will be enjoyed by devotees of [Astor Piazzolla](#), but their mission is to celebrate the compositions of his more obscure Buenos Aires contemporary Eduardo Rovira, who was also an arranger, bandleader and bandoneon player. This was the release show for Sonico's second album, *Eduardo Rovira: Inédito e Inconcluso* (El Intango Records, 2020), in the 40th anniversary year of the composer's early death. There's only a lone Belgian in the band, pianist Ivo De Greef, with the rest of the line-up arriving from France, Argentina itself (two of them), and the USA: Lysandre Donoso (bandoneon), Camilo Cordoba (guitar), Ariel Eberstein (upright bass), and Stephen Meyer (violin).

Sonico began as a guitarless quartet, piano pert whilst the bass scooted around, liberated, light and nimble. An early jewel was translated as "Tango For A Lonely Man," penned by Roviro for himself, and just the beginning of the set's misery-run, suitably lugubrious. A composer's suffering can frequently lead to an audience's shivered pleasure. The music made a deeply interior glide, navigating depopulated partitions, leaving a slug-trail of glistening doom.

De Greef left, and Cordoba joined, the piano and guitar refusing to mingle, initially. Then, there was a trio work for guitar, bandoneon and bass, "The Debris," written pending a visit to the psychiatrist, and not surprisingly, a funereal dirge that sounded like a radically slowed "I Put A Spell On You." Meyer fiddled while the virus burned. All five Sonico members were featured on "Solistas," from the new album, at times initiating phenomenal group surges. In the end, they encored with an actual Piazzolla number, from way back in 1961. The only word to describe Sonico's performance is 'exquisite...'