

Yuri Honing Trio Tour Australia.



25th of January until the 1st of February 2000

Life has been busy and hectic the past few weeks. I hoped I would stay clear of the flu epidemic that put half of Holland in bed. Until yesterday I did well but now it started. Nice start for a 22 hour flight. Headache is booming so I take an Advil. No effect. The heat, the noise, the dry air. It's not easy. 4 b movies (11 hours) later we arrive in Singapore. I had hoped to buy a new organizer since this one i'm writing on has a broken screen which only allows to see the left half of my sentences. Unfortunately the shops were closed until 7 and we had only until 6.15 to stretch our legs. After a flight of another 8 hours we arrive in Sydney. Here we wait 3 hours for our connection to Melbourne. Total travelling time 28 hours. Luckily Joost hasn't scheduled any other things for today.

Tomorrow we will play our first concert in Melbourne. We will play 2 concerts in Melbourne and 2 in Sydney. In between we have two days off which will hopefully allows us to enjoy Australia a bit.

Australia day.

Today is the day that the people of Australia celebrate that the English arrived in Australia and declared it their country. Not everybody is happy. A small protestmarch walks by as we started to explore Melbourne. They don't seem to be to very angry but of course they do have a point since there was already quite a culture from the aboriginals that the English ignored for centuries.

It's also the time of the Australian Open. From my room on the 41st floor ("first floor?" , "no sir, 41st floor!" , "Thank you.") I can see the courts and see the tennis players play. Unfortunately Anna Kournikova is already out and the organization of the jazzfestival tried but did not succeed to invite her to our concerts. Well you can't have everything.

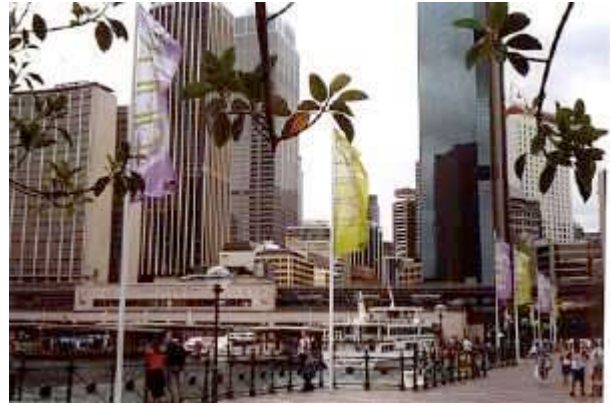
Tonight we played our first concert. A young crowd in a nice music bar. They seem to enjoy our music and cheer like during a football match. Including cheerleaders of which one has a great cat growl imitation. Despite the jetleg and my, and Yuri's, flew we played quite well. It's always a challenge to play for a completely new audience without any expectation. Even if we get quite tired of playing our popsong repertoire, for new audiences it 's always fresh and enjoyable. I do understand how Stan Getz must have felt when he had to play the 'girl from Ipenema' every night. Tomorrow we'll play again but than in the real and only jazzclub in Melbourne. The crowd is supposed to be very quite and attentive their. I didn't mind the raw danceclub atmosphere we had tonight.

It's the third day here. We expected to have jetleg problems but all three of us are fine. Yuri bought jetleg pills, based on a tomato extract, and it seems to work. We are flying back now to Sydney were we will play a concert tonight. Yesterday night we had our last concert in Melbourne in the first smoke free jazzclub we played at. Not bad, the people seemed to enjoy themselves just as much and the air in the club is much cleaner. It definitely helps the performance. Sometimes playing in the Yuri Honing trio feels like playing topsport. The energy level is so high that i'm usually out breath after 40 minutes. Since we have a support act here we now play one setters of an hour and a quarter.

We had an interview before the concert in the afternoon for a national radio station with Jessica Nicholas who also wrote a review in the Melbourne newspaper. she was also so kind to take us for a ride after the interview and we all had dinner at the seaside.

Big sydney

Today we arrived in sydney. Obviously the biggest city in Australia. Completely ready and hyped up for the olympic games this year. It's not easy to avoid the Sydney 2000 hype . We play a concert in the side on Cafe. A typical jazzclub with people eating in front of you. Tables right up until the stage. It's still a bit awkward for us. In holland this formula of dine and Jazz is not working. They tried but most people don't like it. As a musician I always feel a bit embarrassed to play loud. But that's what we do sometimes so we do it anyway. Sydney's crowd seems to be a bit more reserved in their reactions but still it's a nice reception. On the first row/table we see Mike Nock. This Australian piano player came with his wife, called Yuri, to celebrate her birthday. I remembered I had a LP from Mike Nock from at least 20 year ago. It's nice to talk to him. He is very nice man and he liked our concert a lot (which of course helps for me to find him a nice man).



Saturday, the day after the concert we are free. We visit the town and take the ferry to Manly. We sit at the beach look at the ocean and the surfers in the waves.

It's funny to be here in sydney and got to all the sites my 4 and half year old son Kaili and his Mother Amanda went to. Amanda's mother is Australian so they go and see her once in a while. Kaili sent me here on a quest. He wants the magical sword that goes "bleep, bleep" and "oing oing" and has these beautiful light effects. He told me to get it at least a dozen times at home and he called me here in Australia twice.

Blue Mountains

It's our 2nd day off. After the city tour yesterday we decided to go to go to the Blue Mountains. one and a half hours drive by bus and 1 hour by train. The view is magnificent. Rainforest as far as you can see. We walk the nine hundred steps stairway down the three sisters (a triple mountain top) and we try to escape from the tourists by walking as far as we can. Finally we are alone surrounded by the Blue Mountains. It's great. I could walk here for days. Joost and I love to hike, a thing they call bushwalking here. Yuri is always relieved though to get back to the civilized world of the city. I still can't make up my mind which world is more civilized.



The Basement

We have our last concert of the tour in the basement. It's one of the most renowned clubs in Australia. It has a striking likeness with the Ronie Scott's club in london. A big rectangular room with the stage in the middle of the long side, tables around the stage and behind the tables a little fence were the bar is. Light dimmed., carpet on the floor which results in a dry stage sounds . But I must say the acoustic is great to play in. Good sound system. Because it's a monday night we play two shorter sets early in the evening. Most people don't like to get out late at the beginning of the week. The girl who was arranged to announce us is a poet and a singer. She let's us know that she will hold a short introduction. And short it is. "Ladies and gentlemen a warm welcome please for the Yuri Honing trio!!!!". That's it.

Joost plays on a old Ludwig drumset from the fifties. I think it sounds great. For some reason it mixes much better with a double bass instead of the modern more rocky set he plays himself. For some reason old instruments have charm you can't beat.

Surf

The next day we spend the last hours before we leave intensely. I get up early and catch the city train to the center to collect a composition for voice and Viola at the Australian Music Center. It's for my girlfriend who is a classical singer and always interested in finding new repertoire. Yesterday I spent a part of my day at this center to listen and look at music by Australian contemporary composers. This Australian Music Center is an interesting initiative to promote Australian music. Pop, jazz, classical, aboriginal, anything made by Australians. After this I get back to the hotel to meet Joost. We have the usual problems with checking out of the hotel. They present us a bill 1300 Australian dollars for the rooms. According to our contract all our accommodations is paid by the organization. Joost spends an hour calling around and the problem is fixed. I don't like this hotel. I don't know why. It's decent enough. But I don't like the smell of it, don't like the fact they want money for every little thing. I think I'd prefer a simpler hotel with a nicer spirit or a really fancy hotel like the one in Melbourne.



Next stop. Chinese gardens. I just had to get a picture of me in a Chinese emperor's suit just like my Son Kaili did. He's been to Australia twice and both times he came home with a picture of him in the Chinese gardens dressed up as a little emperor. I tried to get the whole trio come with me but I guess you only do crazy stuff like that for your own kid.

Last but not least. Joost and I really wanted to go surfing on the ocean. This was a rare opportunity. So we couldn't miss it. We took the bus to Bondi Beach, a famous surf spot and we rented boogieboards. The surf was so high we didn't dare to rent surfboards. After an hour of getting flushed by the enormous waves and an occasional nice ride down the smaller waves we called it a day. Exhausted and with a slight sunburn despite the waterproof sunblock we went back to the hotel.

This tour ended as it started 25-hour flight and bad KLM meals and B movies. It was worth it though. We all dream of coming back and do a really long tour, maybe by camper and see more of this beautiful country. Now we have to concentrate on the gig tonight in Holland. We arrive at 11 o'clock in the morning, have a rehearsal at 4 and the concert at 8. Tomorrow I leave again for Switzerland. No time to think or feel another jetleg.

Tony Overwater

