

## REVIEW | GONIA



### **Lopa Kothari**

UK

Radio 3 World on your Street stage at WOMAD

Gonia has ended up pioneering of a new form of jazz that they've called K- Jazz because of the Janggu and the virtuosity of Hannah Kim, combining traditional Korean rhythms and sophisticated melodies. In spite of its age (!) - the janggu goes back more than 1500 years - it is the janggu that has carved a space for Gonia in the 21st century and established a place for itself in the music of our planet for the millennia to come. It is both gentle and fierce... as the group improvises around its rhythms. Gonia has elements of indo-jazz where contemporary jazz meets the tribal, almost spiritual, rhythms of ancient India. And the way the trio play, it is a glorious meeting of 3 solo artists/voices.



## **Jordana Leigh**

Senior Director  
Lincoln Center for the Performing arts

I like the originality of this ensemble and that rhythm is the driving force behind their work. It is a lovely balance between the traditions of Korean rhythms and the jazz world. I think they have a very special sound and think they would be well received abroad. It would be fun to find ways to connect them to other jazz musicians in the States. I would be interested in presenting this band in the future.

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## **Birgit Ellinghaus**

Germany  
Director  
Alba KULTUR – International Office for Global Music.

The well-attuned jazz trio shows nice melodic improvisations that are driven by traditional Korean percussion. A musical concept which could convince jazz fans worldwide.



## Esteban Ortega

Chile

Director & Founder

Enlaces Musicale

Gonia is a band that has very good tunes/songs, with extremely engaging parts and thrilling musical developments, sometimes fast, and sometimes dark. The creative work in terms of composition is, without a doubt, to my musical taste. The interpretation is good, but at some points cohesion is lost between the instruments. I think with more time and experience as a project this will improve. Nonetheless, the performance of the bass player is outstanding and contributes to the creation of an own modern sound, both with the rhythm parts and with the solos. This is the thing I like most about Gonia. On the other hand, I think percussion fits well with the bass guitar, but I think the general sound of the bands lacks weight therefore restricting the dynamics possibilities, and the 'trances' or 'journeys' the music may evoke with its structures. The clothing is a good contribution to the visual part, and it is a highling of the performance. I think with a solid planned lights design the overall impression of the performance can improve drastically.



## Derek Andrews

Canada  
Director  
Mundial Montreal

Masterful and exquisite guitar work leading the way, this offering of intense musicianship with fusing tradition with prowess will appeal to all with big music ears. The nuance and gentle side of the playing may not work on the big outdoor stages but in the right setting, this is a subtle and satisfying blend.

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## Petr Dorůžka

Czech Republic  
Journalist  
WOMEX 17 Professional Excellence Award

Formally a jazz trio with guitar, Korean drum, bass. Most interesting part are rhythm patterns, building up the intensity during the 20 minutes showcase. I believe the band has enough potential to develop in other ways, create more colorful set of moods and instrumental textures, to attract wider audience.