



AL JARREAU with the NDR BIGBAND ›The Duke Ellington Songbook‹

Al Jarreau returns with the renowned NDR Bigband and their sensational new programme ›The Duke Ellington Songbook‹ - Ellington like you've never heard him before - Jarreau like you've never heard him before!

Once again, 2015 Al Jarreau returned to the place where his career really took off: Hamburg - the city that made him famous all over Germany 37 years ago. The reason was an offer he simply could not refuse. When NDR Bigband Leader Jörg Achim Keller approached Al Jarreau with the thought of the NDR Bigband revisiting the Duke Ellington Songbook with Jarreau as the vocalist, he couldn't help himself but to helplessly fall in love with this idea.

So picture the 18 musicians of the NDR Bigband playing jazz in the studio, surrounding a 76 year old man throning like an eminence in their middle - despite not a grey eminence. With a smile like a sunbeam, he sings, he scats, he comes up with ideas. His tremendous lively energy radiates through the whole room and puts a smile on every face. He's back.

›Onkel Pö's Carnegie Hall‹ was the name of the place in Hamburg, by no means a hall, more like a small, smoke filled corner bar, that acted as launching pad for ›Uncle Al‹. His version of Dave Brubeck's ›Take Five‹ he sang there for the first time, immediately got heralded as a true sensation. As you have it, only two weeks later he was famous all over Germany.

›Of course I remember these times - how could I ever forget them? The people who saw me back in the day are still coming to my concerts today - bringing their grandchildren with them - to see Uncle Al! To come to Europe was one of the best ideas of my life. That experience opened my eyes to the fact that America indeed is a land full of european immigrants, and african immigrants, too. My initial idea was to share my music with the world, to share a smile with people, to dance and clap in time. And the first door that opened for me to this wonderful universe was here in Hamburg.«

Now it's to him to open doors once again. As Jörg Achim Keller's new take on Ellington's body of work by combining the qualities of Al Jarreau and the NDR Big Band through new arrangements, managed to create something really excitingly brand new - Ellington 2.0, if you will. Also, his collaboration with Keller managed to provide Jarreau, who grew up with the music of the greats like Ellington, Fitzgerald and so on with a totally new perspective of Ellington's music than the few songs he already had in his live repertoire.

So, if push comes to shove, what is it that makes the difference to all the other Ellington programmes? First of all, it's Jarreau's talent to not just ›cover‹ a song (though he himself refers to his takes as Cover-Versions), but to completely making it his own and turning it into something exceptional - and also, it's the unique quality of the human voice.

As Jarreau puts it ›The voice is the first native instrument of humanity, it provides a warmth that no other instrument could ever fully imitate or substitute. Plus, the vocabulary, the messages that you can put into a song via the words, the sequence of words you are choosing to sing - all these ingredients create a very special form of human expression. I love language, I love to write lyrics that actually mean something, that are really saying something and that have a clear point. You can encourage people with words - a chance you just have to take!«

With the ›Duke Ellington Songbook‹ Jarreau jumps at this chance in a way you'd never seen him do before or expected him to do so. If Germany would ever get the opportunity to adopt Al Jarreau as a citizen, it should not hesitate for a second.

www.aljarreau.com

www.facebook.com/aljarreauofficial