



[Press Release] April 16, 2010: Fatima Spar and the Freedom Fries Live in Concert in New York

The American Turkish Society
Moon and Stars Project
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New York, March 03, 2010- Formed in 2004, the Vienna based jazz group Fatima Spar and the Freedom Fries will take stage at Knitting Factory Brooklyn for two back to back performances on Friday, April 16, 2010. The concert is presented by The American Turkish Society and Moon and Stars Project in New York.

Composed of musicians from Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Serbia and Austria, the band is a Euro-Asian indie jazz band with a Turkish singer that integrates swing and many musical styles from the Balkans. Their music encompasses an artistic blend of multiple instruments like trumpet, saxophone, accordion and bass. The band derives its name from the euphemism for French Fries used in the U.S. after the French government's refusal to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq. According to Fatima Spar, the group's lead vocal, "it's a reminder of the anti-French campaign, the national agitation and linguistic cleansing as means of warfare and propaganda. Besides, the band liked the name, and it stuck."

The group which averages around 100 concerts every year has performed in many renowned concert halls throughout Europe including Notting Hill Arts Club in London, Wiener Konzerthaus in Vienna and Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as well as leading music clubs in Belgrade and Istanbul.

The lyrics, which find emotion in Fatima Spar's contemporary jazz voice, are mostly in English and Turkish. When asked about how she would like to be remembered, Fatima Spar told Turkish Journal, "Precious but fleeting", which it may be said, is also a good depiction of her band's brilliant amalgam of sounds. Falling somewhere between 1930's and today's music, the band's tunes resemble avant garde artists such as Pink Martini and Paris Combo and yet retain their own individuality.

Some of their most popular songs including Egyptian Ella (a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald), Bosa Noga, Kızılıklar Oldu Mu, and Kibirli Ceviz are covered in their second album *Zirzop* and their latest album *Trust* was recorded in Frankfurt's renowned Hazelwood Studio. The story behind the album's title song, *Trust*, is poignant and politically charged. "I read a racist propaganda letter in a bus line, which said 'Kill all Muslims' with an image showing a man hanging off a scaffold," says Fatima Spar. The group would then go back to the studio to produce the album. *Trust* contains a skillful mix of romantic and political songs such as *My Little Someone*, which tells the story of a great love, and *Biting Creepers*, which continues with the same theme, depicting love and kisses as best antidotes to hypocrisy.

Fatima Spar has been nominated for the Amadeus Austrian Music Award and the BBC World Music Award, among others, and her band was also the first Austrian band that played in the official program of Womex, the world music expo.

Founded in 1949, The American Turkish Society is America's oldest not-for-profit organization seeking to enhance economic, political and cultural ties between the United States and Turkey. Its close partner, Moon and Stars Project, highlights the best of Turkish arts and culture in the United States since 2002 and hosts the New York Turkish Film Festival.

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