

WARREN BYRD/SASKIA LAROO

Line up:

Saskia Laroo
(trumpet, tenorsax, bas, vocals),
Warren Byrd (piano, zang).

Date and place:

Every Friday from March 20, 2020,
Hartford (US), Amsterdam via Facebook.
In times of adversity, people find innovative
solutions and interesting ways out. Also
trumpeter Saskia Laroo and pianist Warren
Byrd. After canceling an impressive list of
national and international concerts, they
started the series 'Friday Feel Good
Concerts' online from their own homes.
First live from Hartford, Connecticut, the
place where Byrd grew up, and later also
from Amsterdam, we get a look in the
kitchen, the bedroom and eventually the
garden.

Kitchen

The first concert, from the kitchen, opened
with a new song. And how could that be
named other than "Corona blues", an
interesting version of "I got the blues" with
excellent lyrics. The piece then comes
back every concert. The concert is actually
an intimate private lesson blues, given by
Warren Byrd. Beautiful in these somewhat
"dark" times. In addition, the trumpet was
also there and pieces from Laroo's latest
album "Trumpets Around The World". And
a nice tribute to the recently deceased
trumpet player Roy Hargrove in "Groovin'
hard ". Also, and that happened in every
concert, a standard. In the first episode, an
ode to spring with "I member April". The
closing act was a natural tribute to the
founder of the jazz trumpet: Louis
Armstrong. It was not only a tribute, but
also a sign that this duo was especially not
downcast. Obviously they brought "What a
wonderful world".

In the second concert, also from the
kitchen, there was less blues, but the
appearance of the first concert remained:
fun and hope in dark times. As a classic,
"Sunny side of the street" was brought.
This time, too, there was no audience, but
as in a good concert, Laroo and Byrd
called on viewers to participate. Byrd gave
a small master class on the (corona) blues
in "Everybody got it". A blues must be sad
and downcast, but it always has an
undertone of hope, future and better times.
And Byrd sees that very sharply!

...continue in the right column

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JAZZ IN QUARANTINE



Concert in the garden of their house. (Screenshot: You Tube)

Dutch and English were not only alternated, but also used
interchangeably. In later concerts Byrd sings in Dutch and Laroo in
English. The best example is the song "Hold on, Hold": "We have
defeated the flu" and "We will prevail".

Bedroom

In the first bedroom concert it appeared that Casa Laroo-Byrd has a
grand piano next to the bed. Remarkable was the beautiful piano work
and the excellent trumpet sound in "Beyond the flaw", a piece by
Warren Byrd.

Garden

Meanwhile in Amsterdam, the duo moved to the garden. And this time
there was a real audience: neighbors Jeannie, Emma and Igbo, and
many others listened from their own garden. And this time the audience
really hooked up, despite the plot-dividing fences. The cheerfulness
was never far away. The concert ended with "Happy birthday" for
neighbor Jeannie, sung along by the Wilhelminastraat.

The series regularly shows that the two musicians are lovers. The best
moment was certainly in the first bedroom concert. Perhaps the most
sensitive song in jazz history, Warren Byrd introduced Ellington's
"Come rain come shine" in which Laroo plays bass with the comment "it
is always intriguing to work with my baby-pie on the bass." Moving. And
excellent bass work from Laroo!

The concerts are interesting and fun. Of course the sound could be
better here and there. But yes, whose bedroom, kitchen or garden has
good acoustics? And that's not what this series is about, of course.
There are already seven weekly episodes on YouTube. You would
almost hope that the coronavirus remains and the concerts continue for
a long time. Maybe an idea to just keep going when we really beat
corona?

Listen to this series of "Friday Feel Good" concerts. Not only for the
music, but especially for the positive appearance! The concerts are free
to watch, but a donation to help Byrd and Laroo earn their livelihood is
greatly appreciated.

Bart Hollebrandse

Laroo and Byrd give a concert via Facebook every Friday at 7pm.

More info: <https://www.warrenbyrd.com/>

Watch Jazz in the garden part 1 here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ysffh07RfCA>