

Jazz is American, black American. If you have any doubts about it you need to come to the Jazz festival now running on the Riviera. The rhythm, the sound, the accent, the *tempi*, the melodious sweet tunes, the stories. So many about "ma good lady" so many about "man you mistreated me" "Why you gone" recall a culture, a life the white American never had, never lived and will not know better than by "Listen white man".

Last night in the glorious amphitheater of La Pinède set across the bay in Juan les pins we had right to a night of music that could have happen in New Orleans or down town New York. Chairmane Neville was there replacing an ailing Marva Wright. Don't worry Charmaine knows her ropes. A native of New Orleans. In her early forties (am I (W)Right?) she is still full of juices ; an athletic silhouette that kicks up a storm a voice melifluos, rouque at time Satchmo style she has the beat, the energy and the gusto needed for a jam session. "Wave your Handkerchief" she told us and most of the crowd found a schmatte to go along. Pretty soon we had a whole audience waving as if we were, parting Queen Mary at New York pier n°2. She had good company : the BMW band kept the jazz, the blues, the funk at good speed. Flowers for the lady I thought and yes they come on stage with a grand bouquet to the delight of the fans....

Allen Toussaint is a living legend of the 50-60. Everything he composed was "a long time ago" but is still resonant, inspiring, the chords so naturally southern, the lines so inviting, the crooning perfect for the occasion "The party is on" "girls are coming" "Mother in law". You are imported by these tunes you clap hands without being asked to. "Working in the coal mine carry you down down". There is a brief memorial play time for Sidney Bechet who was here and loved it 50 years ago. That was the time that Black musicians had a hard time in good old US where they were sitting in the back of the bus and had drinks in their own bars apart on account of "Whites only" signs. Today these plates (?) are still there in white folks minds and hearts and not only in the deep south. "You don't love me no more" takes toward the end of this evening where good singing, good accompanists and good crowd thrown together makes for a memorable evening.

par Peter Hermes

12 juillet 2009