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The Singers of Mycale Blend Voices in Zorn's 'Book of Angels'

By BEN RATLIFF SEPT. 9, 2015

Mycale is — prepare yourself now for context — a four-woman vocal group brought together by John Zorn to perform original a cappella arrangements from “Book of Angels,” the second galaxy in his universe of succinct compositions collectively titled Masada, all of which use the so-called Jewish scales. (Among the many others who have recorded parts of “Book of Angels”: the guitarist Pat Metheny, the cellist Erik Friedlander, the guitarist Marc Ribot, the trio Medeski, Martin & Wood.) Mycale is Ayelet Rose Gottlieb, Sofia Rei, Sara Serpa and Malika Zarra — from Israeli, Argentine, Portuguese and Moroccan backgrounds — singing texts in Hebrew, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic, from the Hebrew Bible, Rumi, Fernando Pessoa, Heraclitus and elsewhere. And the group’s second record, “Gomory: The Book of Angels, Vol. 25” (Tzadik), released in May, is astonishingly beautiful, a high point in the series: The singers’ individually rigorous tones and dispositions and arranging impulses surround the music and give it another dimension of originality; it sounds medieval and new at the same time.

They are in residence for a week at the Stone in the East Village, Tuesday to next Sunday, with sets at 8 and 10 p.m., performing with their own ensembles and various guests, and also as Mycale. (thestonenyc.com.)

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