



Moutin Reunion Quartet

Something Like Now

NOCTURNE NTCD375

Something Like Now - parts 1 & 2; Bird's Medley; Take It Easy; Surrendering; M.R.C; Tomcat; Echoing; Bottom Line - parts 1 & 2; Touch And Go.

Rick Margitza (ts); Pierre de Bethmann (p); Francois Moutin (b); Louis Moutin (d). 2/05.

Be honest – did you even know they'd split up? In fact, the band's name derives from the reconvening of the Moutin twins, group in 1998 after Francois had spent some time in New York. Prior to his move to the States in 1997 the brothers had made their marks with Martial Solal's trio before forming their own quintet. Whilst in NYC Francois had the chance to work with the likes of Vijay Iyer, Monty Alexander, Clark Terry, Odean Pope and Margitza. (To be fair to Paris, Moutin's home town had already provided the opportunity to play with many major international jazz names.)

Margitza is probably the most widely-known member of this quartet thanks to his time with

Miles Davis (he was with Miles's band when *Amandla*, *Live Around The World* and *Live In Montreux* were recorded) and his three Blue Note albums in the late 80s/early 90s after he left Miles. Unsurprisingly, given his CV, Margitza's playing strongly evinces the influences of Coltrane, Shorter and, in more reflective moments, Charles Lloyd: the treatment of Francois M's "Surrendering" in particular recalls Lloyd's "Love Ship". He is entirely at home in this quartet, not least because the brothers' methods are similar to those he has often used: for example, absorbing the tenor into the structure of the group rather than going for a simple sax-plus-rhythm set-up, and having a penchant for mini-suites.

Louis M's "Something Like Now" has two sections but, after the intermezzo of "Bird's Medley", "Take It Easy" sounds like it could have come from the same bout of inspiration and would not sit too uncomfortably as "Something Like Now - Part 3". The said "Medley" is a mighty display of nimble, driving, precise and well-projected pizzicato bass, but it never sounds like showing off. It's typical of Francois M's work throughout, whether soloing or not – coherent, constructive and highly musical.

The quartet has a bustling energy, and even in its edgier moments retains an aura of good humour. The writing is generally good, so is the sound, and the solos are strong. An enjoyable, satisfying album with all the pukka virtues of mainstream-modern jazz.

BARRY WITHERDEN