

AAJ Publisher's Picks of the Week

JAN 11, 2004



Red Moon

Moutin Reunion Quartet | Sunnyside

Avant garde music is not my cup of tea : I usually find it dark and formless, and the more "out" it goes, the faster I turn it off. But when I heard the opening track here, a bass and drum derangement of "La Mer," I was struck by how playful it could be. Same thing for the next and title track, a driving funk/Latin mix, where pianist Baptiste Trotignon and saxist Rick Margitza join the party, contributing to the genial celebration. I was surprised that I could not only follow the journey, but enjoy it as well. Either my ears have grown after a decade of reviewing, or these guys have produced something special. Perhaps both.

In any case, the leaders are twin brothers, Francois and Louis Moutin, who offer four originals each, as well as two standards arranged by Francois. The "reunion" reflects Francois's return after leaving the first Moutin group in 1996 for the US. The music is bold, with intricate rhythms and intriguing harmonies. Trotignon's piano knits the quartet together with melodic silk, supple and strong.

"Apollo 13" conveys the power and mystery of space flight, with Margitza soaring, as he does on "Sailing Through the Clouds." "Taking Off" makes the most out of a simple riff; "New-York Silly" is full of the Apple's energy, while "Soroya" is a moody ballad. "Stomping at the Savoy" becomes more like "Slinking at the Savoy" in Francois's fresh conception.

This is original, exciting, well-crafted music; it will definitely challenge those used to swimming in the mainstream, but the rewards of listening are many.

~ Dr. Judith Schlesinger

Track Listing: La Mer, Red Moon, Apollo 13, Soraya, Jazz Married, Taking Off, Sailing Through the Clouds, New-York Silly, Elle Aime, Stompin' at the Savoy

Personnel: Francois Moutin (acoustic upright bass, composer), Louis Moutin (drums, composer), Baptiste Trotignon (piano), Rick Margitza (tenor and soprano sax)

Style: Modern Jazz/Free Improvisation

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