

MOUTIN REUNION QUARTET

"Red Moon"

Sunnyside

The brothers Moutin—Francois on bass and Louis on drums—bracket their new quartet release with a pair of familiar tunes cast in a new light: First, an abstract duet arrangement of "La Mer (Beyond The Sea)," marked by skittish lines, swift exchanges and percussive textures; last, an unusually slow and soulful take on "Stompin' at The Savoy." If you lose track of a melody at times, no matter. The band's transcendent musical rapport offers ample compensation.

The tunes that fall in between the standards are all original pieces, and they range from the album's knotty and angular title theme, with its allusions to Thelonious Monk-like harmonic designs and Latin jazz rhythmic cadences, to the haunting ballad "Soraya," a splendid showcase for pianist Baptiste Trotignon and saxophonist

(and recent band recruit) Rick Margitza.

Seasoned rhythm section-mates, the brothers clearly view this ensemble as an opportunity to compose and play jazz that is at once accessible and adventurous, intimate and expansive. They take turns contributing pieces, alternately introducing atmospheric balladry ("Sailing Through the Clouds") and harmonically torqued modal excursions ("Taking Off"). For all the mood shifts, though, there are of plenty of common denominators, beginning with Francois's unfailingly resonant tone and Louis' flair for balancing unfussy swing with clustered accents. The addition of Margitza is a big plus as well, since he wields both tenor and soprano saxes here with muscularity and grace.

— Mike Joyce

Appearing Thursday at the Kennedy Center. ■ To hear a free Sound Bite from Moutin Reunion Quartet, call Post-Haste at 202-334-9000 and press 8124. (Prince William residents, call 703-690-4110.)