


Something Like Now

Moutin Reunion Quartet | Nocturne

By John Kelman

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When twin brothers François and Louis Moutin brought their Moutin Reunion Quartet to this year's [Ottawa International Jazz Festival](#), it was one of those surprise performances that created an immediate buzz amongst festival-goers. The intensely powerful quartet played with the kind of total engagement that grabbed the audience from the first note. While most people didn't know who the Moutin Reunion Quartet was walking into the show, it's a sure bet that they'll be remembering them for a long time to come.

The quartet's performance—which also featured newcomer/pianist Pierre de Bethmann and tenor saxophonist Rick Margitza (a Miles Davis alumnus who moved to Paris a couple of years back and has been with the group since their second release, '04's *Red Moon*)—focused almost exclusively on new material from *Something Like Now*, once again a showcase for drummer Louis and bassist François' strong contemporary writing and the kind of simpatico interaction and uncanny intuition between them that makes indisputable the argument for twins sharing a special connection.

While the Moutin Reunion Quartet is an all-acoustic affair—with the exception of the occasional Fender Rhodes work by Bethmann—the influence of Jaco-era Weather Report is strong, in particular the complex detailing of Wayne Shorter's best writing for that group. And yet, the execution is so effortless and the grooves so unassailable that the elaborate foundations are truly invisible until you pay close attention. And, despite the inherent challenge of the material, there's also room for the kind of interpretive spontaneity that makes for an invigorating listen throughout.

Louis' paradoxically-named modal burner "Take It Easy" finds the brothers lighting a fire beneath Margitza's explosive solo, but they also realize that it's necessary to pace an album, doing so with François' gentle ballad, "Surrendering," an evocative vehicle for the tender side of Margitza and Bethmann—whose accompaniment is sparse but wonderfully supportive. As in performance, the brothers deliver a bass/drums duet, in this case "Bird's Medley," cleverly piecing together a number of Charlie Parker themes that finishes off with "Donna Lee"—and is an impressive alternative to the late electric bassist Jaco Pastorius' duet of the same piece with percussionist Don Alias, from his '76 self-titled debut album.

What distinguishes the music of the Moutin Reunion Quartet is how it can be tightly arranged and yet completely opened at the same time. Louis' funky album closer, "Touch and Go," may revolve around strict form, but the group can seamlessly shift gears—sometimes begging the question whether it's spontaneous or prearranged—preventing them from ever being predictable. And while formidable chops abound, none of the players demonstrate any superfluous excess. Every well-constructed solo works as both self-contained entity and part of a greater collective.

With consistently outstanding playing, creative writing, and unabashed interplay, *Something Like Now* demonstrates the Moutin Reunion Quartet's clear evolution since *Red Moon*. It deserves the kind of exposure that this, their first album with major US distribution by WEA, will hopefully bring.

Visit [Moutin Reunion Quartet](#) on the web.




Track Listing: Something Like Now - Part 1; Something Like Now - Part 2; Bird's Medley; Take It Easy; Surrendering; M.R.C.; Tomcat; Echoing; Bottom Line - Part 1; Bottom Line - Part 2; Touch and Go.

Personnel: François Moutin: acoustic upright bass, composition; Louis Moutin: drums, composition; Pierre de Bethmann: piano, fender rhodes; Rick Margitza: tenor saxophone.

Style: Mainstream/Bop/Hard Bop/Cool

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When not writing feverishly for AAJ, John Kelman contributes to the Canadian magazines Muzik Etc. and The Jazz Report. More about John...