

JAZZ IMPROV **FREE**

Live Performance Reviews

Moutin Reunion Quartet

Live at Jazz Standard
September 2005

By Gilles Laheurte

Any chance to see/hear the Moutin Reunion Quartet in New York City is precious. To this writer, this powerful group should always be on everyone's priority list when they are in town, especially since the city's jazz community does not have frequent opportunities to see this wonderful exuberant quartet "live" often. With François in NY and Louis in Paris, their several "reunions" since 1999 have always been widely praised for their incredible dynamics and interplay. With the incisive Rick Margitza on saxophones and with brilliant new pianist Pierre de Bethmann providing a solid melodic support for the group's many inventive directions, it was a splendid way to end their 2005 North American tour (after Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC), and a party celebrating their new third CD release *Something Like Now*.

The evening started with no fanfare on a furiously fast tempo piece, "MRC," and was sizzling instantly: Lots of notes, lots of waves, lots of energy and lots of clever phrases. When the pianist quietly sat out, the trio format gave Margitza a field wide open for atonal developments reminiscent of Coltrane. Ebullient energies were released through a series of colorful polyphonic choruses on a bed of blistering drums and fast descending bass chords and counterpoints (mostly on the upper register of the 4th string)—François' first virtuoso tour de force of the evening.

"Echoing" featured a long, slow, introverted bass solo, showing a soul totally absorbed in his deep inner private world, gliding over the entire length of the fingerboard—a total contrast with the first piece. A very moody piece, it enabled the audience to appreciate De Bethmann's subtle mix of left hand chords / right hand melodic patterns, and Margitza's soft, poetic warped notes dissipating in half blown clusters, closing in great tender beauty.

Both dropped out to make way for a splendid duo piece between the two brothers, showing their profound empathy and great sense of humor over a Bird medley ("Confirmation, Donna Lee and Ornithology"). Like two young cubs "challenging" each other (Louis using only his fingers and palms between snare, toms and occasional cymbals), their fraternal interaction was great fun to watch: staring at each other's sparkling eyes, obviously enjoying their bold complicity, their

private joyful game showed a happy communion between two loving souls. "I told you he's great!" said François of his brother. The fourth piece ("Take it Easy") featured an elegant solo piano intro made of smooth long phrases, and an exciting fiery duo between tenor sax and drums with shifting modes and openly Coltrane's overtones (polyrhythmic and polyphonic), bringing the group to a splashing crescendo finale.

Although plagued by some sound problems that the club had some difficulties to resolve, the second set was just as vigorous and colorful, at times funky and "Blue Note" like ("Tomcat"), at times mildly middle-eastern and exotic, at times pensive and mellow not unlike some 20th century "classical" chamber music of Poulenc and Ibert ("Surrendering"), all in subtle shades full of intense emotions. Although each musician was given ample time to shine—particularly during "Surrendering," which included a delicate introduction by Bethmann and Margitza's masterful control of soft polyphonic explorations in ending the piece—it seemed to give more focus to the brothers' extraordinarily inventive duo interplay, especially in the second ("Africa") and the concluding piece ("Something like Now"). Each time, both pianist and saxophonist watched attentively, a radiant smile of appreciation on their faces, marveling at the twins' buoyant bursts of energy.

With the incredible rapport that shines between the four of them, this quartet revealed a magnetic unified vision of its highly original compositions. Catch them next time they are in town. You'll be glad you did!

Keith Jarrett

Live at Carnegie Hall
September 26, 2005

By Larry Gelb

In Keith Jarrett's liner notes for his recent recording *Radiance*, he says, "I've taken you places before and I'm not aiming to disappoint." How fortunate, then, for an audience to fill Carnegie Hall and be so willing to go with him on the musical journey of September 26, his solo concert.

For the first twenty minutes, he seemed to be stating that if we have no limitations, we must invent some in order to transcend them. There must be a jumping off point.

Musically, this consisted of a complete keyboard exploration of a dissonant nature. Some hint of Charles Ives was very appropriate for the landscape of the recent American consciousness—with the dynamics surging into triple forte hurricanes. This gave way to a