

## JAZZ REVIEW

## France's Moutin twins double the pleasure

The rhythm team returns to the Jazz Bakery fronting a venturesome ensemble.

By DON HECKMAN  
*Special to The Times*

Twins are a jazz rarity. But the novelty that Francois and Louis Moutin are twin brothers fades into the area of intriguing background information after they begin to play. And their per-

formance at the Jazz Bakery on Thursday night had less to do with their fraternal identity than it did with the quality of their music.

Two years ago, the Moutins startled Southland jazz listeners with their capacity to match the free-flying improvisations of pianist Martial Solal during his run at the Bakery. This time out, they have arrived with their own ensemble, which also features tenor saxophonist Rick Margitza and pianist Pierre de Bethmann.

It was apparent, from the

opening phrases of "M.R.C." (a whimsical title for a work structured over minor-key harmonies of the song "I Got Rhythm" — i.e., minor rhythm changes) that it was going to be an adventurous evening. Written by bassist Francois Moutin, the piece began with an arching figure doubled on bass and piano, with Margitza playing a disjunct melody filled with wide, leaping intervals as drummer Louis Moutin stirred up a caldron of simmering rhythm.

This was a pattern that surfaced frequently in other numbers, setting the stage for improvising from Margitza and De Bethmann that consistently skirted the edges of the jazz avant-garde. But no matter how complex the musical interchanges — and there were times when they were very complex indeed — the constant feeling of musical togetherness, of players

deeply in touch with each other, brought everything vividly to life.

That contact was energized by the symbiotic linkage between the two brothers, by their sense of rhythmic flow, by improvisational ideas germinated and fulfilled together. On a duet version of "La Vie en Rose," for example, they began with an utterly deconstructed view of the familiar song, gradually pulling its pieces back into something resembling coherence but very different from anything that Edith Piaf might have imagined.

Like all siblings, the Moutins undoubtedly endured (and endure) periods of rivalry and competition. But, at 44, they have transformed their brotherly connection into an extraordinary and admirable creative partnership.

They continue at the Jazz Bakery with shows at 8 and 9:30 tonight. Admission is \$25.