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NOTES FROM THE APPLE

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The Moutin Reunion Quartet performs at Jazz Standard

There was excitement in the air at the Jazz Standard at the thought of hearing the French Moutin twin brothers! The band consists of François Moutin, bass; Louis Moutin, drums; Pierre de Bethmann, piano; and Rick Margitza, tenor sax. On the tail end of their American tour to celebrate their new CD, "*Something like Now*," the musicians were relaxed and played with extreme precision.

The brothers composed all of the music that they played that evening. Despite the lack of a synthesizer (which was used in conjunction with a piano on the Moutin Reunion CD), the pianist was able to recreate the essence of the music on the CD.

The first tune of the set was "Tomcat," which started as a groove, and quickly built up to a very hip tenor sax solo. Drums and piano kept a syncopated rhythm going underneath the one American in the group, saxophonist Rick Margitza. Pierre de Bethmann is an accomplished pianist and played fluidly, with fingers flying.

On the second piece, "Africa," one could really start to notice the interplay connecting bass and drums. François's virtuosity on his bass was evident in his solo at the beginning of the tune, and intuitively Louis gradually increased his involvement on his drumming until the phrases were amazingly synchronized.

The angular lines and unusual chord combinations of this music led the pianist into a solo that veered from swing to polyrhythms, and once again Louis Moutin was able to maintain the phrase endings with Pierre. Margitza topped the tune off by playing outside the tonality on tenor sax.

At this point, it was refreshing to hear de Bethmann play a piece called "Surrendering" quietly on the grand piano. This tune is a beautiful ballad that is also featured on the CD. Pierre played eighth-note lines in his right hand, with pretty harmonies played by his left. After awhile, Margitza took over, and on cue the band dropped out. A beautiful soft tone on tenor led to overtones, and he was able to create his own harmonies on the sax.

"Touch and Go," the closer of the set, was a fusion rock piece. Once again the rhythm section was really tight, playing phrases together behind the piano solo, and working the room with increasing dynamics. The crowd responded with a huge applause, and the Moutin Reunion Quartet finished the set exhausted but upbeat. This is a very exciting group, and I recommend readers to keep an eye out for these musicians.

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