

Hot Club of Detroit – Junction

Mack Avenue MAC 1067, 1 hour [8/14/12]

Hot Club personnel: Evan Perri – guitar; Julien Labro – accordion; Paul Brady – guitar; Jon Irabagon & Andrew Bishop – sax & flute; Shawn Conley, bass



This is the fourth CD for Mack Avenue by Detroit's entry into the many gypsy jazz ensembles around the world. They have retained their original lineup of reeds, two guitars, accordion and acoustic bass. They have never added drums, as some gypsy jazz groups have done. For the first time on this new CD, they have a vocalist on three of the 13 tracks, and she is French singer Cyrille Aimé, who just happens to be a native of Django's own former hometown in France and a third-place winner in the Thelonious Monk International Vocal Competition of last year. No other gypsy jazz group can claim that!

Like many gypsy jazz groups, the band tries to honor the amazing legacy of Django Reinhardt but also brings in influences of Pat Metheny, Ornette Coleman, and even the rock band

Phish – would you believe. It wants to be a versatile modern jazz group. For this recording session the band had to make some changes in personnel: The group's original saxist had to step aside due to family obligations and their bassist, Andrew Kratzat, was seriously injured in an auto accident and is now recovering.

A couple movie tie-ins are seen in the CD: The opening "Goodbye Mr. Anderson," by reed player Jon Irabagon, refers to The Matrix, and the French-style waltz "Midnight in Detroit" is a reference to the recent Woody Allen film Midnight in Paris. Both "Chutzpah" and "Puck Bunny" have sections of strangely atonal chaos which sound like the band wanted to switch into loft jazz mode for a bit (they claim inspiration from John Zorn), and the closing track of "Rift" gets into a Western Swing mode, opening with what almost sounds like the bluegrass music for Bonnie & Clyde. "Goodbye Mr. Shearing" is a calm and serious tune in honor of the late pianist, who started out on the accordion. Accordionist Labro wrote that, as well as "Django Mort," in which he was inspired by a Jean Cocteau poem which was read at Django's funeral. Aimée sings the French text and Labro thought since Django was a jazz musician, why not have a musical procession as in New Orleans, so that became part of the tune. Ornette Coleman's lovely "Lonely Woman" is another stellar vocal track, with Aimée singing Margo Guryan's lyrics to it. Guitarist Brady observes that if Django were alive today he wouldn't be playing the same way he always did, so the HCOD is paying tribute to him by pursuing their own ideas.

TrackList:

Goodby Mr. Anderson, Song for Gabriel, La Foule, Hey!, Chutzpah, Mess Gitane, Django Mort, Junction, Midnight in Detroit, Lonely Woman, Goddby Mr. Shearing, Puck Bunny, Rift