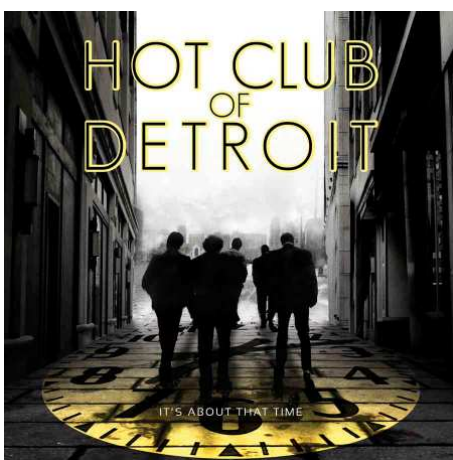


It's About That Time Hot Club of Detroit

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Review by Ken Dryden



While the Hot Club of Detroit has been influenced by the gypsy jazz of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France with Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli, this quintet is a bit different in its makeup, with guitarist Evan Perri, accordionist Julien Labro, multi-reed player Carl Cafagna, rhythm guitarist Paul Brady, and bassist Andrew Kratzat. Earlier CDs focused primarily on works either written or performed by Reinhardt and Grappelli, though this time around, their musical scope is thrown wide open.

Reinhardt's "Heavy Artillerie," which blends intricate bop on electric guitar with its swing roots, is combined in medley with the late fusion keyboardist Joe Zawinul's funky "It's About That Time." Kratzat introduces the snappy, swinging rendition of Charles Mingus' "Nostalgia in Times Square," highlighted by Perri's intricate acoustic

guitar and Cafagna's testifying tenor sax, signifying a jazz revival -- no tent required. Classical music has been previously explored by the band, and theirs is a majestic arrangement of Frédéric Chopin's "Tristesse E Major Etude" Labro's elegant bandoneón, and Perri's intimate guitar, with Cafagna adding a bittersweet clarinet at its close. The furious bop vehicle "On the Steps" is based on the chord changes to Pat Martino's "On the Stairs," featuring Perri's pulsing electric guitar and Cafagna's robust tenor over the percolating gypsy rhythm section, with Labro adding a compelling solo on accordion. The band also contributed several fine originals. Perri penned the relaxing "Patio Swing," suggesting a lazy summer day, along with the surging "For Stéphane" in honor of guitarist Stéphane Wrembel (a young Frenchman whose diverse interests include gypsy jazz, among many forms of music). "Papillion" is a charming ballad co-written by Labro and Kratzat, with a nostalgic, bittersweet air, while Cafagna's "Restless Twilights" proves to be a catchy bossa nova.

Hot Club of Detroit's interest in continuing to expand their musical horizons makes each new release a highly anticipated event.