



MM Circle (Canada) - 2002 - "Physics of Light"
(35 min, "Unicorn")



Preamble.

MM Circle is a new project led by Martin Maheux, the drummer for the well-known Canadian band Spaced Out. "Physics of Light" is an all-instrumental concept album, and it's clear that the destination of it is the expression of various aspects of the nature of light by dint of music.

The Album.

To my surprise, the music presented on "Physics of Light" has absolutely nothing in common with that of Spaced Out. Although the genre, chosen by Martin, is nothing else but Jazz-Fusion, the contents of the debut MM Circle album are highly original. Musically however, they're not of a unified stylistics. Indeed, the physics of light (not to mention the quantum mechanics) is certainly not uniform, so I wonder to myself - why did I write this here? (Well, all we know that the written word remains. Nevertheless, I see that there are two unnecessary sentences in this review already. No, three! So I think I must stop myself now and sorry for presenting here the physics of twaddle.) Back to "Physics of Light", this highly complex 'science' turned out to be very interesting, which, though, becomes more and more obvious with every successive listen. Down to Earth, four out of the seven compositions on the album are about a real Jazz-Fusion, i.e. the confluence of Jazz (Jazz-Rock in this case) and Symphonic Progressive. These are: Red Shift, Spectrum Walk, Traveling Through Vacuum, and Prism Suite (1, 2, 4, & 6). Unique, intricate, eclectic, contrasting, magic, hypnotic, and (even) dramatic - all these words are actually a very appropriate set of prefixes that should stand before a genre definition of the said four compositions, as well as the album's closing track, which I'll describe a bit later. Varied, highly inventive and intricate interplay between passages and solos of piano and synthesizers, solos of bass and trumpet and passages of violin, all of which flow to the accompaniment of a very diverse and expressive drumming, are the general characteristics of the arrangements that are featured on the album. Unlike any others, Polychromatic and Radiation (3 & 5) are such 'categories' of "Physics of Light" that are distinguished by a high turbulence of most of the elements that they consist of. In other words, both of the said pieces are the only tracks on the album where the number of improvisations exceeds that of the composed solos. No violins are heard on any of these compositions, and the parts of trumpet, piano, and bass, along with those of drums, are wonderfully of a jazzy, eclectic,

and, at the same time, hypnotic character - especially those on Polychromatic. Apart from the parts of instruments, listed in the previous sentence, Radiation features also the 'flying' solos of synthesizer. Surprisingly, the album's closing track, Light Waves (7), was performed without Martin, as there are neither drums nor any other percussion instruments on it. Like all four of the tracks that I've described first, overall, this piece also consists of the mixed, jazzy and symphonic, musical textures, though the latter of them are here really bright. Those of you who have listened to this album already, know that, unlike the lightitself, Light Waves move slowly. Furthermore, it turned out to be that not only magic, but also emotional aspects - dramatic in this case - reside them. Great!

Summary. Martin Maheux is a very talented composer, arranger, and musician. And what is more, he is one of only a few of those Jazz-related performers who are able not only to animate the soul (or the spirit) of this music, but also to express through it such emotions that are more than merely familiar to anyone of us. In that way, I am sure that those who are exclusively into Jazz-Fusion won't limit the potential audience of the "Physics of Light" album. Most of the Art-Rock lovers should find this album brilliant as well. IMHO, the release of the debut MM Circle album is one of the most important events that happened in the new millennium within the framework of the Jazz-Fusion genre, to say the least.

Média: internet

Source: Progressor

Adresse: <http://www.progressor.net>

Sujet: Critique d'album « Physics of Light » MMcircle

Chroniqueur: Vitaly Menshikov

Date: 30 décembre 2002

Sea of Tranquility



Evidently, everyone gets stripes in the Martin Maheux Circle: every player's name is printed on the album cover, and the bouncy mix and glossy production values leave nobody out in the cold. The production on *Physics of Light* is lively *very* lively and leader Maheux's drums & cymbals rest in the foreground and round starkly & crisply.

Jean-Francois Gagnon's trumpet bursts to life on the overture that is "Red Shift," as gurus Hassell & Isham look on. Pianist Guy Dubuc's ethereal synth noises help elevate the overall mood into an ephemerally euphoric state like the buzzy synth patch that snakes out a medieval melody on "Spectrum Walk" and Frédéric Alarie's upright bass sounds ominously robust. This is jazz's bubbling cider, and what's more is that it rocks nearly as much as it grooves. The *Physics* portion may well be the music, while the players themselves comprise the *Light*. Dubuc's ivories dance through "Polychromatic" as if he conducts a small-scale ballet alongside the percussion rattles. "Traveling Through Vacuum" introduces the violin talent of Rachel Duperreault; she sets a phantasmally somber tone that intensifies with Maheux's salve if this album gets out to the public jazz masses, Martin's session calendar could be akin to a gigantic beanstalk. Despite cymballic pings pelting the mix like hail, they don't clash with the agile snare notes or the overdose ride the most respected drummers aren't just those who can keep odd times, but those who exact *control*.

When the music school graduate slams into an insane barrage before the violin coda, only then does the camouflaged crescendo become apparent. "Radiation Pulse" takes the scheme for a different spin with a spacey sequence programmed by Maheux, that transposes up or down several steps. Superb bass & piano solos preempt a shrieking trumpet run before the tune returns back to the pulsating sequence, with dashes of piano notes accenting the prelude to a cataclysmic resolution that resembles a prison breakout. The legato trumpet melody of "Prism Suite" is chorus-effected to produce a lush, orchestra-like quality that drapes itself across the undulating bass line. "Light Waves" closes this production with a somnolent air extracted by isolated notes & gentle chords on piano, and a long, acrobatic howl case by Alarie.

This is jazz, people, as opposed to jazz-fusion. There are rubies and emeralds, and then there are diamonds. What this album appears to be through your eyescope is up to you, but if you're familiar with Martin's main act, Spaced Out and if you're already a fan then the *Physics of Light* is an album we like to refer to as an "owner."

Média: internet

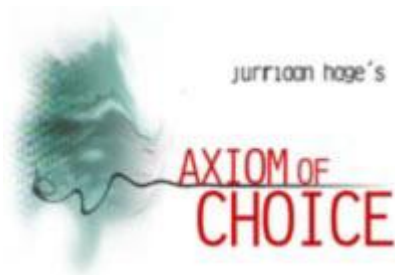
Source: Sea of tranquility

Adresse: <http://www.seaoftranquility.org>

Sujet: Critique d'album « Physics of Light » MMcircle

Chroniqueur: Elias Granillo

Date: 30 novembre 2003



Summary

The drummer of Spaced Out on his own. Well not his own really since he has some partners in science here. On the other hand, the artwork first makes you think this is just Maheux, but later you spot the fact that following his name is the word Circle.

The music

On Red Shift my first thoughts go to Jon Hassell, later I am tended more to think of After Crying. The sound wanders between classical and jazz, but is more of the latter. Do not think this is a lame jazz album though, because it is fresh, light and varied. As you might expect, the drums figure on the foreground with usually light and fast playing. The melody however is also important enough, and I was never bored. Regarding to sound, the bass has a low thrum and the drum sound is very open. To make the music more telling the song also features some atmosphere making violin. Spectrum Walk has gurgling electronics, nice loops, a sort of electronic music, fresh and light. The bass moans, the drums are light footed. Polychromatic is similar to the first track. Traveling Through Vacuum is sad with its opening in violin. The piano is jazzy, the keys are soft in the background, drums are fast and light on the fore. Radiation Pulse again features dark keyboards and the trumpet is real jazzy. Prism Suite is similar to recent solo work by Bruford and or Levin, Light Waves is the longest track on the album. A fretless bass solo, spare piano, dark keyboards and a melodic approach give this mini album the right conclusion.

Conclusion

A very enjoyable album of fresh light jazzy prog. Not too much meandering going on, there is plenty of likable melodies and the playing is fresh and light, with plenty of sad violin and Hasselllike trumpet playing. The keyboards are often quite dark. A good combination.

Média: internet

Source: Axiom of choice

Adresse: <http://www.cs.uu.nl/people/jur/progrock.html>

Sujet: Critique d'album « Physics of Light » MMcircle

Chroniqueur: Jurriaan Hage

Date: mars 2003



Martin Maheux Circle - Physics of Light

Canadian drummer, Martin Maheux, is perhaps better known for his performances with the jazz-prog band Spaced Out which has appeared at the legendary Nearfest. As an outlet for his own compositions, he decided to create MM Circle and targeted four other musicians to accompany him on his project.

So, Physics Of Light is Martin's first solo album (he is currently working on his next) and a treat for lovers of contemporary jazz mixing sounds of more traditional jazz instrumentation (double bass, piano, trumpet, drums) with modern keyboard and violin. The seven tracks, all innovatively titled in the physics of light theme, have a distinctive jazz style; some tracks and passages going down an 'experimental' route, yet this 'experimentation' is along the lines of improv and the main theme is rarely far away. The use of modern keyboards and violin lends a prog 'feel' on many an occasion and elements of Gong, Hatfield And the North and even Jean Michel Jarre are determinable especially if one substitutes in one's mind, say, a guitar for the trumpet. Musicianship is excellent and the compositions are clever without touching on the pretentious.

This is an album to be listened to in subdued light whether alone on in intimate company. So, if you are a 'grown up' and looking for intellectually stimulating music, look no further.

Martin mentions that he would like to compose a piece for violin quartet, but doesn't mention what style he has in mind. Will this feature on the next album I wonder?

Rating: 9 keys

Jem Jedrzejewsk

Média: internet

Source: Prog4you

Adresse: http://www.prog4you.com/cd-review/martin_maheux_circle.htm

Sujet: Critique d'album « Physics of Light » MMcircle

Chroniqueur: Jem Jedrzejewsk

Date:2003



Progressive jazz mayhem from drummer Maheux (Spaced Out) and friends (especially trumpeter Jean-Francois Gagnon) that adds up to some esth sie that stretches the boundaries of music and the boundaries of the imagination. At times it's like a more sedate, more melodic Bitches Brew, at other times it's a pleasurable nighttime drive and at still others it's the gnawing, nagging thought that won't leave you alone as you pace back and forth at the edge of sleep. But the less one says about this outing, the better, for it would be wrong to place boundaries on this tantalizing, innovative work. Try "Polychromatic," "Traveling Through Vacuum," and "Red Shift" first, then let the others slowly seep their way into your heart.

Score: ★★★★★

M dia: internet

Source: Ytsejam

Adresse:

www.ytsejam.com/modules.php?name=Reviews&rop=showcontent&id=263

Sujet: Critique d'album « Physics of Light » MMcircle

Chroniqueur: Jedd Beaudoin

Date: 02 mars 2003