

Dorado Schmitt
Quintette
feat. Kristian Jørgensen

Clair de Lune

Stunt Records



Stunt Records CD

STUCD 18132



In the months leading up to his passing in 1953, the ground-breaking Roma and jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt feared that he would soon be forgotten and end up as an overlooked footnote in music history. Of course, the swinging “jazz manouche” lives and breathes forever through the music he developed and created. Today, no one has done more to keep the tradition alive and relevant than the dazzling Dorado Schmitt. Considered a godfather-like figure on the international gypsy-jazz scene, he continues to represent the art form at the highest level, often headlining festivals such as the “Django Festival” at New York’s Carnegie Hall.

The Jazz legend was born in St-Avold, Lorraine, in 1957. He grew up with traditional Roma music and started performing at the age of seven. He plays violin and guitar with equal enthusiasm, and is among the most notable heirs to the music of Django Reinhardt, Stephane Grappelli, and Le Quintette de Hot Club du France, both as a composer and instrumentalist. The torch has already been passed on to Dorado’s son, Amati, in accordance with tradition. With a crushing calm and self-confidence, Amati continues the tradition-bound music on a virtuosic level. As father and son, the violently swinging rhythm section from France has no equal.

After the acclaimed Stunt releases AMATI & DORADO SCHMITT: LIVE and SINTI DU MONDE, the group has recorded again, but not without tweaking the recipe. On the latest album, Dorado invited Danish jazz violinist Kristian Jørgensen to participate on a repertoire reflecting the tradition, with new songs by Dorado plus a number of the genre’s standards. Dorado is best in front of an audience, although in the studio his every demand can be, and is, met.

The recording took place in the Bruunske Pakhus in Fredericia, Denmark, with Jørgen Vad behind the mixing board. The acoustics, mood, and spirit of this place inspired them to record everything “straight-up,” and without “cheating” or clipping. This music deserves to be heard purely, as it exists, and as it is played for parties, weddings, and funerals, in the past and present.

Dorado Schmitt and his team are the real deal, and perhaps second only to the legend Django, himself.

Per Arnoldi created the atmospheric cover, inspired by clear moonlight, and named after the moody melody and title of the release: CLAIR DE LUNE.

Arnoldi has also contributed to the thoughtful liner-notes: THE REAL THING!

Art is communication is art.

A narration, the telling of a story, the delivery of a message, the conveying of an experience, passed on from sender to recipient. The way in which the story is told must be carefully articulated, revised, and perfected.

Excuses and obstacles neither enchant nor persuade, and while virtuosity can dazzle from afar, it’s often the most heartfelt and straightforward communication - as found in these tracks - that penetrates deeper.

Art is never simply captured artistry. Great art unites past, present, and future, as one can hear on this festive recording of Dorado Schmitt’s Quintet featuring Kristian Jørgensen. Grace, tragedy, loneliness, and love flow from the music, overcoming and acknowledging a rugged and dramatic past with the pain and sorrow of mid-European history.

The story of the Sinti has its own sound, and their drama becomes our drama, their infectious musical zest for life, ours, too. But the music on this recording largely lives in the festive, bountiful present, where generous melodiousness rains down upon us, here and now. And if this glorious life-affirming energy does not remind us that artistic statements are our only hope to carry us through chaos into the future, I’ve heard wrong.

Space travel and material technological advances are celebrated accomplishments by modern society, but the gentle glow that Clair de Lune throws over Dorado’s brave group of narrators is much more human. It’s a Mensch and his band of story tellers who remind us of what is most important.

Per Arnoldi

Dorado Schmitt: violin, sologuitar / Amati Schmitt: sologuitar / Franco Mehrstein: rhythm guitar / Esben Mylle Strandvig: rhythm guitar, arrangements / Gino Roman: bass / Kristian Jørgensen: violin.

Made in Italy / Night and Day / Only You / Clair de Lune / Them There Eyes / Danube / September Song / Swing for Wadi / Troublant Bolero / Tears / Shine.

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