

François Bourassa Quartet: Number 9

Released on Oct 27, 2017 on Effendi/Naxos worldwide



Greg Ritchie
drums

Guy Boisvert
double bass

François Bourassa
piano

André Leroux
sax, fl, clarinet

On Number 9, François Bourassa's ninth album of original music for his own band, the Montreal-born pianist and empathic colleagues allude to formative influences, serendipitous encounters and places from his past. That might suggest a highly reflective program, and the seven performances here certainly convey thoughtfulness. But the true focus of composer-improviser Bourassa and his ensemble, from beginning to end of the record, is in the moment, now.

Sensuous imagination supported by sterling technique, François here empowers reeds player André Leroux, bassist Guy Boisvert, drummer Greg Ritchie -- a cast he first assembled in 2002 -- to embark on an adventure-strewn, winding road that tours vistas and waysides of a collective mindscape, strikingly different at every go 'round, each listen. The music of Number 9 cycles from melodic lyricism to pure sonics, from a swinging basis to open space, from probing inquiry to fervent self-expression to satisfying resolutions, sometimes conclusive. There is finesse and passion, flintiness and warmth, formal structures and free association. Some of Number 9 is simply dreamy. Bourassa and company make these diversities all of one piece, aspects of an ensemble sensibility. The quartet covers a lot of ground from a complex of perspectives, new details unveiled with each turn of the ear. Return, repeat, replay, dig in, lay back. A world of music comes clear. (From the liner notes by Howard Mandel, 2017).



Bookings anglophone markets: Heidi Fleming, Famgroup | heidi@famgroup.ca | +1 514 844 7393
Booking francophone markets: Alain Bédard, Effendi | alain@effendirecords.com | +1 514 692 4950



Listen

Here is a private link to the album on soundcloud:
<https://soundcloud.com/famgroup-1/sets/number-9-francois-bourassa-quartet/s-VC8U8>

Video

“Carla und Karlheinz” live at Jazz en Rafale, March 2017. Click [here](#) to view.

International Press for previous albums & concerts

“A pianist and composer of high stature in his native Montreal, Mr. Bourassa favors avant-gardism of a liquid and often lyrical sort.” Nate Chinen, New York Times

“There’s a seriousness about this outstanding quartet’s music that comes, in part, from how damn hard they’ve worked to achieve such a high level of artistry. ... This features killer, passionate playing from everybody.” Glen Hall, Exclaim Magazine, Canada

“Une architecture musicale avec de beaux développements, d’étonnants changements de rythmes ... un pianist-compositeur complètement habité par sa musique ...suprend de bout en bout et sur tous les points.” Lionel Eskenazi, JazzMan, France

“...soliste de haut niveau, section rythmique impeccable, pianiste capable de transcender l’héritage jazzistique par la force de ses idées, de son jeu et de sa sensibilité.” Alain Brunet, La Presse, Canada

“They sound great as a unit, phrase firmly and make each note count while following the rigorous terrain that Bourassa has constructed.” Mike Hobart, Financial Times, UK

“Bourassa has worked with his band mates for years and it showed.” Russell Corbett, Bebop Spoken Here, UK

“... (une) disque qui invite, plage après plage, à guetter les prochaines apparitions européennes de cette excellente formation.” Vincent Cotro, Jazz Magazine, France

“A highly impressive performance of powerful yet fluidly lyrical musical straddling post-bop, free improvisation and contemporary classical music.” Matthew Wright, London Jazz News

“Bourassa’s compositions are hard to pin down... the effect is neither cold nor clinical, but rather warm and inviting...” Adam Kinner, The Gazette, Montreal

Awards

Juno Award 2002

Félix Award 2005

Oscar Peterson Prize of the Montréal International Jazz Festival 2007

Opus Awards 2002, 2004 (several), 2008

Plus numerous citations in other projects

Biography of François Bourassa

François Bourassa was born in Montreal on September 29, 1959. Initially inspired to play piano by his mother's example, he put the instrument aside for five years in favor of the guitar. "I came back to the piano at 17 and started to write tunes. Return to Forever was my transition point to jazz, after which I discovered Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans, Coltrane and Miles." Now a committed if self-taught improviser, Bourassa studied composition at McGill, where he earned his college degree.

In 1983, Bourassa, bassist Guy Boisvert and drummer Yves Boisvert formed the François Bourassa Trio, an ensemble that won the prestigious Montreal Jazz Festival new talent competition in 1985. The festival prize led to hometown gigs, touring throughout Canada and a debut album *Reflet 1* in 1986 that underscored the band's roots in the music of Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner and Wayne Shorter. Bourassa then returned to studies at Boston's New England Conservatory, where he focused on improvisation with George Russell and Fred Hersch, and earned a Master's degree. At the same time, the Trio continued to evolve, building an international following with initial appearances in Europe (1988), the United States (1992) and Asia (1993), and recording its second album, *Jeune Vieux Jeune* in 1992.

Echo, from 1996, gave a major boost to Bourassa's international profile. It also marked the end of the Bourassa Trio era, as the ensemble soon expanded to include another prominent member of the Montreal jazz community, saxophonist and flutist André Leroux. Initially billed as the François Bourassa Trio + André Leroux, their initial recording *Cactus* (1998) revealed a new power and emotional range that had blossomed by the time the JUNO award-winning *Live* was recorded at Toronto's Top of the Senator in 2001.

More change was forthcoming. The 2002 recording *Indefinite Time* now identified the band as the François Bourassa Quartet, with Yves Boisvert replaced by Greg Ritchie and Aboulaye Koné, a percussionist from the Ivory Coast, adding new colors on the track "Boubacar." The composition is dedicated to Malian musician Boubacar Traoré, who has inspired Bourassa to include more of an African color in his recent work. The djembe and talking drums of Koné were added again on the Quartet's next recording, *Rasstones* (2007), with Ritchie and Phillippe Melanson playing drums on different tracks.

His album *Idiosyncrasie* (2011) displays new levels of mystery, whimsy and passion, with more angles and space in its sound and an ever-deepening telepathy among its members. It explores the influences of German and Austrian composers of the 20th century. "Number 9" is a follow up which delves even deeper into the quart's dynamics. After "Number 9", his tenth album which will be a solo record. Meanwhile, he travels the world with his various projects (*En Trois Couleurs*, *Hommage à Dave Brubeck*, *Jeanne Rochette* etc.) - China, the US, Europe... and across Canada.

Apart from Juno nominations, several of François Bourassa's albums have won or have been nominated for Felix and Opus awards. In addition, he received the 2007 Oscar Peterson Award of the Montreal International Jazz Festival for his contribution to Canadian Jazz.

Bookings anglophone markets: Heidi Fleming, Famgroup | heidi@famorup.ca | +1 514 844 7393

Booking francophone markets: Alain Bédard, Effendi | alain@effendirecords.com | +1 514 692 4950