

## Healing Unit

### Repeat Please!

LFDS Records LFDS 007

An infectious FreeBop session, mostly dedicated to pianist/vibraphonist Paul Wacrenier's eight-part Repeat Please suite, it shows these five young veterans of the French scene adroitly extending their approach by injecting a bit of South African Kwela into the program. This admixture is most prominent on "Full Moon Fanfare" and the concluding "La Chanson d'Albert", the latter of which was composed by alto saxophonist Arnaud Sacase.

The latter tune is a fitting session summation. It also references the New Thing by breaking up Hi Life inflections with high-pitched but controlled cacophony via the saxophonist's tongue-stopped slurs, Xavier Bornens' plunger trumpet blats and trundling piano chords. However it's the free-form jumps of "Full Moon Fanfare" which signal a climax of the suite as capillary trumpet brays and curvaceous reed trills intermingle with equatorial keyboard runs to demonstrate the contrasting dynamics suggested and connections made during the program.

Suturing of these sounds with Soweto inferences is obvious as early as "Repeat Please", the suite's first amplifications. Here Wacrenier's sinewy vibe positions and parallel lines add sonic possibilities to execution of theme with its echoes of "Salt Peanuts". Buttressed by stropping strings from bassist Marco Quaresimin and positioned smacks from drummer Benoist Raffin the portrait is subtly colored with mallet shimmers, brass grace notes and saxophone slurs. And these musical surprises multiply as the sequences progress. As a pianist, Wacrenier confirms his light-fingered almost Swing era tasteful syncopation on "Too New or not Too New", but without ever losing his worldly rhythmic sense. While even more surprisingly, Sacase creates his pitch-jumping solo on "Blues for AEC" with a tone that's half Peter Brown-like wide intervals and half Eric Dolphy-like spirited dissonance.

Free spirited and funky, but without every going overboard in any direction, Healing Unit and its members confirm the promise they've shown on earlier performances.

—Ken Waxman

Track Listing: 1. Opening 2. Repeat Please 3. Blues for AEC 4. Clear Night Deep Fire 5. Decision 6. Full Moon Fanfare 7. Too New or not Too New 8. Outro 9. La Chanson d'Albert

Personnel: Xavier Bornens (trumpet); Arnaud Sacase (alto saxophone); Paul Wacrenier (piano, vibraphone); Marco Quaresimin (bass) and Benoist Raffin (drums)