

ACT

Emile Parisien Sextet

Louise

ACT 9943-2 (also on Vinyl)

Release date: 28. January 2022

"The best new thing that has happened in European jazz for a long time" (Le Monde), Emile Parisien has formed a top-flight American-European sextet for this album, his seventh as leader or co-leader on ACT. The band will be touring in 2022, the year which also marks the tenth anniversary of Parisien's first appearance on an ACT album.

The saxophonist developed his strong sense of direction in music remarkably early: he was 10 years old when the news reached his family in Cahors that a new music school would be opening up roughly 200 kilometres away in Marciac. The youngster told his parents that this was the school he wanted to go to as a boarder...and so, with their support and approval, off he went. And it was through the school and the festival in Marciac that he received mentorship from some of the greats of North American jazz: Wynton Marsalis (who appeared as a guest on the album *Sfumato Live*), Clark Terry, Bobby Hutcherson, Oscar Peterson...

The fact that three of the musicians in the sextet on "Louise or half of the band is American (Theo Croker (trumpet), Joe Martin (bass), and Nasheet Waits (drums) is important for Parisien: "It was time for me to return to the source that gave me the love for this music in the first place," he explains. The idea of a 'return to the source' is especially true of Parisien's choice to work alongside Theo Croker, the grandson of trumpeter Doc Cheatham (1905-97). Parisien describes their meeting on the "Jazz Animals" tour in 2018 as having been a 'super-rencontre', and a particularly strong musical connection and a personal friendship have developed since those meetings. On "Louise" Parisien has not only ensured that a huge emotional and stylistic range can be heard in Croker's trumpet-playing, but has also enjoyed matching and intertwining his own melodic voice with Croker's. Their interaction is something special, and provides some of the many joyous moments on this wide-ranging yet very coherent album. Parisien has also generously given Croker the chance to have last word on the album, with his solemnly evocative composition, "Prayer for Peace".

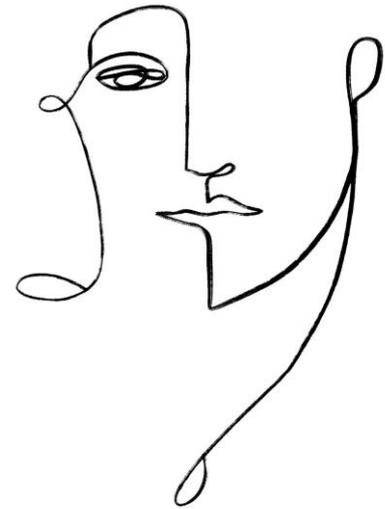
Drummer Nasheet Waits is a vivid and energising presence throughout the album, and especially in the third part of "Memento", the most substantial piece on "Louise", which Parisien dedicates to his mother. "I just love Nasheet's playing, he's unbelievable. It was a dream to play with him," says Parisien who first admired

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Theo Croker
Roberto Negro
Manu Codjia
Joe Martin
Nasheet Waits

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Waits' playing on record, before their paths started to cross at festivals. This is the first time they have worked together. Joe Martin is one of the first-call New York bassists; Parisien knows him from their time as fellow members of Yaron Herman's quartet.

Manu Codjia and Roberto Negro are two of Emile Parisien's very closest musical colleagues. "We have played in so many contexts, explored so much music together," says Parisien. Guitarist Codjia was one of the very first musicians whom he met when he first moved to Paris nearly two decades ago. "Manu has an amazing ability to be the 'glue' that holds a band together and creates a common sound." Codjia has contributed the composition "Jungle Jig", an energetic piece in which an ideal balance has been struck between chaos and order. Roberto Negro has also played with Parisien regularly as a duo, in *Sfumato* and other contexts. "European music, classical, jazz, Roberto plays them all so well! He's such a complete musician," says Parisien. Roberto Negro's composition "Il giorno della civetta" (civet) is elegantly paced and has a wonderfully natural flow.

The title track "Louise" is gentle, spacious and meditative. The title refers to the 'spider' sculptures of Louise Bourgeois. These sculptures have mostly been seen in public spaces, and that has caused Parisien to reflect on how confinement during lockdown has deprived us all of the joy of being out in the open. Bourgeois' sculptures are also very strongly connected to themes of motherhood, and to the metaphors of spinning, weaving, caring and protecting. Parisien's affection for and valuing of the unconditional love of mothers for their children is the emotional background to this evocative track, with its glorious solos from Theo Croker and Manu Codjia.

Two pieces bring to the fore European musicians from earlier generations who have been decisive influences on Parisien: "Jojo" is a happy reference to Joachim Kühn; the track is unmistakably, intentionally, and deeply 'Ornette-ish' in its inspiration. "Madagascar" by Weather Report recalls a time when Parisien played in The Syndicate, the band formed in 2007 to carry on Joe Zawinul's legacy and to perform his music.

"Louise" is a remarkable album in which ferocious energy contrasts and co-exists happily with a much softer side. Its subtleties and joys emerge the more one listens. As a result, "Louise" gives us the closest insight yet into the character and the creative individuality of one of Europe's leading jazz musicians.

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- 01 **Louise** (Emile Parisien)
- 02 **Madagascar** (Joe Zawinul)

Memento

- 03 **Part I** (Emile Parisien)
- 04 **Part II** (Emile Parisien)
- 05 **Part III** (Emile Parisien)

- 06 **Il giorno della civetta** (Roberto Negro)
- 07 **Jojo** (Emile Parisien)
- 08 **Jungle Jig** (Manu Codjia)
- 09 **Prayer 4 Peace** (Theo Croker)

Recorded by Mathieu Pion# at Studio Gil Evans de La Maison de la Culture, Amiens (France), June 2021
Mixed by Mathieu Pion in October 2021
Mastered by Klaus Scheuermann

Produced by Emile Parisien
Executive Producer: Andreas Brandis & Full Rhizome

Emile Parisien soprano saxophone
Theo Croker trumpet
Roberto Negro piano
Manu Codjia guitar
Joe Martin bass
Nasheet Waits drums

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