

# Spirit of Jazz

## United Colors of Méditerranée, Sirocco

‘Fusion’, ‘world-music’, all those terms usually describe the fanciful ideas that musicians devoid of artistic compass dream up as a way to make up for their lack of rooted purpose. Inventive and lost, they use their technical abilities to create a flimsy figment of shallow music. Not so here. Some of those excellent compositions “Bird’s Eye View” and “Countdown” are really enduring melodies. There is gusto and passion in spirited solos, reflexive but colourful passages.



Using all the possibilities of various musical traditions from North Africa, Spain and the Middle-East in a sober acoustic setting, this album possesses a rhythmic persistence and understated trance-like quality. Only the beat of “Silence After Blow Up” (and the dreadful remix) is on the heavy side and not as tasteful as the rest. The lead voice tends to be that of the excellent violinist Guillaume Dettmar but the album is powerfully served by the interventions of Jean-Jacques Taïb on clarinet and Jason Marsalis on marimba. Great rhythmic support by Bluteau, Haiouani and Draï who provide a colourful foundation. The clever intro to “Egyptian Dream” uses the intro to “Delilah”—while Jason Marsalis quotes “Softly as in a Morning Sunrise” in his solo—thus discreetly weaving jazz into the Eastern fabric of the music. This is not folk’s music but it’s not jazz either. It is a collective take on cultural traditions that have been filtered by a contemporary artistic vision. An enjoyable album that makes the most of its rhythmic zest. ‘Fusion’ but only in the best sense of the term.

Jean Szlamowicz (*Spirit of Jazz & Down Beat*)

**Tracks.** Count Down, Sahara, Silence After Blow Up, Parfum d’Orient, Bird’s Eyes View, Aramaïc Prayer, Egyptian Dream, Andalucia, This World is Getting Wrong, Constantinople, Andalucia Remix

**Musicians :** Guillaume Dettmar (vln), Brahim Haiouani (b), Philippe Draï (perc), Pierre-Henri Bluteau (g), Jean-Jacques Taïb (ts, cl, ss) + Jason Marsalis (marimba, perc), Jean-Pierre Smadja (oud)

« Sirocco » was Recorded in January 2018

[Label Ô Jazz/ Socadisc](#)