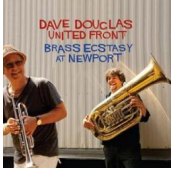


Dave Douglas – Brass Ecstasy at Newport (2011)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 08 September 2011 18:43 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 September 2014 13:52

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01 – *Spirit Moves* 02 – *Rava* 03 – *Fats* [play](#) 04 – *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* 05 –
United Front 06 – *Bowie* Personnel:
Dave Douglas – trumpet, Vincent Chancey - French horn, Luis Bonilla – trombone, Marcus
Rojas – tuba, Nasheet Waits – drums

The spirit of the old New Orleans marching band, in all its sturdy cheerfulness, dignity and melancholy, is revived on this delightful album. But it's not just an exercise in nostalgia. The new numbers have a dissonant edge that's entirely contemporary. And the four brass players, plus drummer Nasheet Waits, summon a variety of tone and texture that would have astonished those old-timers. ---Ivan Hewett, telegraph.co.uk

Brass bands, like wild animals are best viewed in their native habitats. Watching a lion on the savanna is a much different experience than seeing it caged in a zoo. Likewise, hearing Dave Douglas' Brass Ecstasy live is superior to any studio recording. Not that the band's *Spirit Moves* (Greenleaf, 2009) was a subpar Douglas recording; it's just that any band inspired by the trumpeter Lester Bowie and the New Orleans brass band tradition should be heard in public.

Recorded at the 2010 Newport Jazz Festival, United Front retains the original lineup of Brass Ecstasy, and the music sizzles from the nostalgic opener, "Spirit Moves," which acts as a processional, entering quietly as if the brass band was coming from down the street. Soon it's right there at the doorstep, and everyone is running to catch up with the parade.

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This unique lineup matches the marching sounds of trumpet, tuba, and trombone with of Nasheet Waits' full drum kit, while Vincent Chancey's French horn balances the outside parade with the inside chamber, and does so nicely. Waits is more than a timekeeper, he's the turbo engine, with Chancey providing the polishing agent to the sound. On "Rava," a dedication to Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava, Douglas unfolds the tune with a soulful introduction, before delivering some musical acrobatics over the ever churning harmonies of Chancey and tubaist Marcus Rojas. Trombonist Luis Bonilla then solos over Waits' pulse, chasing some mystical demon.

The band plays all Douglas' originals, except for Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," with Douglas' muted trumpet of Douglas a bit like 1957-era Miles Davis. When Rojas takes a solo, he blows his tuba by speaking/singing into his mouthpiece to the delight of the crowd. "Untied Front" crackles with energy, as does the closer, "Bowie," which mixes multiple styles into a tapestry of sound, skillfully woven into a party quilt. ---Mark Corroto, allaboutjazz.com

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