

Fusion REVIEWS

No Tongues Les Voies du Monde

Les Productions du Mouflon (55 mins)



'Voices of the world' speaking in a tricky language



This group of French avant-garde jazz improvisers are not always an easy listen, but there are rewards to be had if you persevere. Proceedings begin with short random vocal noises, perfectly mimicked by blasts of brass; eventually, after some abstract sonic kerfuffle and what sounds like expulsions of steam, a pulsing bass groove materialises out

of the organised chaos. Some of the more accessible passages of music on offer are slightly reminiscent of Tom Waits' soundtrack to *Night on Earth*, in the evocation of a city with its squalls of sound and rain-slashed sidewalks. Then, suddenly, there'll be some ghosts from the 1996 album of ethnographic recordings from which this record borrows its title) momentarily taking you into some remote tribe's homestead. But be warned: this 55-minute journey may seem longer than it actually is, given that some of the quarrelling sounds blasted at you have all the appeal of tinnitus. Having said that, a more traditional sense of

melody does appear, as if from behind a cloud, during the final number.

HOWARD MALE

TRACK TO TRY *Mamm Gozh*

Carmen Paris & Nabyla Maan Dos Medinas Blancas

Fol Musica (53 mins)



A tale of two medinas



The two white medinas of this album's title are Zaragoza and Fes, the home towns of established singer-songwriter Carmen Paris and

up-and-coming Nabyla Maan respectively. They are emblems for the whole enterprise, which is all about cross-cultural collaboration. The first track, 'Poema del Céfiro', is a setting of a poem by the Arab polymath Ibn Bâjja (also known by his Latinate name, Avempace), who was born in Zaragoza in 1075 and died in Fes in 1139. The second track, 'Zaragoza la Romana', is a Valencian *paso doble* first recorded by Carmen Paris in 2005 and now revamped, according to the liner notes, as a 'Moor and Christian' duet. Some of the tracks are sung in Arabic, and most of the accompanying instruments are quintessentially either Spanish or North African.



Turkwaz Nazar

Turkwaz (50 mins)



Soulful foursome on Balkan and Middle Eastern tour



I've been a fan of Canadian singer Brenna MacCrimmon for nearly two decades; back when she was a resident of Turkey, she featured on two great recordings on the Kalan label, *Ayde Mori* and *Karşılama*. Now she's a pivotal member of Toronto-based Turkwaz, a vocal quartet aptly describing itself as presenting 'music of the Middle East and Balkans in new and unexpected ways.' Whether in accompanied harmony, a *capella* on Bulgarian or Albanian numbers, or solo, the foursome – completed by Maryem Tollar, Sophia Grigoriadis and Jayne Brown, all with years of experience in award-winning folk ensembles – are celestial. Tracks range in origin from Syria to Macedonia by way of all

points in between, and include two strongly Sufic ones sung in Arabic by Tollar. Transitions between non-contiguous traditions are rendered seamless by four guest instrumentalists (especially Naghme Farahmand on Persian percussion) improvising flawlessly.

Turkwaz also drum while singing, and few will stay seated during 'They Call Me Hüseyin the Charmer'. Singling out a top track on a CD of such consistent quality is an invidious task, so there are honourable mentions for lead vocalists MacCrimmon on 'Tiren Kara Tiren' and Grigoriadis on 'Apano stin Triandafilia'. Liner notes, particularly in the lyric translations, are tokenistic, but the recording quality is excellent.

MARC DUBIN

TRACK TO TRY *Zaranil Mahbub (In the Garden I Saw the Beloved)*