

L'Échelle du temps-Yves Léveillé

On the Quebec jazz scene, pianist Yves Léveillé is without a doubt one of our finest stars. As you will easily notice with **L'Échelle du temps**, or surrounded by a string quartet, he still works wonders. A hybrid jazz, which can as well be found on a classical stage as on a jazz one, of course.

In the tradition of the Modern Jazz Quartet (a mixture of musical essences), Yves Léveillé offers you a gentle dive into a more than poetic universe. In eight tracks, the pianist and his accomplices Lizann Gervais (1st violin), Olivier Thouin (2nd violin), François Vallières (viola), Émile Girard-Charest (cello) and Étienne Lafrance (double bass), slip into an elegant and refined music.

The harmonic constructions evoke those master watchmakers whose precision is their art. But nothing is mechanical. Everything is played in the aesthetics, the counterpoint, the finesse of the play, as you will be able to note it by listening several times: *Couleur Grenade*, *Sans retour* or *Embrasure*. This soothed language, these little touches that the pianist sows throughout the tracks are so much happiness that leads us to a form of serenity.

L'Échelle du temps - an almost secret garden that is gently cultivated on canvases as different as each other, Yves Léveillé has, in our humble opinion, taken a new step in his career. Far from the miasma of Ludovico Einaudi, his light swing balanced by classical influences makes us hope for a Léveillé on the big stage of the Maison symphonique. For many music lovers, and not only jazz lovers, this would be a wonderful surprise and an opportunity to merge genres.

Never melancholic, "trippy" as the late Jacques Languirand would have said so well, this novelty is a perfect start to the summer season.

Christophe Rodriguez : SortieJazznight, 12 mai 2022

A mystery-adventure with piano and strings

Yves Léveillé is a composer and pianist from Québec; **L'Échelle du temps** is his ninth album with Effendi Records.

Like many of Yves' past albums, *L'échelle du temps* has a distinct instrumentation – piano with a string quartet, plus bass.

Translating the title as "time standard" is perfect: it's the opposite of all the many jazz-standards projects called *Standard Time*.

This album is an original mystery and an adventure.

My highlight is track two, "Couleur grenade".

A violin sets "Couleur grenade" in motion with a forceful jig rhythm, and the power of this arrangement would make North Shore Celtic Ensemble blush. Yves' piano doesn't enter until over two minutes in but then plays unaccompanied. The light touch of the keys, especially on the left-hand power chords, taps into something I've felt from both Chick Corea and Aaron Parks.

From that point of the album on, you get some waltzes ("Missive" and "Sans retour"), some soloing that could've come right off the Tangent stage ("Encodage 2.0"), and

something that could fit the newgrass / progressive chamber-folk world ("Une journée comme ça").

Étienne Lafrance plays several bass solos; "Une journée comme ça" has the most epic one. And the ensemble sound is at its most ambiguous and mysterious as the track list draws to an end – keeping me interested.

My spouse even approved it as rainy-day listening or D&D campaign music material of the highest quality. *L'échelle du temps* is among the heaviest new jazz albums I've enjoyed so far in 2022, and we're spoiled to be able to stream it on all platforms.

Will Chernoff May 3rd, 2022 (Rhythm Changes)

"Missive" opens with a piano solo into which the bass inserts its voice before emerging from the background to solo itself. The two instruments duet, with the piano leading before the rest of the strings, enter in sweeping style, creating harmonic contrast with the theme. "Encodage" opens with a lively, uplifting statement of intent – which then develops into a jazz polka-dot to and fro with rhythmic changes, solos and interludes that grasp the attention and keep the crazy rhythms alive. Fast fingers, contrasting full-throttle bowed lines, and polyphonics add interest and keep the listener enthralled across this song. At times, the strings intertwine and merge to blend and create lines that come together and, just as quickly, find their individuality again. Wonderful arranging and great to hear. The final section has a fast walking gait, and the track finishes with a wonderful descent... Third stream music, which I would say this is, contains some of the most beautiful coming together of classical and jazz traditions and arrangements. The music feels personal, full of character, unfettered, and wonderful in the true sense of the word.

Sammy Stein (England) March 2022- (Something else)

...For the first time, Yves Leveille has called upon a classical string quartet and bassist Etienne Lafrance for an album with the philosophical title "L'échelle du temps". The program of eight of his own compositions, proposed by the group's leader to his ensemble, is an excellent example of what Gürter Schuller called the "third current" stylistics. I'm sure Schuller would have appreciated the distinct jazz intonations accompanying the double bass solo in Encodage, and the subtle expression of the strings in Couleur grenade, as well as the precise piano lines of Yves Leveille himself throughout the program... It seems to me that *L'échelle du temps* has every chance of finding admirers in both the jazz and the academic "camp" of music lovers.

Léonid AUSKERN. (Russie) Mars 2022

This album — the title roughly translates as "the scale of time" — is a fine example of the way contemporary jazz has no rules about what belongs and what doesn't. Quebec pianist/composer Léveillé has worked comfortably with a wide variety of styles, and here he has given us a rewarding example of melodic and rhythmic music with piano, bass and

string quartet... The constantly evolving jazz world has embraced strings and much more, and this beautiful album is an example of the pointlessness of narrow definitions. Highly recommended. ★★★★★ out of five

Keith Black – Winnipeg Free Press

The delicate opening of the title track indicates that the strings will play a pivotal role: they articulate the lush melody while Léveillé is content to provide gentle chordal accompaniment—until he takes over with a graceful solo... Lafrance serves as a pivot point for the album's shifts between classical and jazz idioms. His subtle swing enlivens "Missive," a lovely piece played largely as a duo with the pianist, and on "Encodage 2.0" he provides an invigorating, jazz-inflected solo that leads Léveillé into his own plucky solo turn, this time with the strings in support. "Une Journée Comme ça" may be an even better example of the way the music can bridge the genres... Léveillé's classical formalism may make it difficult for jazz purists to latch on to *L'Échelle du Temps*. The beauty of the music speaks for itself, however. It's a worthy addition to the pianist's catalogue, and hopefully one that will alter his status as one of Quebec's best-kept secrets.

★★★★★

Troy Dostert – All About Jazz

Léveillé's themes are attractive and evocative. Close your eyes and you can almost imagine the characters in a *Nouvelle Vague* film that his melodies might represent.

John Chacona

...it just has class and style falling off it from every direction. Teaming his piano with an ad hoc string ensemble made up of individual pros, this is what real adult listening sounds like.

Chris Spector – The Midwest Record