



HOT CLUB OF DETROIT

More than seven decades after the innovations of the Quintette du Hot Club de France, featuring guitar virtuoso Django Reinhardt, combos called Hot Clubs carry on the gypsy jazz sound around the globe—in Tokyo, San Francisco, Seattle, Sweden, Norway, Austria, and many other locales. None, however, offers a fresher take on the tradition than does the Hot Club of Detroit, led by fast-fingered Reinhardt disciple Evan Perri.

Hot Club of Detroit has headlined nearly every jazz festival, club and concert hall in Southeast MI as well as various venues throughout the Midwest. Highlighted performances have included the Detroit International Jazz Festival, the Max Fischer Music Box (Orchestra Hall, Detroit MI), Night Town (Cleveland OH), Pete Miller's (Chicago IL), and the Madison Gypsy Jazz Festival (Madison WI).

Unlike the instrumentation of original Paris-based quintet, comprising Reinhardt, violinist Stephane Grappelli, two rhythm guitarists, and a bassist, the current Hot Club of Detroit is made of guitarist Perri, accordionist Julien Labro, soprano and tenor saxophonist Carl Cafagna, rhythm guitarist Paul Brady and bassist Andrew Kratzat. The fibrous accordion tones of Labro, a native of Marseilles, France, links the Detroit quintet to the French musette style from which gypsy jazz partially sprung, while Cafagna's robust saxophone work introduces bop and post-bop elements to gypsy jazz.

The son of a professional jazz guitarist, Perri was born in Detroit on June 12, 1979, and raised in nearby Grosse Pointe, Michigan. He began studying piano at age four and was giving classical recitals by the time he was five. When he was 17, his dad gave him a guitar.

Perri had been exposed to his father's straight-ahead jazz guitar playing, as well as to records by Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass, and Jim Hall, while growing up and, after taking up guitar himself, developed a fondness for Pat Martino, yet he had never heard Django Reinhardt until he enrolled at the McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota, to study with Mike Elliott, a former student of jazz guitar great Johnny Smith.

Perri, who now plays a small oval-hole Del Arte acoustic guitar, formed the Hot Club of Detroit in 2003 while attending Wayne State University in Detroit. The group took first place in the 2004 Detroit International Jazz Festival competition and won the 2006 Detroit Music Awards as Outstanding Traditional Jazz Group. In 2007, the band swept the Detroit Music Awards, winning in the Outstanding Traditional Jazz Artist, Best Independent Label Recording, Outstanding National Small Independent Label Recording, and Outstanding Video on a Limited Budget categories; Perri himself was named Best Jazz Instrumentalist. And, for the past five years, the quintet has hosted the annual Djangofest Detroit at various venues, including the Masonic Temple, where Reinhardt himself had appeared with Duke Ellington in 1946.

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