

Liner notes for The best of Rêve Bohème

1) Just one of those things

A beautiful dark, melodic and complex composition by Cole Porter. Just a song for Django with its rich harmonies and catchy melody. He recorded it twice with a strong bebop feeling in his solos with his Nouveau Quintette and Rostaing on clarinet on May 25 and Sept. 19, 1947.

The lyrics about a long night downtown where you at some hour have to decide if you want to go home – or not. In Rêve Bohème's version we have the first chorus with vocal before we go into fast gypsy swing.

2) Melodie au Crepuscule

Also known under the name "Love's Melody" this beautiful song was recorded first by Django & son Orchestra with vocals by Nelly Kay in July 7, 1943, and later on with Grappelly on violin at the reunion after the war at February 1, 1946. Two other recordings were done in Nov. 8-13, 1947.

Django plays eminent solos on all recordings and in our version we took fragments from his different solos and made our own arrangement. Django is known as the composer but roomers say that it was his brother Nin-Nin who made the song.

3) Red Lights

One of our own compositions made by the whole band. Like the first song it's about a long night downtown. In this case the inspiration came from a visit to the red light neighbourhood in Den Haag on a tour in Netherlands. The rhythm is tense and dramatic in a gypsy-latin style.

4) Porto Cabello

A pseudo-mexican air composed by Django in 1947. The opening is mysterious and exotic and shows Django's inspiration from Debussy and Ravel until the song changes dramatically to an up-tempo bebop-tune with surprising chord-changes. It was recorded two times by Django and his Nouveau Quintette with Rostaing on May 21, 1947 and Sept. 7-22, 1947.

In Rêve Bohème's version the clarinet also plays the opening to get the right ambiance. In the fast part we transposed the chords under the sax-solo.

5) Trying to

A composition by Jens Fuglsang. A homage to two great musicians. The instrumental part is inspired by the great Tscavolo Schimtt and his funky old school playing while the vocal is influenced by the jazz singer and piano player Nat King Cole.

6) Django's dream

Django's dream is an improvisation based on Debussy's piece called Reverie. Django was always drawn by the impressionistic sounds of Debussy and Ravel and this slow ballad is his tribute to the two great composers. It was recorded two times, first on Sept. 7, 1947 with Hubert Rostaing and secondly with an Italian group Jan. 1950 with Andre Ekyan on clarinet.

In Rêve Bohème's version we kept the clarinet playing the theme and Django's harp-rolling chords under this beautiful melody.

7) Spring in Oslo

A composition by Robert Pilgaard inspired by a trip to Oslo in Norway. Rêve Bohème we're playing "hot gypsy jazz" in a very cold country with snow everywhere. But suddenly the sun was shining and gave the feeling that spring was on its way.

8) Rain Waltz

Composed by Jens Fuglsang. A melancholy Nordic waltz about missing the one you love. The Norwegian singer Lise Haavik sings the melody while her father Einer Haavik plays the accordion.

9) Vette

A catchy melody in medium up-tempo. It was first recorded in 1943 with his wartime-quintet but this version is still un-issued. Later he recorded the tune on July 6, 1947 with the Nouveau Quintette. In this bebop-version, with Hubert Rostaing on clarinet, you can hear the influence from Dizzy and Bird in Django's fast solo.

In Rêve Bohème's version we made a new intro, instead of the drums, and incorporated a couple of riffs in the last theme.

10) Pêche à la mouche

A nice and relaxed medium swing-tune which Django recorded twice. The first version was recorded April 1947 with a band called "Django Reinhardt et son Orchestra du Boeuf sur le Toit" that featured Michel de Villers on alto-sax and Django on acoustic guitar.

The second version from November 8, 1947 with the Nouveau Quintette is more bebop-oriented with Django on amplified Selmer-guitar and this time Gerard Leveque on clarinet.

Rêve Bohème's version of Pêche à la mouche is in bossanova-style. The simple and repeated chord sequence gave us a good opportunity to make a melodic and funky version of this old swing-tune.

11) Limehouse Blues

An old standard by Braham/Furber recorded four times by Django. Rêve Bohème's version starts slowly and then goes up-tempo with quotes from Django's most famous recording made on May 4, 1936, by the Hot Club de France.

12) Django Jalousie

Composed by Kasper Fredholm with a reference in the title to the famous "Tango Jalousie" by Danish Composer Jacob Gade. A melodic and catchy theme that goes into a minor blues progression in the solos.

13) Sofie Swing

Composed by Jens Fuglsang. Made for his daughter Sofie who loves to dance to Gypsy Jazz. A busy minor theme that goes into a latin swing in the last part.

14) Stockholm

This avantgarde-composition with its "modern" augmented harmony in the opening was composed under Quintette du Hot Club de France's Scandinavian-tour in 1939. It is more a concert-piece than a swing tune and Django recorded it three times in different arrangements. First with the string-quintet on March 21, 1939, and later with the big orchestra Django's Music on Dec. 26, 1940 and finally with the Nouveau Quintette on Sept. 7-19, 1947.

In Rêve Bohème's version we took parts from all of the 3 different arrangements Django recorded. We kept the sound from the first recording and took the chord-changes for the solo's and the unison melody from the big band version.

15) Webster

This composition is not a tribute to sax-player Ben Webster but it's the name of one tape-recorder that Django bought in 1948. The tape-recorder was a revolution for Django because he could record his own concerts, like the one in Brussels Dec. 1948, and it made it easier for him to compose larger arrangements. Webster has a flavour of bebop and the chord-changes are similar to another Django-tune called Coquette. It was recorded only one time in Rome together with Stephane Grappelly and an Italian group Jan. & Feb. 1950.

In Rêve Bohème's version we added a few kicks in the rhythm-group to spice up the bebop feeling.

16) Hungaria

This classic up-tempo Django-composition with the characteristic semitone chord-changes in the opening was recorded five times. The two classic takes were made with Stephane Grappelly and the Hot Club de France on March 21, 1939 and May 17, 1939. The last recording was made on Sep. 11, 1941 with his wartime-quintet featuring Andre Ekyan on alto-sax.

In Rêve Bohème's version we incorporated a small feature of the rhythm-group in Hot Club de France-style.

17) Nocturne

This beautiful nocturnal melody was co-written with Stephane Grappelly. It was probably more a casual improvisation over a chromatic idea than a pre-composed song when they recorded it as a duet on Feb. 1, 1938 - but the ambiance is perfect.

In Rêve Bohème's version we added the rhythm-group and constructed a solo-chorus built on the chord-changes Django played in the original version.

18) Solen er så rød

"Why is the sun so red". A Danish lullaby every Danish child knows composed by the Danish national classical composer Carl Nielsen in 1924. We made a version where the guitar improvises on the melody which is later introduced by the sax.