



CAB

Bunny Brunel & Tony MacAlpine "CAB"

Sick of wimpy jazz?

So are the members of the Grammy Nominated CAB, and they're doing something about it. Think of this quintet as music's answer to the Justice League, each one endowed with superhero powers and sworn to bring excitement back to the bandstand.

CAB consists of guitar monster Tony MacAlpine, bass wizard and Return To Forever alumnus Bunny Brunel, legendary British organist Brian Auger, elegant and ingenious keyboard innovator Patrice Rushen, and the "Thunder from Down Under"; unstoppable rhythm dynamo Virgil Donati on drums -- each a giant on his or her own terms. Together, they are unlike anything heard since the glory days of jazz-rock fusion. As Steve Vai said it "This is the best fusion album since Return To Forever."

But wait. Isn't "fusion" a dirty word? Not in CAB country: Their unique balance of rock (Auger, MacAlpine) and jazz (Rushen, Virgil, Brunel) talents assures that both idioms are well represented and blended into something entirely new.

CAB is, in fact, something like what jazz might have become had the torch not been dropped so soon after the fusion race had begun. That long-gone sense of limitless possibilities that once surrounded RTF, Weather Report, and the Mahavishnu Orchestra traced back to Miles Davis and his crossover experiments in the sixties. In its willingness to question stereotypes, redefine improvisation, and push virtuosity to new extremes, this music was akin to bebop; as the product of exploration by the best players of the day, it represented the best of jazz, period.

But then the winds shifted, and jazz became archival -- an exercise in animating the remains of what had been played generations ago. Or it melted into a simplification of once vital ideas. In either case, adventure receded into the freezer, to be replaced by something that goes down easy, leaving little aftertaste -- or, for that matter, any taste at all.

That began to change when MacAlpine, Brunel, and Chambers got together for the first CAB album in 1999. Lauded by Allmusic.com for "providing the world with a much-needed shot of adrenaline," CAB also hipped the trio to the potential for working together as a team. A year later, in 2001, they joined forces for the Grammy Nominated CAB2, with Auger now invited to the party. Their sound was fuller now, and spread across a wider spectrum.