

Melody Maker

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MAGOG

MAGOG: "Live In Montreux." Magog: One For Lucky Luke; Tell; Ganz Zum Überfluss; Meine Eusebius Noch Folgendes; Mini Rock; See, Waldi. (Evasion EA 100 812).

Hans Kennel (trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion), Andy Scherrer (tenor, soprano saxes, percussion), Paul Haag (trombone, percussion), Klaus Koenig (piano), Peter Frei (bass), Peter Schmidlin (drums).

Montreux, 3/7/73.

WELL, well, well. Here's Switzerland's answer to Return To Forever, Herbie Hancock, and Weather Report and better than any of 'em.

No, that's a ridiculous thing to say, I'll start again. Magog have clearly been listening to the younger, hipper American musicians who lean towards rock, and they've learnt from them and channelled those same energies into something very much their own. It's all high-octane, energetic youthful stuff, and is enthusiastically received by the cheering Montreux crowd.

That's not surprising, because Magog's music is very immediate, lacking in depth or restraint perhaps, but a gas, nonetheless. All six members are world-class musicians, trumpeter Hans Kennel, who reminds of Enrico Rava occasionally, being especially interesting. His chirpy feature on the "folkdance" section of "Tell" is full of all sorts of quirky twists and turns.

Behind him bassist Frei keeps resolutely pumping, Michael Henderson — funky, before opening into a very brief solo. No sooner is he finished than Koenig drops in, unexpectedly reflective at first and then loosening up and spiralling across fly-swatting, random brushed snare and cymbal. Enter saxist Scherrer, and the ensemble changes again, honking and riffing into "Ganz Zum" and "Mini Rock," the front line using the sensational rhythm team of Frei and Schmidlin as a springboard for their vaulting extravagances.

Best track? Probably "Magog," with its mysterious Coltrane coda beginning that explodes into all manner of related action. But there're fifty-two minutes of fine playing on this one. Obtainable only from obscurity guru Andrzej Sojka, 18 Carlton Avenue East, Wembley Park, Middlesex. Price £2.30, including post and pack. Worth every penny. — S.L.