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Israel's family gift to jazz: 3 Cohens

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Written by
Jay Harvey

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The band that calls itself 3 Cohens — siblings Avishai, trumpet, and reed players Yuval and Anat — has followed up the intricate but appealing “Braid” with a down-to-earth, almost retro program called “Family” (Anzic Records). The family is on a kick from the start, Avishai’s original called “Shufra De Shufra,” which seems to run New Orleans shuffle rhythms through a Middle Eastern sensibility. Jazz fans who took in the SFJAZZ Collective show at the Palladium recently will doubtless remember the tall, bearded trumpeter in the band.

Speaking of the Palladium, this disc features the ageless Jon Hendricks (who will be coming to the Palladium in December with a couple of the vocal groups his skills have inspired) on two numbers: “On the Sunny Side of the Street” and “Roll ‘Em, Pete.” Hendricks still swings, and the band is clearly inspired by his presence, but his phrasing is choppy, possibly because there’s little sustaining power left in his voice anymore.

At any rate, the band is filled out admirably by pianist Aaron Goldberg, bassist Matt Penman (another SFJAZZ Collective stalwart) and drummer Gregory Hutchinson. The band has such an infectious spirit that it can almost redeem “Tiger Rag” for me (in Anat Cohen’s arrangement). An even better, almost visionary, revival is of Duke Ellington’s “The Mooch.” Here’s a disc with a modern sensibility at work that ought to find fans among members of the Indianapolis Jazz Club, I’m guessing. But will they ever come across it? Lots of jazz fans across the board should, certainly!

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