

TWO GUITARS : FORTIN-LÉVEILLÉ

Fortin-Léveillé is a classical guitar duet from Montreal, where the cross breeding of cultures is on the right track. Music is one of the privileged vehicles. It has therefore become music of the world. Fortin-Léveillé's compositions, that are at times exotic and yet have a familiar flavor, remain authentic.

Nimble fingers on nylon string guitars sketch memories of breathtaking soundscapes evoking music filled with life and liberty. Rich, bewitching melodies touch our deepest selves.

Since 1987, these two composers have gained each other's musical respect. Their musical interplay is complementary (Luc Fortin's solos and improvisation, Richard Léveillé's rhythm and harmonies) lending impact to their duo.



Luc Fortin has been a guitarist for more than thirty years. A well-learned musician, he flirted with jazz, rock, latin and classical music, while he was completing a master's degree in music. Graced with an authentic talent for improvisation and served by remarkable finger dexterity, he can weave astounding flights of fancy one after the other... On stage, he puts the stakes very high, acting as a first class performer, and the public just love it. His free-style music has a life of its own, where poetry rubs shoulders with improvisation; his sources of inspiration are great guitarists like Paco de Lucia, Baden Powell, Egberto Gismonti and Django Reinhardt. He also collaborates with virtuoso accordionist Didier Dumoutier (trio Montréal Jazz Musette) et with French composer-interpreter Thierry Séchan, (producer of his last album).

The trade-mark of **Richard Léveillé** is a unique guitar style. He developed his musical arrangement technique while playing with a number of multi-ethnic bands like Ta Legal, Ultima Hora, Los Hermanos Internacionales, ChôroSwing, Ethnison etc. in full-scale musical events. Combining an academic knowledge of music (a master's degree in music) with hands-on experience he picked up while jamming with musicians from all over the world, he developed a well-balanced artistic maturity. In concert, he introduces the pieces with tongue-in-cheek presentations stuffed with funny trivia to warm up the public. He also collaborates with Jeunesses Musicales du Canada.

FORTIN-LEVEILLE, GUITAR DUO : Highlights of the Last Two Years

July 2002

Fortin-Léveillé perform with four other musicians at the **Montreal International Jazz Festival**, on the main outdoor stage.

November 2001

Launching of “**Valse d’Automne**”, Fortin-Léveillé’s 5th album.

October 2001

Fortin-Léveillé is a hit on the MP3.COM Web site (mp3.com/2guitars), with several pieces in the 40 top positions in the Classical/Guitar genre. (Between February 2000 and June 2002 Fortin-Léveillé’s artist page received over 60,000 unique visitors - mostly from U.S, Japan, Canada and France - who listened around 500,000 tunes)

August 2001

Launching of “**Sol & Tranquilidade**”, a CD compilation, in Europe (Vox Terrae records)

March 2001

Concert in the **Chapel of the Fine Arts Museum of d’Ottawa**. The concert was broadcast on « Concert aux Beaux-Arts » on the French radio network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

October 2000

Nominated at the Gala of l’Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo (ADISQ 2000) (Best Group - Musics of the world)

February 2000

A serie of three performances at « La Balustrade » (Monument National, Montreal)

November 1999

Launching of « **Tropical Morte** » on Analekta label

April 1999

Musicora (Paris), Musicanada kiosk

November 1998

Launching of « **Avenida Café** »

July 11, 1998

Performance at the International Festival of Jazz in Montreal

April 1998

Performance in « L'Anglicane », Lévis (Quebec)

March 28, 1998

« Printemps de la guitare », in the chapel of the St-Jean-Baptiste Church (Montreal)

December 6, 1997

Concert in Café du Palais Montcalm, Quebec City.

September 12 and November 27-28, 1997

Studio-Théâtre du Maurier, **Place des Arts (Montreal)**

August 28 - 30, 1997

Festi-Jazz in Rimouski

July 10, 1997

Concert at “La Maison de la Chanson”, **Québec International Summer Festival**

July 3 1997

Launching of « **Soleil** »

May 17 1997

Performance at the « Musiques Multi-Montréal » festival, *Salle Pierre-Mercure*

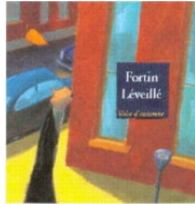
April 12 1997

Concert at the « Guitar Fest », *Salle Pierre-Mercure*.

Albums :

- *Tranquilidade* (June 1996)
- *Soleil* (July 1997)
- *Avenida Café* (November 1998)
- *Rivière du Loup (France)* (March 1999)
- *Tropical Norte* (November 1999)
- *Sol & Tranquilidade* (August 2001)
- *Valse d'automne* (November 2001)

Albums reviews



Valse d'automne

Fortin-Léveillé : For the Pleasure of the Ears

- *Valse d'automne* is the fifth CD in five years of the Fortin-Léveillé Duo. One could think that these talented acoustic guitarists will eventually have gone full circle, but they keep on reserving us new (and pleasant) surprises every time.

It helps to know that Luc Fortin has been a professional guitarist for 30 years, a trade he possesses right to the tips of his fingers, so to speak. But the ear is the real test : combining technical proficiency with a keen talent for improvisation, his melodic approaches can be extremely sophisticated. Richard Léveillé, his partner, displays a vast ethnomusicological culture served by an absolute mastery of his instrument. Assuming the rhythmic et harmonic functions in the duo, he goeswell beyond of simple, basic arrangements; as a matter of fact, he is a one-man-orchestra that can pull lots of rabbits from his hat to give breath and depth to the pieces they play. So, what else is new? They broadened their repertoire: 9 of the 12 titles are interpretations - jazz, manouche and latino. They set a soft sound parade for the pleasure of our ears, with old favorites or classical tunes like Jo Privat (*Black Butterflies*), John Coltrane (*Giant Steps*), Django Reinhardt (*Manor of my Dreams*), Milton Nascimento (*Travessia*) or Gato Barbieri (*the Last Tango in Paris* theme). With the occasional help of Mathieu Bélanger's clarinette et and Michel Dupire's drums and percussions, the two partners do, as usual, what they know best: cool, relaxing music, just for the fun of it - art for art's sake. Directions for use: Recommended for any quiet setting. Caution: During an intimate dinner, you may forget your plate suddenly because an apparently innocent tun ecould swell into a complex, intricate musical theme. Less than 40 minutes, did you say? No problem: just play it again! Fortin-Léveillé, *Valse d'automne* (Guit'Boys-Dep) ***1/2

Pierre Boulet (Le Soleil, Québec City)

- In their three previous albums featuring warm guitars playing dreamy and melancholic tunes, **Luc Fortin and Richard Léveillé** developed a special touch to lull the soul and warm up the mood of their listeners. In their fourth album, the duo keep on pinching the strings with the soft emotion that became their trade mark. *Valse d'automne* may seem like a stern choice for a title, and indeed, soothing, melancholic themes are a mainstay in every one of their albums, whatever season is depicted. Only ports of call change. Can you imagine visiting successively “Travesia”

(Milton Nascimento), "Papillons noirs" (Joe Privat), "Manoir de mes rêves" (Django Reinhardt - or is it rather Babik, which passed away a few weeks ago?), "Made in France" (Birelli Lagrene) and, the cream on top, Gato Barbieri's "Last Tango in Paris". This album has a distinct Mediterranean taste, something like (...) olive oil applied in intravenous perfusion.

Claude Côté (Voir, Montréal)



Tropical Norte (1999)

Nominated at the ADISQ 2000 Festival (Gala de l'Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo) - Category : World Music.

A fourth journey (in less than three years) into the passionate, melancholic and colourful rhythms of the musics of the world..

- "You expect 12 years of collaboration to bear fruit, and these two guitarist/composers prove it with 13 pieces (11 originals), 12 nylon strings and three guest artists. Their fourth album showcases a synthesis of gypsy/tango - in short, the wonderful world of the world. You will not find much in the way of dissonant textures here, but if you're a sucker for classical guitar (especially in season right now) you'll love Didier Dumoutier's accordion on Procession or Kristin Molnar's violin in Souvenance, Percussionist Michel Dupire weighs as well in a very sweet Bossa, Emotive. (...) "

Dean Cottrill: "Hour", Montreal, January 13 - 2000.

- « *The main quality of Tropical Norte soon becomes obvious. One listening is enough to feel the tremendous impulse of freedom that gives a life of its own to that disk* »

Cyril Torland, La Guitare.com Web site.

- « *Since Soleil, this pair of nylon string virtuosos refined their fictional gypsy and Brazilian worlds, as well as their jazz and classical guitar background, to offer us their best production to date [...]. Here's a CD with a taste of culmination - just plain and lovely music.*

Pierre Boulet, Le Soleil, November 27, 1999



Avenida Café (1998)

« Under the dimming light of the end of the day
How can one find his way
In a country where the only clues are
The soft echoes of guitars »
Michel X. Côté

- « [...] *The Duo use their acoustic guitars to create an intimate world combining a great sensibility with a near-religious mood of contemplation, to carry us into an unknown, yet familiar land. Mind you: this is great art* »

Claude Côté, Voir, December 16, 1998

- « [...] *Consistant and rich, the compositions of the two partners pick up their inspiration from different musical styles, deftly avoiding the pitfalls of clichéd structures. Fortin- Léveillé bank on soft, enveloping tunes, displaying the proficiency of their craft.* »

Manon Guilbert, Journal de Montréal, November 28, 1998



Soleil (1997)

Nominated at the ADISQ 1998 Festival (Gala de l'Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo) - Category : World Music

- “ The second album from this Canadian guitar duo distills Spanish and South American influences into a delightful listening experience. Fortin and Léveillé play together seamlessly but write quite differently. "Bonne Fête" and "Soleil" by Léveillé have a distinctly Brazilian flavor, and his lovely "Rêveur" is one of the most beautiful guitar melodies on record. Fortin's compositions, such as "Equinox" and the Gypsy-inspired "Pinson Roumain" are more atmospheric (...) A thoroughly enjoyable outing (...)”

Jim Ohlschmidt, Acoustic Guitar Magazine

- « *Close your eyes and picture yourself in the port of Lisbon, feeling the rays of the sun on your skin. This warm, yet cool, sound stream creates a ambiance where fragile, crystal-clear guitar notes surge up to carry us away [...] A beautiful record, indeed* »

Claude Côté, Voir, September 17, 1997

-« *You may fancy yourself sitting outside a café on the beach, feeling a warm breeze tickling your ears, without anything to do for the rest of the day. Soleil extends the special universe of Tranquilidade, their first album[...]. Ship ahoy! Let's get back on the boat. Beautiful days are back.* »

Jean-Christophe Laurence, La Presse, September 17, 1997



Tranquilidade (1996)

Brazilian and Gipsy music, and jazz. A fascinating, emotion-filling musical journey,

- " (...) The elaborate, yet smooth playing by each of these accomplished musicians has the unmistakable sound of non-mechanical mastery. The pauses, the sliding fingers on the frets, the improvisations are all reassuringly comforting. There is a near hypnotic effect to listening to this gentle collection...

Carl Twitchell, Hour Magazine (Oct. 10, 1996)

- « [...] *Happiness played by the tips of the fingers. [...] Moving melodies played with an obvious virtuosity, banking on the complementarity of two proficient guitarists. Every chord and each one of the notes of this album have an essential, pertinent feel [...] moments de pure delights et cool serenity.* »

Pierre Boulet, Le Soleil, July 13, 1996

- « [...] *A music with an uncommon cordiality, the outcome of passionate musical experiments, a keen crossbreeding of many musical genres, forms et inspiration sources. Contagious* »

Alain Bénard, Journal de Montréal, June 22, 1996

Concert reviews and interviews

The Fortin-Léveillé Duo Present a Tasty Cocktail of Music

On February 5, the patrons of the Côté-Cour were swept away to cool, heavenly mirages, by the tunes of two classical guitars played by magic hands. Fortin-Léveillé 's unique cross-breeding of South American, Gypsy, Classical and Jazz music certainly has an appeal of its own. (...)

Canada chaud

(Hot Canada - a show which took place in France)

*Luc Fortin and Richard Léveillé are Quebecers whose cabin is made of straw instead of logs. Drawing their inspiration from Brazilian music, gipsy music and soft jazz, this duo just released a new album in France, *Rivière du Loup* (Wolf River) in the *Collection Guitaristes* (Déclic Communications/Sony Music) These two guitarists share common influences, one (who traded electrical steel for soft nylon strings) with a jazz coloration, and the other, with a classical touch. Using a rich and complex palette of two-guitar harmonisations, they construct a dream-like Brazil in the mind. Don't expect a tfechnical performance show. What you will get is a succession of melodies embroidered by a pair o keenly harmonized guitars, which flow pleasantly like the heat of the sun, on a light groove. Mr. Takamine will be glad to hear that his precious tools serve well indeed.*

Fortin-Léveillé, A Magical Performance!

The quiet charm of the place has been keenly enhanced by the remarkable performance of Fortin and Léveillé, guitarists and composers. The small audience (about 150 people) greatly enjoyed the simplicity, spontaneity and tongue-in-cheek humour of the artists. No need to be an expert to be an expert to recognize the value of these gifted interpreters and composers who have been exploring and mastering for many years the full musical spectrum of their tool, the classical guitar.

Shades of Guitar Music

Northern tropics - does that ring any bell in your mind? According to guitarists Luc Fortin and Richard Léveillé, this musical country is to be found somewhere where warm landscapes meet the ice-covered summits. For a dozen years, they have been depicting this special, exotic climate in their compositions with their faithful six-string guitars.

The Fortin-Léveillé Duo, masters of musical cross-breeding, give to their favourite instrument a unique palette of colours, merging with loving care Brazilian, Cuban, Gypsy, Spanish and jazz music to create their own timeless, delocalised celebration of the rhythms of the world.

Purist might as well go back to wherever they came from, because their technique is quite unorthodox. After playing by the rules of classical guitar for many years, they migrated to a kind of free play characterized by a minimum of constraints - which is exactly what young musicians should not do, one might say.

"We just want to play good music", says Richard Léveillé. "We are not the trendy type. We don't want to be mere guitarists or interpreters of exotic music either. In musical composition, results, not technique, are the important thing. We are full-fledged musicians, using our guitars to express our ideas and feelings."