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Bio information: **GHOST RHYTHMS**
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FILE UNDER: **JAZZ / POST-JAZZ/ POST-ROCK / AVANT PROGRESSIVE/ POST-GENRE**

GHOST RHYTHMS,
one of the most exciting Post-Genre Ensembles on the
International Avant Music Scene, release
MISSING TIMES
a Tour-De-Force of Stunningly Beautiful Compositions
Embracing Jazz, Classical, Rock and World Music as well as
Concepts of Time and Perception, Absence and UFOs

"The musical equivalent of a page-turner… Styles mingle without it ever sounding artificial… This...cannot be reduced to any existing style – it is in equal parts jazz, chamber music, rock, improv…
A coherent, finely-crafted and supremely evocative work."
– *Chromatique* on Ghost Rhythms

Ghost Rhythms are a truly exciting, electric-eclectic jazz / post-genre ensemble based in **France**. Active in **Paris** since 2005, the nine-piece ensemble has won numerous awards and released 9 albums. Their music is cool, intelligent (conceptual themes underlay each album), and self-assured, featuring morphing drum grooves, catchy bass lines, expressive harmony changes, world music touches and a never-ending succession of dizzying, odd-time polyrhythms. The highly skilled instrumental ensemble uses a world of instrumentation and influences – jazz, classical, rock, world – to create captivating tunes that defy genre boundaries and soar beyond tradition.

Missing Times, Ghost Rhythms' new release and third album for **Cuneiform Records**, conceptually probes notions of UFOs – specifically, the phenomenon in which UFO abductees lose memory of their experiences aboard ships from outer space. It's a slippery slope full of mythology, as drummer/guitarist **Xavier Gelard** points out, but not one without merit and depth. And beyond the sci-fi elements of that subject matter, there are universal themes. "We're trying to decolonize the UFO lore from the UFO," he explains, "in order to access the human part."

The Ghost Rhythms ensemble is based around the creative duo of **Xavier Gelard** and pianist **Camille Petit**. Together, they've deeply explored the interplay between interlocking rhythms and musical feel throughout the group's 20-year run. The themes relayed in *Missing Times* —absence, perception, and time itself—have been guiding principles.

In that way, then, *Missing Times*, their ninth full-length release, is their ultimate statement, as its displaced rhythmic structures weave amongst each other in the foreground. "It was not just to be clever or for the sake of it," Gelard explains," it was a way of showing that many ghostly themes appear when you play with the way they're perceived."

The album—most of which was recorded live in the studio—started with the title and concept, and the music fell into place. "Reacting is probably my main way of writing music," explains Petit. "It applies not only to the initial ideas but also to the compositional process itself. Each new section, each counterpoint, and most of the structural ideas emerge from listening to what is already there and responding to it."

Ghost Rhythms seamlessly create sonic quilts of interweaving riffage and soaring melodies. Their sound straddles genres, wearing inspiration from modern avant-leaning influences like **John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet** or **Bad Plus**—both ensembles that feature jazz-associated musicians reaching toward rock, pop, and classical influences—as easily as it does vintage progressive rock groups like **National Health**, particularly in their propensity toward rhythmic experimentation and flexibility, as well as genre-defying Chamber Rock/ avant progessive ensembles like **Lars Hollmer / Von Zamla, Art Zoyd** and **Miriodor.**

Throughout *Missing Times*, the UFO concept is strong on pieces like the pulse-driven **"Aux Grand Absents"** and the title track. The former features a choir of wordless vocals soaring over a multi-meter rhythmic foundation. An accordion solo enters with a lighter, sprightly feel that pulls the listener's ear in new directions and adds intrigue. On the closing **"Missing Times,"** things develop much more slowly, Petit's lonely piano in the foreground a mysterious sonic investigation of absence.

UFO lore is just a lens for absence and longing—feelings notably explored in a rock context on **Pink Floyd**'s epic ***Wish You Were Here***. Opener **"Quinta del Sordo,"** Gelard explains, was directly inspired by the house where late-18th-century /early-19th-century Spanish artist **Francisco Goya** painted his "black paintings." A growing dissonance pervades the piece that, while full of activity, evokes loss. "As Goya grew more and more deaf through his life," Gelard explains, "he grew more lonely."

Similarly, **"Agatha"** is inspired by the 11 days that author **Agatha Christie** went missing in 1926. The track blends mystery and grandeur via a noir-ish melody and soaring chorus and strings. An ever-shifting set of driving grooves settles in the soulful middle section behind Petit's plaintive, lyrical solo.

Right in the middle of the album—track 7—is the one lyric-driven tune, **"Vie de Betty and Barney Hill."** It's a rumination on the couple's famous alleged abduction by UFOs that seems to imagine a collaboration between **Robert Wyatt** and **Syd Barrett** with its lonely nylon-string arpeggios and string accompaniment. That might not feel like the most obvious centerpiece for an ensemble-driven instrumental record, yet it serves as cohesion, tying the record perfectly together.

An epic sensibility, characteristic of the best concept-driven albums, pervades *Missing Times*; it's in the themes themselves and how they manifest in the songs. Below the surface, within the interplay of the musicians and the ever-evolving rhythmic texture of the compositions is the feeling of the music, the grooves, and how Ghost Rhythms work as a driving, well-oiled unit. *Missing Times* is modern music that spans and flies beyond genres—the kind of album made by an ensemble with intellectual curiosity and infinite ideas, exemplary compositional and performance skills, ears open to the musical universe, and with the energy and sense of adventure to dive in with abandon.

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QUOTES on GHOST RHYTHMS:

"...gloriously expansive and darkly cinematic...
Mysterious and beguiling, this is a highly enjoyable and melodic album of intricate chamber jazz arrangements... While hinting at avant influences, there is nothing at all difficult...
A must for any jazz fan, and for any music fan not put off by the word "jazz" and not hidebound by genre restrictions."
– The Progressive Aspect

"Despite the musical sophistication and adventure [here], this music is extremely accessible to a wide swathe of listeners. Its release signals ***the magnificent arrival of Ghost Rhythms on American shores.*** *Get it now."* – AllMusic

" Ghost Rhythms… one of the world's lesser-known, ***great, boundary-blurring ensembles, take a step into the spotlight****..."*
– All About Jazz