



Benoît Martiny Band & the Grand Cosmic Journey

# MOONS OF URANUS



# Moons of Uranus

6<sup>th</sup> album of Benoit Martiny Band

Follow-up to their 2016 album "The Grand Cosmic Journey"

Release date 15.10.2020

In Gatefold, CD, Digital

Label Badass Yogi Productions

For fans of Frank Zappa, John Coltrane, Sun Ra Arkestra, Miles Davis's Bitches Brew, Magma, Amon Düül, The Doors, Soft Machine, Lettuce...

Listen [Moons of Uranus](#)

## Track listing

1. The World Goes To Shit But Still You Play that Jazz (5:54)
2. Space: The Final Frontier (6:22)
3. Space Express (8:49)
4. Attack of the Martian Nazis (13:53)
5. Stardate 2020 (8:30)
6. Kaspar's Dream (12:02)
7. The Moons of Uranus (20:09)

All music written and conceived by Benoit Martiny except "Space: The Final Frontier" includes composition "HOO 2" by Steve Kaspar, "Attack of the Martian Nazis" includes composition "HOO 10" by Steve Kaspar, "Kaspar's Dream" includes composition "HOO 5" by Steve Kaspar and "Nasu no hanna" by Michel Pilz.

## Discussion with Benoit Martiny

**1. BMB celebrates its fifteenth recording anniversary this year with this new very special album, "Moons of Uranus". Today we discover a formation that has been enriched musically and humanly. In this group journey and for the conception of this album, how do you explain that?**

It is true that the BMB went through many changes during their different adventures, musical and other and that certainly reflects on the music of the new album. That's why "Moons of Uranus" really is a great summery of the bands' history: starting out as a "simple" Jazz-Rock 5tet, the line-up of the BMB already changed 4 times within the first 5 years, the only members remaining there from the beginning being bassist Sandor Kém and me obviously. But also Frank Jonas (guitar), Jasper van Damme (alt sax) and Joao Driessen



(tenor sax) are in the band for over more than 10 years now, and this 5tet is still the core of the BMB. But through the years we invited many friends to join us on different musical adventures: Singer Mark Lotterman, bass clarinetist Michel Pilz and pianist Leon den Engelsen are just some of the great musicians and friends that we collaborated with and so, over the years, the BMB developed into sort of a vehicle for all kinds of musical explorations, not only because of

those collaborations but also because the band became more diverse stylistically. With "Moons of Uranus" the line-up is like a

family reunion with new and old friends: Michel Pilz brought his longtime friend and collaborator trumpeter Itaru Oki and my wife Renata van der Vyver joined on viola.

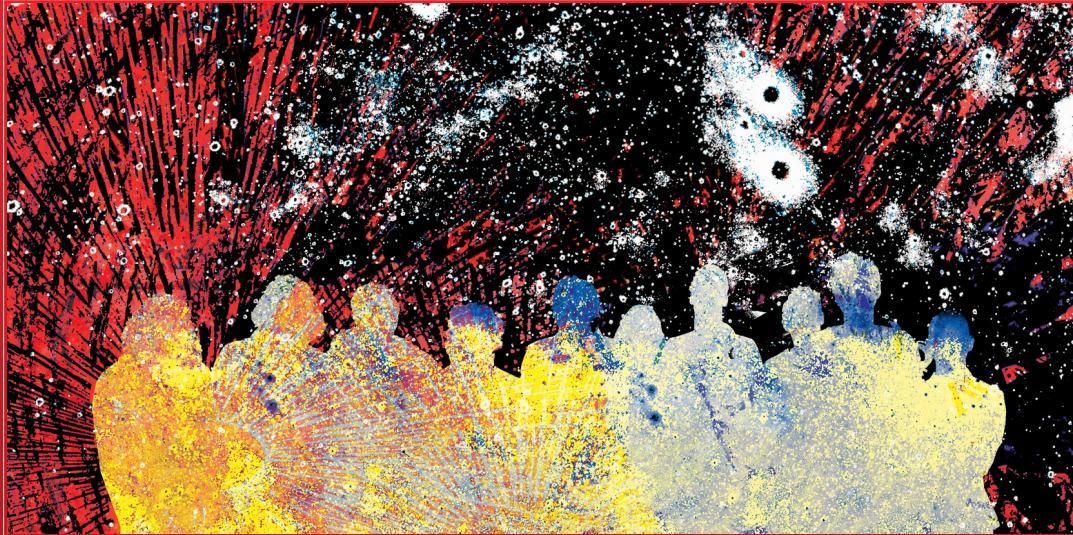
I think with "Moons of Uranus" we really managed to capture the great interaction between these musicians and their sometimes very deep personal relationships to another. Especially the different atmospheres and free improvisations leave a lot of room for "musical conversations". And I guess the so-called "red thread" to hold it all together and map out the plan is me in the end. Anyway, personally I see the BMB as sort of an adventure playground on which I can go into any musical direction that inspires me and have any musician join me that I like.

**2. "Moons of Uranus" like its predecessor "The Grand Cosmic Journey" of which it is a follow-up are recordings made during their very first public performance, it is a way of working on an album that few musicians consider these days as it involves unknowns and risk taking, what are you trying to communicate to your audience through this letting go?**

Well I must say that we were also sort of lucky to get two Albums out of those concerts as we didn't really mess up big time, but the risk of that happening is always present at a live show. At the same time such "risks" create tension that can lead to wonderful musical moments that, if captured, really represent the band at their best and so it seems obvious to present that to the public and capture those kind of performances. And of course playing in front of a live audience creates an energy that you wouldn't necessarily find in a studio setting where the focus and final result might be a different one. Especially with "Moons of Uranus" there is a lot of space for improvisation so every time we play the music it would unfold in a different way creating thus another "valid" version of the music.

**3. When we listen to "Moons of Uranus" we have the feeling that there is also in this music the pursuit of a dream. What enriches this dream?**

The "story" of "Moons of Uranus" is basically the dream for a better, new world, better days ahead, more wisdom, less injustice, exploration of possibilities... . At the same time it's a nightmare: we must depart from planet earth and look for new land among the moons of Uranus and on the way there we are attacked by martian Nazis. At the end we arrive, but being humans the story begins anew. The universe is a circle.



**4. By the journey that you propose to the public throughout the album, you wish to pose a look at the ecological and social issues that cross our societies, do you think that music enables change?**

I definitely think that music along with culture in general and education can help to change the world for the better. If you listen to music or read a book, watch a movie or look at a painting, it inspires you, makes you feel good, gets you creative and it opens your mind, all qualities you need in order to find the best way to live together in harmony on and with this planet. Music is used to express personal, spiritual, humorous and political views and it is in my opinion even one of the artists' purposes to hold a mirror in front of society and make aware of, make fun of and question some of the situations in our societies. In my music I like to address the topics that move, inspire or worry me but another aspect that I really like expressed in music is humour. We have a lot of titles that are a bit tongue in cheek, they seem a bit political but are meant more as satire. Most of the time though the music speaks for itself and everyone has their own way of interpreting it.

**5. Do music and mysticism have close or distant links?**

Well, music is mysterious cause its invisible and yet touches you, but at the same time its very physical, it is just sound in the end. Music and Mystics have their flirtations quite often, especially in lyrics and musical story telling there is often the topic of mystery, so I would say they are close enough for Jazz.

**6. Nature is very present in this album, what is the relationship between music and nature in your inspiration?**

Music is communication and all elements in nature communicate with each other. Music is also the art form that touches you the easiest, with a little beat you dance, with a sad song you cry. We use music in rituals and festivities or to let our mind take a journey beyond the borders of this world. We also use music to tell a story and get across all sorts of messages. It is a universal language. The music we explored on the new album is definitely the kind that makes me think of stars and planets, space and alien sounds. Apart from that I grew up on the countryside and so always had a connection to nature...And well, drumming is also kind of a natural thing, rhythm is a natural thing, banging on stuff...pretty natural.



**7. The music of this new album could be used for a film, by browsing the titles of your songs on the album cover, we also find elements that we imagine straight out of remakes of series and series films -B from the 80s. How do these aspects of pop culture enrich "Moons of Uranus"?**

Memories of my child- and teenage-hood definitely include watching Star Trek, Star Wars, Indiana Jones and so on, and dreaming of adventures and travels, discovering new worlds, seeing new things, hearing new things, with music you can travel to any place you imagine right from the drum chair. So you can travel anywhere without leaving your home. That sort of outlet is fantastic.

## **BMB & The Grand Cosmic Journey Is**



**Benoît Martiny** – Drums, composer  
**Frank Jonas** – Guitar  
**Itaru Oki** – Flutes, trumpet  
**Jasper van Damme** – Alto saxophone  
**Jean Bermes** – Vocals  
**Joao Driessen** – Tenor saxophone  
**Leon den Engelsen** – Keyboards  
**Michel Pilz** – Bass clarinet  
**Sandor Kem** – Double-bass, electric bass  
**Steve Kaspar** – Sound design  
**Renata van der Vyver** – Violin  
**Rémi Corsin** – Vijing

## **In the Local Press**

### **About the concert**

*"... With 'Moons of Uranus', the Benoît Martiny Band & The Grand Cosmic Journey created an unforgettable musical experience. This evening began with the piece 'The world goes to shit but still you play that jazz', a jazz rock number with blues influences, in which a reggae beat sometimes got lost, in which, among other things, Oki on the trumpet proves his skills. The 77-year-old Japanese is a living legend and belongs to the first generation of Japanese free jazz. The piece symbolized the start from earth into space. And so then followed not entirely worldly sounding, compact sounds. The group created a beautiful musical wall hanging in which sounds from the Far East were woven. Here, too, it was Oki again, this time on the flutes, who particularly stood out. But the guitar riffs by Jonas and van der Vyver on the viola were also remarkable and captivating. This part of the concert was rounded off by the deep singing of Bermes, which was reminiscent of larynx singing, but which he calls "Limpertsberg overtone singing".*

*The evening lived from the dynamic changes between more conventional jazz, blues-rock interludes and experimental parts with free jazz, as well as the improvisations and solos of the musicians. One of the things that was a bit surprising was reciting the recipe for 'Bouneschlupp' by Bermes, as well as his Klingon arts. In addition to Oki, it was also the great*

*Pilz that kept shining on the bass clarinet. We were particularly impressed by Kem, who was able to convince on the electric bass and especially on the double bass. Actually everyone deliver a great performance on Saturday, so that 'Moons of Uranus' has to be said to be an all-round successful concert.... "... ."*

- Luxemburger Journal March 2019 concert review "Moons of Uranus" .

## About the album

### In German

Woxx – [Read the full review](#)

Tageblatt - [Read the full review](#)

### In French

Land.lu – [Read the full review](#)

Le Quotidien – [Read the full review](#)

## In the International Press

Since its release in october 2020, "Moons of Uranus" has received international critical acclaim. Magazines and newspapers like Eclipsed (DE), Mint (DE), Sticks (DE), Le Jazzophone (FR), Le soir (BE), Jazzthing (DE), Slagwerkkraant (NL), Progwereld (NL), Jazzjournal (UK), Jazz Espresso (IT) and more praised the Benoit Martiny Band 6th effort.

### Germany

"...Mitunter erinnert es an die grandiosen Arrangements der **Frank Zappa Band** aus dessen „Bigband“-Phase („Waka Jawaka“), oder man fühlt sich melodisch und rhythmisch an Recordings der britische Jazzrock-Legende Soft Machine aus den späten 60er- und frühen 70er-Jahren erinnert, die im Kontext dieser Performance auf eine modernere Grunge/Rock-Gitarrenwand prallt. Sphärische Klangteppiche erinnern teils an das **Sun Ra Orchestra**, das auf die „Kosmischen Kuriere“ der deutschen Musikszene der frühen 70er trifft, und auch die musikalischen Eskapaden von **Amon Düül** werden hintergründig spürbar. (...) Das Album (wie auch die Benoit Martiny Band) ist eine Empfehlung nicht nur für die Fans der oben genannten Einflüsse, sondern auch für alle, die sich gern mal auf eine abenteuerliche und spannende musikalische Erfahrung einlassen. „Moons of Uranus“ wird jede (Jazzrock-) Musikkollektion bereichern."

- **Axel Mikolajczak – Sticks** – [Read the full review](#)

"...Schon der name des Ensembles lässt Unkonventionelles vermuten und auch die einleitenden Worte im Innern des Gatefolds versprechen "eine Resie jenseits der Grenzen des Gewöhnlichen". Zu viel verspricht Martiny damit nicht. Die erste von vier Vinylseiten beginnt zwar mit konventionellem Jazz-Rock der bisweilen wie eine Hommage an Größen wie **Frank Zappa** oder **Soft Machine** klingt, allerdings vermischt die Band nach kurzer Laufzeit Genres wie Blues, Reggae oder Funk zu einem abwechslungsreichen Potpourri. Kurz darauf heben die Musiker in andere Sphären ab denn fortan sind vor allem experimentierfreudige

Improvisationen zu hören die vom mehrminütigen Schlagzeugsolo bis zu psychedelischen Soundscapes reichen. Aufhorchen lässt auch der Auftritt des Opernsängers Jean Bermes, der erst ein Suppenrezept vorträgt und später Gesänge auf klingonisch zum besten gibt."

- **Gunnar Schulz - Mint**

"...Martiny gibt unumwunden zu, dass ihn als Kind sowohl Star Trek als auch Star Wars schwer beeindruckt haben - und auch seine Band ist in den besten Momenten in der Lage, Territorium zu entdecken, in dem nie ein Mensch zuvor gewesen ist."

"...Schön jedenfalls, dass endlich mal wieder jemand einen Shuffle-Rhythmus nutzt („The World Goes To Shit But Still You Play That Jazz“), Musiker wie der Bassklarinettist Michael Pilz oder der japanische Flötenveteran Itaru Oki addieren zusätzliche Freakyness."

- **Rolf Thomas – Jazzthetik & Jazzthing** - [Read the full review in Jazzthing](#)

## France

"...Imaginez un instant un mariage entre le Jefferson Airplane, les **Doors** et d'autres hérauts du rock psychédélique et le **John Coltrane** de «Stellar Regions» ou le **Miles Davis** de «Bitches Brew»... Eh bien, vous aurez une idée assez approchante de la musique que contient cet album. (...) «Moons of Uranus», qui est aussi le morceau-titre, est une longue plage à la fois planante et funky. L'esprit s'envole, mais le corps bouge aussi. Ce qui résume ce disque, qui est une expérience totalement passionnante."

- **Le Jazzophone** - [Read the full review](#)

## UK

"...inspired by **Frank Zappa's** big band projects and **Sun Ra's** Orchestra. To my taste there are passages where they surpass their models. The opening track begins with an ominous rumbling, suggesting the approach of a space vehicle or a solar storm, but when the wave breaks after 30 seconds it manifests as a rollicking, jubilant big-band blues, with a soupçon of reggae sneaked in and even a passage where **ZZ Top** might comfortably fit. It's a glorious start to a very enjoyable session."

- **Barry Witherden – Jazz Journal** – [Read the full review](#)

## Belgium

"...Rock, jazz, psychédélique, enragé, énergique, dynamitant, explosif, planant, Volcanique. (...) Il rend un magnifique hommage au musicien japonais (Itaru Oki)."

- **Jean-Claude Vantroyen – Le Soir**

## Netherlands

"...is "Moons Of Uranus" een spannende, sprankelende plaat waarop de band jazz met psychedelische rock vermengt. De afwisseling tussen frivole, swingende passages en onbestemde georganiseerd chaos is aansprekend. Voor de luisteraar die het geduld kan opbrengen is hier veel moois te vinden. Het album is in elk geval de moeite van het beluisteren meer dan waard!"

- **Luke Peerdeman – Progwereld** - [Read the full review](#)

Other review in dutch: [Slagwerkkran](#)t

## Italy

"...Un album particolarmente originale, senza limiti, che piacerà sicuramente (ma non solo) a chi considera il jazz come la massima forma di creatività"

- **EM – Jazz Espresso** - [Read the full review](#)