

## **All around Sun Ra**

Heliocentrism, also known as Copernican worldview, is a philosophy which is based on the assumption that all planets revolve around the sun while, simultaneously, gyrating around their own axes. In this sense, the young and extremely charming Berlin octet Heliocentric Counterblast may be called heliocentric. They appeared on the scene of RTS studio 6 for the opening concert of the 2013 Ring-Ring Festival where they obviously put the music of the jazz legend Sun Ra center stage. As you might know, this was the alias of famous jazz musician Hermann Poole Blount (1914 – 1993). Heliocentric Counterblast's Belgrade concert happened to coincide with the 99<sup>th</sup> birthday of this unforgotten visionary and jazz philosopher.

The performance of the German jazz musicians was marked by a wonderful chaos, by a maze of ideas, and an insanely youthful expressiveness. But all of this is very much symbiotic with their idols Sun Ra's deep and sincere understanding of music who they, obviously, boundlessly respect and adore. The young musicians handle their trumpets, saxes and trombones with nearly scientific thoughtfulness, complimented occasionally with flutes, tubas, drums, piano and keyboards creating especially "cosmic" sounds. They quickly turn the seemingly ghostly atmosphere they are imaginatively creating into an ecstatic and highly enjoyable intoxication. Thus, the German octet immerse the audience in the planets' magic spin taken from their own very personal universe and carries them off, especially through the keyboarder's enigmatic style between the art of music and the one of karate, to a hallucinatory feast for the senses.

Everything on this very special evening prompts the audience present to dance, and it is only with utmost effort that everyone present can resist this impulse to jump from their chairs and to give in to the whirls of excitement the inimitable rhythm creates. The atmosphere of an urban jungle full of charms, archaic hand-clapping and foot-stamping of primeval clans from primeval times, playing on every single one of a piano's parts, creating sounds by crunching a plastic bottle before the microphone, producing out-of-the world music which could only come from extraterrestrial creatures, and an immensely dynamic range and passion surrounded by exotic dreams – all this is a true homage to the immortal oeuvre of Sun Ra, a bow to his, but also to their own music.

Heliocentric Counterblast in their performance at Ring-Ring-Festival challenged the spirit of Jazz itself, in the shape of an irresistible alienation, in fact teeming with joy and beauty from chaos – or chaotic beauty. A radio program you were always longing for, a live radio transmission you always wanted to listen to. Those who were privileged to be present left the studio filled with joy, blessed with deepest belief into the healing powers of good mood and high spirits. They should be grateful to Sun Ra and wish him a Happy Birthday!