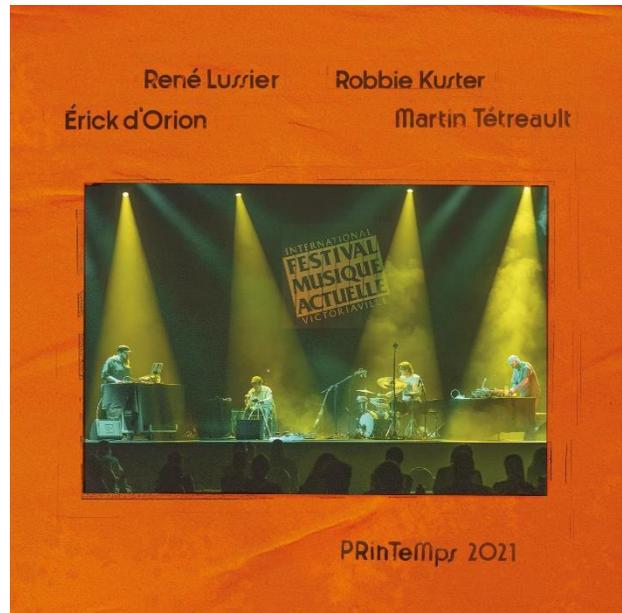


Complètement Marteau, René Lussier (ReR Megacorp) & PRinTeMps 2021, René Lussier, Robbie Kuster, Érick d'Orion, Martin Tétréault (Les Disques VICTO)

By Steven Loewy

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Montréal-based guitarist René Lussier, who turns 65 this month, has alternately thrilled and surprised listeners with a fresh and evolving (and occasionally devolving) approach, which made him one of the leading free-style Canadian performers in the decades at the end of the 20th Century. Ensclosed in a wide variety of performance, ranging from fully composed pieces to wildly comedic and scintillating free improvisation, Lussier continues to pump out a regular flow of recordings exploring the outer edges, incorporating a form of theatrical performance mixed with wild juxtapositions of jazzy riffs, moody ambient rhythms and changing tempos and sounds. Along the way, he adds "...home-made percussive elements consisting of rubbing sounds, mouth sounds, cake spatulas, barbecue spits and Styrofoam on a wet pane of glass."

Complètement Marteau collects some of the guitarist's 21st Century compositions, performed solo with electronics, voices, electric guitar riffs and drones coming and going. Acoustic bassist Hugo Blouin performs solo on "Le Clou", one of the highlights, with alternating arco bass, pizzicato strumming, jazzy melodies and plenty of displays of great technique. Elsewhere, there is lots going on, as Lussier totally dominates with strong guitar riffs, a fine display of the Hans Reichel-invented daxophone and reverberating, crusty electronics and bluesy and rock-like musings. Calling it "John Zorn Meets the Crazy guy with the Guitar" wouldn't be way off. The results pay off as there is continuous excitement in the air, exemplified by the rousing "Pour Modifier Vos Options Personnelles, Appuyer, Sur L'étoile", a 15-minute tour de force mixing crunchy, explosive electro magic with a variety of changing moods and sounds.

PRinTeMps 2021, recorded live at the Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, is an entirely different kind of recording, in which Lussier is joined by Érick D'Orion on laptop and electronics, Robbie Kuster on drums and longtime collaborator and turntable manipulator whiz Martin Tétréault. Lussier fans should enjoy the peregrinations of the unit, as there are the usual little sounds, guitar wizardry and almost anything else you can imagine. Volume intensifies and wanes, ambience rears its head and the variety is endless. "Celle Qui Précède L'Autre" and "L'Autre" are standouts, the former with thrilling guitar and hard-hitting drums, tailed by untamed daxophone and repetitive drumming, the latter focusing on static, bells, powerful drumming, moaning voices and more.

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