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Jack Mouse & Scott Robinson: Snakeheads & Ladybugs (2015)

By **DAN BILAWSKY**, Published: December 25, 2014 | 1,484 views

This may be a brand new release for 2015, but it's been thirty years in the making. Drummer Jack Mouse and man-of-many-horns [Scott Robinson](#) have been contemplating putting together an album of freely-improvised duets since the '80s, and now they've finally found the time and place to make it happen.

Snakeheads & Ladybugs presents a dozen aural concoctions that mark these men as players with big ears and strong communicative skills. Mouse and Robinson relish the opportunity to let go and explore the musical outer reaches together, but this isn't your typical Sturm und Drang saxophone-and-drums date. There's great sensitivity in the majority of these probing pieces, which should come as no surprise considering the fact that both men carry reputations as being articulate musical speakers. Mouse delivers clear-headed, cleanly-executed tom and cymbal work, Robinson gets all matter of sounds from the collection of horns he brings along for the trip, and neither man steps all over the other one. Both men stress musicality over muscularity, a relative rarity in this type of scenario.

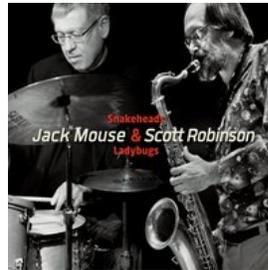
The music itself isn't uni-directional, as each track references a different pathway, language, or dialect. One number may be built around soft and eerie tremolos that conjure thoughts of an alien landing in a '50s sci-fi film ("Flutter"); another may center on Mouse's press rolls, as Robinson delivers seagull sounds and lightly popping rejoinders ("Two Minute March"); and a third may find Robinson's trumpet working atop Mouse's linear hi-hat-and-snare grooves ("Funk Infestation"). Fury has its place here ("Scorch"), as Mouse and Robinson show that they can run wild with the best of them, but it's hardly a dominant theme.

While one or two tracks here suffer from a lack of direction (i.e. "Orcan"), the large majority of these on-the-spot creations are highly focused explorations that invite the listener in as a near-equal party. With *Snakeheads & Ladybugs*, Mouse and Robinson manage to prove that there's a tactful and tasteful way to musically portray the great unknown.

Track Listing: Flutter; Bolero Incognito; Backward Glance; Two Minute March; Orcan; Dual Duel; Funk Infestation; Snakeheads & Ladybugs; Shapeshifter; Scorch; Fandango; FreeBop.

Personnel: Scott Robinson: tenor, C-melody sax, cornet, e-flat clarinet; Jack Mouse: drums.

Record Label: Tall Grass Records



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