

MATS/MORGAN BAND HEAT BEATS LIVE // TOURBOOK 1991-2007 CD+DVD CUNEIFORM 2008

“Öberg, blind from birth, is a keyboard prodigy, while Agren is regularly voted into the top three best drummers in the world. The music is **jazz-rock, echoing Zappa, but more often world/jazz-rock supremo Joe Zawinul, and his ilk. Bassist Tommy Tordsson aids the remarkable duo.** The tracks, all live, range from **heavyweight jazz-rock freak-outs in impossible-to-follow time signatures, to otherworldly Zawinul-esque divertissements. Öberg wrings some great sounds out of his synth...** it does grip the listener, especially the insane piano/harp/drums/brass trip cut “The Bösendorfer of Advokaten.” The DVD collects sixty-five clips of Agren in action, ranging from studio work to sessions to live cuts. **Excellent quality material, and an absolute must for drummers in any genre.**” – Simon Lewis & Stephen Palmer, *Terrascope*, www.terrascope.co.uk, 2008

“With a collection of eight albums already and the experience of playing at concerts and festivals alike, Mats Oberg and Morgan Agren have a life long rush of musical genius behind them and they are not stopping there...the duo definitely have something huge going for them... The CD, Heat Beats Live, is a collection of the excellence of their live performances done at Stockholm’s Club Fasching in May 2005 and April 2007, and in France’s Le Triton club near Paris in September 2007... **Jazz Rock must have... If you are a fan of any type of jazz music from Medeski Martin and Wood, Frank Zappa, or even trip hop artists such as Bjork or Massive Attack, you need to pick up this album for you collection. It’s a decision you won’t regret!**” [5 star] – Lisa Knapp, *Lucidforge*, www.lucidforge.com

[Ranked number 3 on Loughborough Radio’s Alternative playlist] – *Jazzwise*, November 2008

“If your tastes run to the more experimental side of things, this is a disc you simply must have... **highly charged experimental jazz-fusion with doses of modern classical influences.** The musicianship of this duo is first rate; it’s absurdly complex at times yet on a dime will become minimalistic featuring tinkling keyboards and harmonica... it’s a musical roller-coaster. You will never quite know where the music will be going next because it defies traditional convention.” – Jerry Lucky, “My Progressive Rock World”, *JerryLucky.com*

“...this new live album...it’s a wide variety...**complex fusion, full of solos, blending-in folk and all sorts of other elements, with obvious influences like: Zappa/ Mothers, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Samia Mamma Manna, in fact lots of jazz-fusion and RIO type musicians** are adapted and sewn into their lively concoction... The bonus DVD credited to Morgan Agren: Tourbook 1991-2007... collecting various Mats/Morgan gig extracts along with other bands, projects, and solo work, does showcase his talent well in a wide variety of settings... he’s good, and with an original style.” – Alan Freeman, *Audion*

“**Mats/Morgan Band produces a frenetic, musical stew that always intrigues and usually ingratiates... Equipped with jaw-dropping chops,** the band sometimes lets unbridled virtuosity get the better of it... But wait – sometimes the utter wild musicianship trumps everything: One finds oneself bowing in humble acknowledgement of genius bracketing whatever reservations one might have about the downright audacity of the proceedings (“Tuvas Rumba”). Other times (“Cry of Laika”) there’s such a pure folk sensibility operating, that grousing would be curmudgeonly without cause... if you’re all taken by **chops-heavy world/jazz/rock/classical fusion**, it’s certainly worth a listen.” – Jan Dennis, *Audiophile Audition*, www.audaud.com

“**Their music is influenced by jazz, classical, progressive rock, Magma, Frank Zappa, and jazz-fusion...** Most of the songs are very complex and are not in your standard 4/4 time...Mats uses a full range of keyboard sounds creating a very full sound. **Morgan’s drumming at times reminded me of Terry Bozzio’s** playing, where they play melodies and rhythm at the same time. He also changes where he accents the beats... and this gives a lot of color to his playing... The highlight of this package for me is the DVD... put together by Morgan Agren... There are over 70 video clips... videos of the Mats/ Morgan Band, Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart tribute bands, Fredrik Thordendal (Meshuggah) and other jazz ensembles... really good close up shots of Morgan playing... **He definitely has his own style and adds a lot to the music he plays from jazz to metal. I could not recommend this DVD enough to anyone that plays drums or enjoys them... One amazing drummer!**” [4 stars] – Christian Bernier, *Sea of Tranquility*, www.seaoftranquility.org

“The live DVD *Tourbooks*...opens with a tight shot of drummer Morgan Agren’s hands...poised over a vast drum kit...When he starts, his hands fly over the set, impossibly fast but light-tempered and playful. ...**Agren is... a drummer’s drummer who can flit from cool traditional jazz to proggy rock to howling Swedish metal, without dropping a stick, without batting an eye... Heat Beats Live is...distillation of the pair’s technical proficiency and playful musicality,** augmented on about half the tracks by a full band. The disc starts with “The Return of Advokaten”, a prolonged, fast-paced three-way between Agren’s pulsing, storming rhythms, Oberg’s cool Return to Forever-ish keys, and Tommy Tordsson’s frantic bass. The keyboard takes all kinds of roles here, sounding like an electric piano, an organ and, briefly, a flute. Yet it’s the the duel in the rhythm section that gives the cut oomph. You quite simply can’t believe that both of them can keep up with the pace and complexity... **the most powerful cuts seem to be...the ones where Mats and Morgan go at it, just the two of them, their difficultly paced rhythms matching sometimes and intersecting at odd angles at others. You are struck first by the skill at work ... but then by the sense of play. There is a lightness, a giddiness, a trick-rider bravado to the stunts they pull, as if they themselves cannot stop grinning at what they have gotten away with...** Your appreciation for *Heat Beats* will depend... on how well you tolerate fusion... but Mats and Morgan do it so skillfully that you have to set personal preferences aside... on *Trends and Other Diseases*... the addition of vocals takes the focus off their really excellent playing and puts it on the melodies. **It’s much more of a pop take on what they do, a fusion not just of rock and jazz, but of R&B, funk, and diva crooning...** the skill level is undeniably high.... **If you’ve got a drummer in your family, pick these records up for him. He’ll either thank you or give up his instrument forever.**” [7 stars] – Jennifer Kelly, *PopMatters*, www.popmatters.com

“Swedish jazz/prog rock outfit **Mats Morgan Band** owe a lot to the more exploratory flirtations between jazz and rock through the 60’s and 70’s, especially in **John McLaughlin’s Mahavishnu Orchestra**, and more significantly **Frank Zappa’s** work... **The controlled insanity of Zappa comes through in Heat Beats Live...** Mats Morgan Band are successful when they go for sustained intensity... **It would be criminal to ignore just how amazing the performances on this album are. The bass work is particularly notable.** Even though it undoubtedly evokes the jazz fusion of the 80’s, particularly when slap is used, bass guitarist Tommy Thordsson ultimately proves to be a strong basis for the musical material above, particularly where Morgan Agren seeks more to add color and spectacle to the band’s structure... his breakneck voicings are breathtaking and of the kind of harmonically obtuse chord structures that would make Zappa proud... ignore just how alive these players are in a live format and how well the style does come off when put forth with consistency and structural order. **Above all, when on song, Mats Morgan Band is totally ridiculous fun.**” – Marcus Whale, *The Silent Ballet*

“The CD/DVD set showcases the talents of Swedish drummer Morgan Agren. The live CD features Agren and keyboardist Mats Oberg playing their **unique brand of Zappa influenced jazz/rock**, while the DVD *Tourbook 1991-2007* show Agren... Both feature **great drumming from Agren** but ‘Tvingle’ with the funky bass of Tommy Tordsson is the favourite track” [3 stars] – Brent Keefe, *Drummer Magazine*

“**A solid fifty two minute fusion jazz workout by this Swedish group of brilliant** musicians, and a feature-length DVD of footage from throughout their career.” – George Parsons, *Dream Magazine* #9