

What the press has said about:

Mats/Morgan Band *The Music or the Money?* *Cuneiform reissue* 2011

“Inspired by everyone from Zappa, Return to Forever and the Mahavishnu Orchestra to Miles Davis, Buddy Rich and Louis Bellson...The music is dense, complex, ridiculously tight and relentlessly astounding, with innumerable virtuosic turns by the amazing Öberg on piano, synthesizer, accordion and harmonica.”

– Bill Milkowski, *Jazz Times*, February 2011

“Side by side with the more ‘out there’ Zappa type improvisations and interludes there is, some sparkling musicianship and melodies (e.g ‘If Only I Had A Clavinet’) to make this one of the most accessible Mats/Morgan recordings...‘Coco’ and ‘I Wanna’ touch on psych, with a devilish sense of humour while the closing number, the 9:23 of ‘Baader Puff’ is astonishing, like ELP meets the Mothers of Invention with a bit of Kraftwerk thrown in, ending in mellow mood like a piece of melodic progressive rock, definitely one of my all time favourite Mats Morgan tunes!...These guys certainly push the boundaries and this is one double CD it will take a long, long time to explore!”

– Phil Jackson, *Acid Dragon*

“The Mats/Morgan Band careens from progressive rock to fusion-fueled jazz rock and from Frank Zappa-esque pop spoofery to rock-etched avant-garde...Öberg and Ågren...hopscoth from one genre to another, often on the same track.

...There is a lot more to The Mats/Morgan Band than Zappa influences, but his eclectic taste and far-reaching resourcefulness certainly color the proceedings.

...familiar musical quotations...are tweaked or mocked...French composer Olivier Messiaen gets twisted and pulled apart like taffy during “Advokaten Le Messiaen,” a rock/classical crossover light years removed from the usual Emerson, Lake, and Palmer-inspired pomposity.

There are also instances when The Mats/Morgan Band emulate or simulate the distorted pop of archetypes such as The Residents, particularly during the melodic but warped pop piece, “Coco,” which marries 1960s psychedelic pop with decidedly odd auditory left turns.

...“Jeriko,”...is a keyboard driven improvisation which has a King Crimson flavor, with Öberg’s electronics taking the place of Robert Fripp’s guitar.

Small doses of The Mats/Morgan Band prove to be the best way to appreciate *The Music or the Money?* ...the music can be listened to with concentration...wide-ranging creativity.”

– Doug Simpson, *Audiophile Audition*, February 25, 2011

“There’s a bracing quality to the music from this Swedish band. The 35 tracks cross knotty jazz rock, playful pop pastiche and densely woven prog rock overtures to form a fascinating and fast-moving hybrid.

Their piquant mix of complexity and needle-sharp musical humour is pungently reminiscent of Frank Zappa’s ability to move seamlessly between such poles.

When they do stretch out, as on disc two, it’s **deeply rewarding...fierce, acid-etched guitar lines on the Canterbury-esque suite, *Hjorton Från Mars*, are especially noteworthy and typify the virtuoso support supplied by a tightly drilled ensemble across the entire album. First rate stuff.”**

– Sid Smith, *Progression Magazine*

“The band around 1997 showed brilliance and intelligence with domination of keyboards, bass and rhythmic ideas...It was then that the core of the band caught attention from Frank Zappa...the singing parts are special, with use of slightly odd vocal harmonies...The keyboard are rooted in something like jazz-rock without borders...interesting use of rhythms...The accordion adds extra ideas, occasionally rooted in Eastern European folk...**The extended 1997 album is brilliant, well-mixed and surprised for the whole near 70 minutes...**The second CD is more improvised, more simple, like jazz-rock improvisations...the opener “Dr. Thor” with its long classical/jazz improvisation is a favourite live track.”

– Gerald Van Waes, *Psychemusic.org*, July 3, 2010

“An expanded and remastered version of 1997’s *The Music or the Money?*...A wild but virtuosic performance of originals that showcase their vast abilities...The payoff comes in amazing performances, like the live, Chick Corea-grade piano/drums improvisation of “Dr. Thor.”...Although Zappa influences abound I’m often reminded more of the Residents than the Mothers...*The Music or the Money?* never takes the easy way out, and Mats/Morgan wouldn’t have it any other way.”

– S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, November 11, 2010

“There’s a level of genius to how Mats/Morgan combine excellent jazz fusion, classical arrangements, off the wall antics, and extremely weird ideas on *The Music or the Money?*

Considering their origins, it makes sense that much of *The Music or the Money?* resembles the odder and looser compositions featured on classics like *We’re Only in it For the Money* and *Uncle Meat*...This reissue adds forty-five extra minutes, resulting in **nearly two hours of music that is simultaneously complex, unique, interesting, repetitive.**

The sequencing on the reissue is totally different from the original release...None of that matters, though.

...“If I Only Had a Clavinet,” and “Coco” stand out...The former uses a cartoonish vocal and playful arrangement, bringing to mind the silliness of Ween and The Residents...The latter is easily the coolest song...a quirky English vibe like a less eccentric and simpler offering by Neal Innes (The Bonzo Dog Band).

Most of what remains on *The Music or the Money?* is a mixture of odd sound effects, rapid drumming and piano playing, and a lot of experimentation with timbres and form...**There is a lot of intelligence and craft.**

Mats/Morgan deserves applause...*The Music or the Money?* simply floats into its own space; it's a fascinating journey."

– Jordan Blum, *Sea of Tranquility*, October 8, 2010

"The Mats/Morgan Band and their two CD release *The Music or the Money?* are so good it scares me. I mean, they are good, brothers and sisters.

They have been positively influenced by the best of Frank Zappa's synclavier music, and there are parts that show this through madcap spacefunk meets Varesian encounters... Then they have jam as a trio, with **the incredible drumming of Morgan Ågren spurring Mats Öberg on to some dizzying improvising heights that go beyond what anybody who listens to "post-prog" has any right to expect...There are moments that can take your hair out by the roots...** Then there are songs that have an irresistible quirkiness and show arranging prowess and melodic singularity.

These folks have incredible chops but there is nothing cliché about it... **The music goes by like a high-speed express bullet train, but it's not just fast, it's compositionally striking.**

Anyone who follows the advanced rock world should not miss this one. Whoooo."

–Grego Applegate Edwards, *Gaplegate Guitar and Bass Blog*, August 13, 2010

"Music that contains elements of avant-garde/free jazz, progressive and modern classical music, jazz, dance, techno, electronic music, cleverly constructed, technically excellent and very interesting to listen to.

...influenced by...quirkier moments of We Are Only In It For The Money and Uncle Meat era Zappa... also elements of Steve Vai, the Flex-able era,...with experimental soundstages...Some of the interactions also call to mind the stunning uniqueness of The Residents...

The double CD is **full of syncopated rhythms that at times deviates from the regular notation, placing stress and accent on the rhythmic notation where you wouldn't expect it...** an album that is built on strange, rapid drum and piano patterns, an experimentation of timbre and meter... Diversity is the order of the day.

There are some **mesmerizing guitar interactions...Dr. Thor for me is a stand out piece, (which is not an easy thing to do with an album full of interesting work), featuring a beautiful virtuosity of Öberg punctuated by Ågren intelligent percussions.**

It is an **album that does showcase the abilities of Mats and Morgan...to challenge and more importantly to intrigue.**

This is a definite must for lovers of Zappa, The Residents, Steve Vai, and anyone who likes intricate quirky music. The re-issue may add forty-five minutes to the original release, (thank you Cuneiform)...It may drop into the realms of the avant-garde from time to time...makes what is here even more interesting.

This is an album that certainly floats my boat."

– John O' Boyle, *Dutch Progressive Rock Page*, 2011