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“Le Jazz Hot: How the French Saved Jazz” is a marvelous jazz show

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By Lucy Komisar



Peter and Will Anderson.

It's getting to be a lesser-kept secret, but twin brothers Peter and Will Anderson are back at 59E59 Street Theaters for a multimedia jazz band performance, this one called “Le Jazz Hot: How the French Saved Jazz.”

A mix of old video and terrific live playing by their quintet, it is devoted to the stories and sounds of some of America's great black jazz musicians who went to France beginning in the 1920s, because the French were a lot more hospitable to them than were Americans, including American cops. Some are famous, but others you might not know about.

The venue is an intimate room filled with closely set round tables with red tablecloths and yellow roses. You can bring in drinks you buy at the bar.



Sidney Bechet.

The brothers are clever, funny, and charming. They play the reeds — saxophone, clarinet and flute. Will jokes about the flute being a masculine instrument.

The quintet is completed by Alex Wintz on guitar, Luc Decker on drums, and Clovis Nicolas on bass. All are prominent on the jazz scene, performing at the Village Vanguard, the Blue Note, Jazz at Lincoln Center and international festivals.

The evening is a special treat, featuring sounds of swing and gypsy jazz. History was interspersed with live music, going back to Sidney Bechet and Josephine Baker, with the band taking off from the videos to play songs associated with the musicians, such as Baker's "There's a Small Hotel."

There's a video of Duke Ellington and a clip of Sidney Poitier and Paul Newman in the film "Paris Blues" for which he composed the eponymous music.



Django Reinhardt.

Peter, with his dreadful French accent, introduces "Nuages," clouds, played perfectly by important jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt, not American, but part of the Paris jazz scene of the time.

The set also includes live music made famous by the jazz greats: "C'est Si Bon" of Louis Armstrong, as well as

pieces played by Dizzie Gillespie, Kenny Clarke and Bud Powell. The set ends with Cole Porter's "I Love Paris."

It is a special evening, worth repeating next year.

["Le Jazz Hot: How the French Saved Jazz."](#) 59E59 Theaters, 59 East 59th Street, New York City. Written and directed by and featuring musicians Peter and Will Anderson. 212-279-4200. Tickets \$35. Opened Dec 3, 2013; closes Dec 29, 2013. 12/27/13.

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