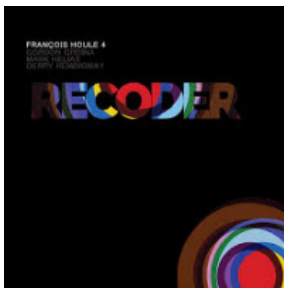




By **DOUG COLLETTE**
ALL ABOUT JAZZ
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Francois Houle 4
Recoder
[Songlines Recordings](#)
2020

The collaboration between clarinetist Francois Houle and multi-instrumentalist Gordon Grdina on *Ghost Lights* (Songlines, 2017) was quite likely inevitable, but that doesn't make its reappearance here any less dramatic. On the contrary, it resolves the suspense arising from their recent parallel works the former's *You Have Options* (Songlines Recordings, 2018) and the latter's *Ejdeha* (Songlines Recordings, 2018). Still, there's a sense of theater here on *Recorder* because the two principals, as well as the rhythm section of Mark Helias on bass and Gerry Hemingway on drums, manage to maintain their unpredictable ways of playing without lessening their idiosyncratic manner(s) of instrumental motion: the foursome's willingness to surrender to the spontaneity of the moment is courageous but well served. All of which invigorating activity is readily discernible within spacious sound quality, initially recorded by Michael Brorby, then edited, mixed and mastered by Houle himself in assumption of production responsibility.