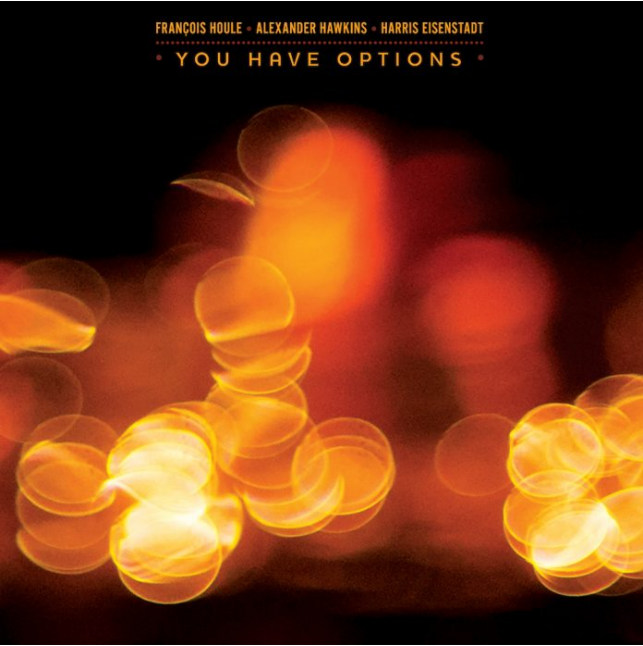


Houle, Hawkins & Eisenstadt: You Have Options

By **Garry Booth** - February 24, 2019



This improvising triumvirate coalesced around Canadian clarinetist Houle in 2014, gigging in Vancouver Island, although the English pianist Hawkins and Eisenstadt had worked together since 2006.

They found they had similar tastes and an appetite for penning their own material and the programme here reflects that shared empathy: six of the 10 pieces are originals; “Art” is from Steve Lacy’s book, “Largo” from Charles Ives (an obscure piece for clarinet, piano and violin) and “Dusk” by pianist Andrew Hill.

They play an often dense, albeit controlled style of group improv that relies more on ears, technique and sound quality than pure power and attack. Not that it’s a soft ride: “Run Riot” has Houle’s loudly beseeching clarinet front and centre, buffeted by a forceful drum and piano exchange.

Eisenstadt’s “The Pitts” has a trundling Monk-like piano line and stertorous drum accompaniment that imparts a melancholic mood made more mournful by a gorgeously expressive clarinet. Houle’s “Prayer” builds to a climax on the back of repeated piano motif while Hawkins’ “Advice” surprises with a bluesy nod to New Orleans.

Discography
Clue; Art; Run Riot; The Pitts; Prayer; Advice; Largo; You Have Options, I Have a Lawyer; Le Concombre de Chicoutimi; Dusk (58.46)
Francois Houle (cl); Alexander Hawkins (p); Harris Eisenstadt (d). Vancouver, July 5, 2016.

Songlines SGL1628-2

REVIEW OVERVIEW

Reviewer rating	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
<div>SUMMARY</div> <p>"...an often dense, albeit controlled style of group improv that relies more on ears, technique and sound quality than pure power and attack..."</p>	
	<div>3</div> <div>★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆</div>