

The secrets of Roots and Wings

After inviting Phil Abraham to play in Seattle on the West Coast in May 2013, Dave Menz became the organiser of Phil Abraham's recording of *Roots and Wings* in New York in February 2014. With the common thread through the album being Jean de la Fontaine's fable of the Raven and the Fox, Phil's latest album has its 'Roots' deeply grounded in major jazz pieces and its 'Wings' in the delicate freedom of interpretation of those very same pieces and in the recording of some original compositions as well. The cherry on the cake is that *Roots and Wings* was recorded with creme de la creme musicians and friends: top French guitarist Sylvain Luc from Paris, very best double bass player Hein Van de Geyn from Cape Town, world famous percussionist Mino Cinelu from New York, formerly with Miles Davis, Sting etc. and with special guest, rising American star Bria Skonberg on the trumpet. Some pieces have a special story... So discover those stories told by Phil himself and enjoy the music even more...



It Don't Mean a Thing: Duke Ellington's words resonate here in a special way as this piece is all about swing, one of the major bases of jazz. Indeed jazz is nothing if it ain't got the swing. So this version starts in a Latin style and the key word ('swing') is even left out so that the lyrics themselves don't mean anything either. This progressively opens the door to the scatting part of the song. Groove is present throughout the tune but feel the difference towards the end when swing does appear.



Degustation: This is about Bourgogne and its famous wine. I was inspired

by a week spent in Châlon, France, playing and recording a CD there with the Big Band Châlon Bourgogne. Each evening, between rehearsals, we had a wine tasting. The tune I wrote really follows the progress of a tasting. The bass introduction symbolises the presentation of the bottle, the first part of the melody mimics the first sip in your mouth, the second part with a change of key and with some more notes provides you with new flavours and so on with the third part until the resolution in major, which fits with the accomplishment of all the tastes of the wine in your mouth.





Petit à Petit: (Little by little) This piece represents the long path each musician and in fact each artist has to follow to be recognized as such, with all the obstacles, disappointments, challenges but also all the fantastic moments thanks to the other musicians, artists and of course the audience and all the wonderful places where we perform. The tune is

mainly in minor but has a colourful thriving end in major.

Autumn in Forest: This piece is a wink to "Autumn in New York". Forest is basically a part of Brussels, like Brooklyn (we recorded in Brooklyn) is a district of New York and this is where I live. In Forest, there are a few beautiful natural parks and an old abbey. In fact there was a time when vineyards were grown here so maybe I was inspired in one of those parks for my 'Degustation' as well...



Le Corbeau et le Renard: (The Raven and the Fox) See first the translation of the fable in the CD booklet. First step: the 'parrottrombone' repeats each of the phrases of its master. Second step: it already knows the text much better and is able to tell the tale at the same time as its master. Third step: it stands on its own two feet or as we say in French "it flies with its own two wings". My good old friend Francis Leclerc was the inspiration for this joke. I

started to do this in my one-man show about ten or fifteen years ago. Now I often do it in concerts because it's a bit of a laugh really and people keep asking for it!