



Duke Heitger and Bernd Lhotzky

Doin' the Voom Voom Arbors Records

By Tom McDermott

With his daytime gig on the Steamboat Natchez ended by Katrina, trumpeter Duke Heitger has been hard to hear in New Orleans. His latest CD, *Doin' the Voom Voom*, shows that he hasn't stopped growing as a player. Recorded in a church in Bavaria, it is one of those rare trad jazz albums with an absolutely gorgeous sound. Duke's wide-open tone, very Armstrongian at the start of his career, takes on layers of Ruby Braff here as it grows richer. His mute work is terrific, and superbly recorded here.

Accompanying Duke is the German pianist Bernd Lhotzky, with an equally gorgeous sound well captured. Lhotzky is flawless and swinging, and must make anyone's list of the world's half-dozen best stride pianists. His execution of James P. Johnson's "You've Got to Be Modernistic" is a delight. These two thirtysomething musicians make some interesting repertory choices: Ellington rarities like the title cut and "Saturday Night Function," a Carlos Gardel tango, an Elgar bonbon, alongside better known tunes by Gershwin and Kern. But again, the sonic quality is the clincher. Record musicians as good as these two in conditions this good and it will always be catnip for classic jazz lovers.