



Benevento/Russo Duo: Best Reason To Buy The Sun As told by Jesse Jarnow, the Rolling Stone correspondent that's followed their career.

Two guys, four hands, kaleidoscopically exploding wall of sound. 15 years playing together, 250 shows per annum, famous to the underground. Well positioned to bubble up this year with their ropeadope debut – best reason to buy the sun. It's so much fun. It's the Duo y'all, and here's a little story you should know:

Straight outta Brooklyn like a gringo Sly & Robbie (with tortoise-shell rims), our masked crusaders - organist Marco Benevento and drummer Joe Russo - split indie jazz wide open with sweepingly efficient arrangements that snap, crackle and pop the fine lines one finds in trying to categorize music. And after a fake bidding war exploded into a real deal, the time had come to make a record.

The two-man Wrecking Crew laid down their Ropeadope debut in Hollywood in August of 2004 with producer and premier alterna-drummer Joey Waronker (Beck, R.E.M.) between left-field collaborations with a range of artists, from hip hop pioneers (west coast underground sensation, Lyrics Born) to jazz passengers (Charlie Hunter, Marc Ribot) to rock odd balls (Rana, Ween) and jam kings (Mike Gordon, Warren Haynes).

Recording, Best Reason to Buy the Sun gave the instrumental Duo an all-new partner: the recording studio. Acting as an editor, Waronker helped the two get to the

core of what Russo calls "songs that almost shouldn't be instrumental." The Duo revealed themselves as surprisingly great songwriters, lashing together influences as diverse as Radiohead and Elliot Smith into powerfully ethereal melodies.

The Duo's sound, found on their new record, is a telescoped blow-up of the ghosts of New York's underground past. Sharpening their teeth at their weekly "Thursday night booty call" (Russo's joke) at the Knitting Factory's famed basement Tap Bar, The Duo became the city's worst-kept secret, friends telling friends telling friends. Soon, they had no choice but to move upstairs, load the station wagon, and take the show on the road -- two dudes taking the world by good vibes, and family ties (the guys have been best friends since meeting 20 years ago at Franklin Lakes Middle School in North Jersey). From basement floors to headlining front doors, the sounds keep evolving.

The two-man lineup, Benevento's left hand anchors the basslines, began as a practical matter, but quickly developed an aesthetic of its own. Citing a revelatory experience watching the White Stripes' Jack White adapt Elephant's studio thunder to his band's live guitar/drums lineup, The Duo economized. Feeding Benevento's parts into Russo's sampler, the pair simultaneously recalled the (re)inventive jazz of Brad Mehldau (Benevento's longtime mentor) and the sleek modernity of indie darlings The Postal Service (Russo's longtime method of sending mail).

Political undertones abound. Best Reason To Buy The Sun? "Well, what else is left?" The Duo respond. "Scratchitti" is an interpretation of the violently cryptic

etchings on subway windows, pocked scars of contemporary urban life. Russo and guest percussionist Mike Dillon (Critters Buggin) lay down a manic zag while Benevento and freakaphonist Skerik (Critters Buggin) trigger a tense avalanche. "My Pet Goat," meanwhile, is a tribute to the infamous children's book clutched between George Bush's nervous hands when told of the attacks on 9/11.

Best Reason To Buy The Sun rewards color more than flashiness, emulating live what Radiohead and Nigel Godrich or Jim O'Rourke and Wilco spend small eternities crafting, applying whisker-brush detail to a gargantuan sound. And that sound is only getting bigger. So, here they are, the arbiters of space-age love-jazz, the Benevento/Russo Duo, ready to conquer the fabulous world of tomorrow.



www.ropeadope.com