

ZED-U

Night Time on the Middle Passage

Release Date: 15th June 2009

Babel - BDV2982

Night Time on the Middle Passage is the debut album from three-piece band **Zed-U**. The band – bassist **Neil Charles**, reedsman **Shabaka Hutchings** and drummer **Tom Skinner** - have produced what Jazzwise called something “fresh and exciting” and have already gained a strong word-of-mouth reputation on the London scene. The band's music - an energetic, improvisation-driven kind of 'jazz-thrash' mixes improv with electronica, and even dub reggae, creating a unique, big sound, much greater than the sum of their parts would suggest.

The title **Night Time on the Middle Passage** refers to the intercontinental strip of sea between Africa and the West; depicting transition, the fusion of cultures and ways of life – all integral to the band's creative processes. Their interest in merging cultures, the development of the urban landscape and the need for self-expression have all influenced the music and also their approach to making music. They have been described as a band in flux, which goes some way towards describing their method of constantly reworking their material, of perfecting tunes in terms of how they were originally conceived, written and arranged, only to constantly reinvent them. This approach lends a freshness to the music and the album itself becomes a snapshot of a certain time and place in the band's history, most likely never to be repeated.

With his input on composition and arrangement, John Surman is also very much a part of **Night Time on the Middle Passage**. His suggestions were taken on board throughout the writing, recording and mixing process. By taking the raw elements of jazz and incorporating generous use of electronic loops and effects, **Zed-U** creates what they call a 'symphony of sound'. Each instrument effectively doubles up their contribution by adding electronic effects, making a much larger sound. They successfully dissect numerous styles and genres to meet their own ends and one of the most distinctive sounds to come out of this has been dub reggae, largely credited to drummer Tom Skinner. It can be heard lurking in several tracks, most notably on *Phone Tap*, but also in *Showroom Dummies*, a cover of the Kraftwerk classic which works extraordinary well in this setting. Lalo Schifrin fans will spot a cheeky Lalo riff towards the end of *Breaking the News* whilst hardcore jazz-thrashers will be turning the volume level up for *Chief*, which features some awesome tenor sax playing from Shabaka Hutchings over Neil Charles' driving bass line.

Album launch:

Vortex, LONDON

Thursday June 11th

For more information/ interviews/ images please contact Siân Williams at Riotsquad Publicity on:

020 7223 7456 or email sian@riotsquadpublicity.com