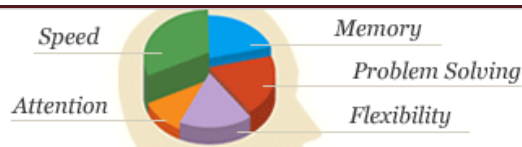


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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

## Music Review: Sultans of String – Move!

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Author: Phillip Barnett — Published: Dec 11, 2011 at 9:39 pm

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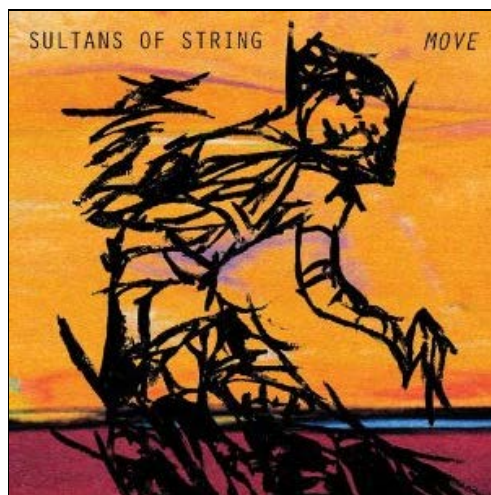
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The Toronto-based group Sultans of String creates music based on a variety of genres, including Flamenco, Arabic folk, Cuban rhythms, Gypsy jazz and Brazilian Samba. *Move!* Is their third CD.

Sultans of String, whose name is a play from the Dire Straits hit "Sultans of Swing," is led by six-string violinist Chris McKhool. McKhool is also a well-known children's music performer. He has clearly listened to a lot of Stéphane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt, which shows in his tone and in the instrumental arrangements. He's also played with Jesse Cook and Pavlo, and influences from these artists are evident. He's joined by guitarists Kevin Laliberté and Eddie Paton, bassist Drew Birston and Cuban percussionist Rosendo "Chendy" Leon.



These instrumentalists are all virtuosos, and the interplay between them flows seamlessly. From the YouTube performances I've seen, they also seem to have a good time together and avoid the temptation to take themselves too seriously. They combine their influences in sometimes quirky and unexpected ways. The changes between musical styles can be a bit abrupt — and that seems to be the point. Selections from *Move!* include:

- "Andalucia" – an ode to the influences that created Flamenco music. It starts out as an up-tempo Jesse Cook-style Spanish metre and then changes abruptly to a Middle-Eastern rhythm.
- "Road to Kfarmishki" – Inspired by McKhool's visit to his maternal grandparents' village in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, this song features Middle-Eastern cadences and a nay flute solo by guest Ernie Tollar. A Nay (or ney) flute, incidentally, is a Middle-Eastern end-blown flute of ancient origin. (Yes, I had to look it up.)
- "Emerald Swing" – an Irish-style fiddle tune done with a Gypsy-jazz rhythm that shows that sense of humor and quirky changes I referred to earlier. (It reminded me, in concept, of the Django Reinhardt version of "La Marseillaise.")



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Phillip Barnett is a middle-aged software geek with multiple and conflicting musical fantasies. He has played jazz piano, folk guitar and klezmer clarinet (though not all at the same time). You can follow his meanderings through twitter.

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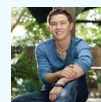
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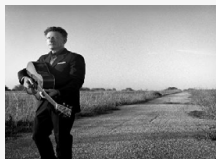
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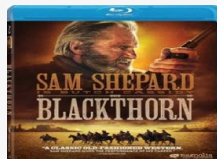
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