

VEIN

Michael Arbenz: piano Thomas Lähns: bass Florian Arbenz: drums

There certainly is no special need any more to mention the fact that today most jazz piano trios are deeply attached to musical *interplay* (even though this fact is worth to never be taken for granted!).

And yet, even with the most subtle, most distinguished form of interplay there is always one in the trio who plays the part of the *primus inter pares* – the pianist, of course (usually and by definition leader of the group).

That's exactly where pianist Michael Arbenz, drummer Florian Arbenz and bassist Thomas Lähns come up with their own idea of musical interplay. In fact, what they aim to achieve with their music - *their understanding of music* - is nothing less than the greatest possible balance of their three voices - starting with the way they work out their own compositions and arrangements, and going right through to the soloistic parts, fully assigned to all three of them.

The result is a stupendous musical togetherness, packed with surprising melodic, rhythmic and dynamic turns, played with highest precision even in the most complex, distorted and twisted passages of their compositions, arrangements and solos.

How much the musicians of VEIN actually love to explore unexpected musical terrains – unexpected for their trio -, can once more be seen in their brandnew project and CD:

VEIN now plays (with) Porgy and Bess.

First of all, the musicians of VEIN all have a classical music education. Therefore it is not surprising that they have a close relationship to the musical genre of the opera.

Secondly, George Gershwin, proving his closeness to jazz again and again in his whole oeuvre, has influenced this music once and for all with his tune „I Got Rhythm“, i.e. the *rhythm changes*.

Finally, jazz history is also a long history of the jazz interpretations of *Porgy & Bess*, with certainly the most famous and most illustrious example of Gil Evans and Miles Davis - a benchmark too high for anyone else who might want to add a new interpretation to mentioned history?

Everyone who knows the musicians of VEIN will answer „no!“, as for them, the challenge of finding new and personal ways of interpretation of existing music (which can be music of all different kinds) will always be one of their genuine musical impulses.

And so, with *Porgy & Bess*, VEIN comes up once again with a thrilling new album, full of wonderful musical ideas, breathtaking contrasts in tempo, rhythm and dynamics, beautiful lyrical passages as well as some witty *impromptus*.

It is truly due to the love and respect they feel for this music that they allow themselves to not just play it, but also to play **with** it and keep it alive by finding new ways of expression:

From the dazzling *ouverture* and the heavily grooving „*Summertime*“ to playfully interpreted solo parts of all three musicians (incl. some experimenting with the sound) and the touching interpretations of „*I loves you Porgy*“ and „*Strawberry Woman*“ right to the unusually fast versions of „*It ain't necessarily so*“ and „*There is a Boat ...*“.

Indeed, this is a VEIN production that also comes across in a fantastically swinging way, revealing once more its protagonists as real jazz virtuosos. *Virtuosos* in the best sense of the word, since each of the three musicians knows how to give way in the right moment, and with that always maintaining the dramaturgic flow and the subtly balanced musical structure.

Press

Vein, a piano trio with a difference. These guys can play together (like on "Funky Monkey") at a new level of straight-eight interaction... They don't really sound like anybody, but do proceed (way) out of the Evans-Bley tradition. Anybody who wants something truly new in the piano trio format would do well to hear this one.

Grego Edwards, Cadence, NYC, 2.2010

In the jazz club, a concert took place that was of a almost divine class of its own. Greg Osby made his appearance with the Swiss piano trio *Vein*. ... After everything that the 47-year-old alto saxophone stylist has passed through during his career he seems to be congenially cradled like never before with the two Arbenz brothers and the bass player Thomas Lähns. ... *Vein* challenges and supports Osby in a sublime manner. The pianist Michael Arbenz must be seen as hidden world star. He plays in a league with Brad Mehldau and Jacky Terrasson, technically virtuously and precisely, fissuredly wide-rangingly, filled with crazy ideas that emerge between knotted hacked chords and tingly silver-reels, harmonious, cumbersome or mellifluous – an intimate dance with the spirits of Lennie Tristano and Thelonious Monk and one's very own mind...

Ulrich Olshausen, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3.2008

In the set after the break the Vein members turned out to be – following the title of their CD *Standards - No Standards* – just as excellent when it came to interpreting other pieces. Bits such as *All the things you are* convinced, emphatically implemented. The musicians from Basle proffered an astounding concert that will stay remembered permanently.

Jürgen Zeitzel, Marburg-News, 2.2008

I thoroughly enjoyed this CD and I picture myself pulling it out when my Jazz piano friends come over, saying "Check *this* out!" Highly recommended. - David Kane, Cadence, NYC, 4.2007

Pianist Michael Arbenz and drummer Florian Arbenz accomplish with Thomas Lähns what others only graze or lose to unwanted caricature: Their trio jazz.. astonishes!

Frank von Niederhäusern, Radiomagazin, 8.2008

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