

GINA SCHWARZ

«Pannonica»

CRACKED ANNEG, CRACK 0072

REVIEW SALT PEANUTS

Austrian double bass player-composer-bandleader Gina Schwarz began her «Pannonica» project as a tribute to Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter (1913-1988), ala Kathleen Rothschild, known as a patron to bebop musicians and a friend of Thelonious Monk, who immortalized her name in a beautiful composition. Schwarz wanted that this project would reflect a female consciousness, close to the way that the Baroness saw jazz – jazz as the embodiment of modernism, tolerance, and plurality, an urgent and most necessary antidote to racism, sexism, and gender-bias.

The «Pannonica» nonet began working as a stage band at the Viennese Porgy & Bess club during the 2017-18 season, hosting a series of female composers from around the world, among them Swedish trombonist Karin Hammar, German pianist Julia Hülsmann, Chilean guitarist-singer-songwriter Camila Meza, Swiss-American pianist Sylvie Courvoisier, Polish-German sax player Angelika Niescier, Canadian trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and Danish percussionist Marilyn Mazur.

The double-album «Pannonica» reflects the inclusive aesthetics of Schwarz, adopting the Baroness' vision of jazz and embracing compositional ideas from modern jazz, contemporary music, rock, and fusion, emphasizing personal interpretations of her own motives, and leaving enough space for collective improvisations. The album is divided into the first part – «Musicbox» – featuring 11 compositions and «Free Landscape» – newly arranged 12 pieces.

«Musicbox»' compositions move gently between exotic African and East-European folk sceneries, well-dressed, chamber concert halls,

smoking jazz basements and shiny-funky dance clubs, with Schwarz herself leading and balancing gently the passionate commotion with strong rhythmic patterns, and adds bass solos in few short interludes. «Four Steps», «Lily of the Nile» and «New Year's Eve» melt these elements perfectly and highlight the powerful, emphatic interplay of the «Pannonica» nonet.

The compositions on «Free Landscape» are shorter, more urgent and energetic, suggesting distinct and concise melodic or rhythmic theme with minor attempts to develop these themes further. But there are few exceptions. Trumpeter Lorenz Raab, guitarist Primus Sitter, and Schwarz lead the rock-tinged «Baharat» with its addictive pulse, and Schwarz charges the bebop-ish «Abibliophobia» with Monk-ish tight, elliptical lines, as a beautiful homage to the Baroness.

Eyal Hareuveni

Gina Schwarz (b), Lorenz Raab (tp, flh), Lisa Hofmaninger (ss, bcl), Alois Eberl (tb), Florian Sighartner (vio), Clemens Sainitzer (c), Philipp Nykrin (p), Primus Sitter (g), Judith Schwarz (dr)

25. mars 2020

Av Jan Granlie