

Review der Online Jazz-Zeitschrift

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By Raul d'Gama Rose

Style: Modern Jazz

Published: April 01, 2009

CD Kritik "AirBass"

Gina Schwarz / Richard Oesterreicher | ATS Records (2009)

There could be many a slip between coming up with an unusual concept for a record and actually having the gumption to pull it off. Austrian bassist Gina Schwarz and harmonica maestro Richard Oesterreicher have indeed pulled it off on AirBass, a wonderful record where the two musicians share principal credits, although Schwarz is the main contributor in terms of compositions.

Conceptually, the record sets about the task of creating a dazzling palette of sound colors, often bracketed by the pedal point of Schwarz's dark, woody bass and the high and mighty undulations of Oesterreicher's harmonica. And there is something else: apart from the bass clarinet—played almost classical concert style, and rarely above the musical midriff of bubbling harmonics—there is no other lead melodic instrument or solo voice other than the harmonica. Every other instrument—piano, vibes and guitar—is rhythmically oriented, despite regular soloing. This preponderance of rhythmic instrumental orientation makes for music with an unusually soulful warmth and mighty swing.

Schwarz is a virtuoso bassist who handles the great bull of an instrument with surprising muscularity. She is also a composer of depth and sensitivity. She is able to turn observation and opinion into meaningful pieces. Her European sensibility melds well with her bluesy instincts. As a result, her work is a full-blooded display of not only musical intellect, but also a vibrant sense of dance.

This record is a perfect example. It inhabits the deepest recesses of the mind as it provokes an irresistible urge to suddenly sweep across the floor in great swirling circles. There are myriad variations of tonal color from song to song. Tempos are simple but maddeningly polyrhythmic. There is always a danger of music becoming trite and sentimental when it sets about to deliberately describe emotions, but here on AirBass, the music appears to serve a higher purpose when it examines emotions with a greater sense of depth and profundity.

At its heart, AirBass appears to revolve around the premise that the glorious center of all music is "song"—this from the classical translation of the word "air". In a deeper sense, the Latin "aria" may also be blended into the title, for the strong sense of almost "sung" melody by the harmonica. "Sound of Air" is an exquisite example of this.

Other tracks, though less deliberately aria-like, are wonderful examples of programmatic skill and recall some of the best of Oregon's music in a very (sonic) painterly manner.

"Cape Cod," "Caps & Rags," and "Noce Italiana" are wonderfully vivid; the last of which purports to relive the fictional experience of a young composer who will preview a concert work for the first time. "Ududuction," a wild romp for Schwarz and percussionist Iris Camaa, as well as "Orient Sun" and "Caps & Rags" all swing with abandon.

Swing is the big surprise, because often music that is so obviously narrative can ignore the danceable elements of song. Happily, AirBass rises far above the serious and flirts with the puckish in the rarified space that it seeks to inhabit.

„Das Album Airbass ist excellent!
Alles hervorragend - die Stücke - die Arrangements - und vor allem Richard
Oesterreicher.“

Hendrik Meurkens

Dear Gina,

Your CD IS BEAUTIFUL!!!

How you've developed. I can't express how happy and proud I am for you.

Your writing is insightful; your playing is right on the mark-in tune.

The whole CD is imaginative, creative, and shows tremendous caring and thought.

And the poetry and little stories for each song--wow!

Thoroughly enjoyable!

Thank you for sending it to me.

Regards,
Buster Williams

CD Kritik "AirBass"

Christian Bakonyi, Jazzzeit / 77, März/April 2009

Allzu viele Mundharmonika-Virtuosen hat es im Jazz nie gegeben. Umso erfreulicher ist es, dass wir mit Richard Oestreicher einen im eigenen Land haben. Noch schöner ist es, wenn es zu Generationen übergreifenden Zusammenarbeit kommt und Oestreicher mit den doch um einiges jüngeren Musikerinnen Gina Schwarz und Iris Camaa zusammenarbeitet.

Und wenn zusätzlich auch noch Clemens Salesny, Primus Sitter und Woody Schabata mitwirken, dann muss "AirBass" einen besonderen Charme haben - und so ist es auch. Herbert Otahal (p) Gina Schwarz (b) und Harry Tanschek (dr) erzeugen das rhythmisch feine Grundgerüst zu den von Schwarz komponierten Tunes, die eine bunte Spielwiese für die Ausführenden darstellen.

Es swingt und funkt an allen Ecken und Enden, es groovt dahin, kurz: wunderbare Titel auch für Oestreicher und seine Mundharmonika.

Wie spielerisch das alles klingt!

Alle Beteiligten müssen bei den Aufnahmen jede Menge Spaß gehabt haben - und ich beim Hören. (bak)

**New & Recommended Jazz CDs by Bob Bernotas,
Host of WNTI's Just Jazz**

June's four new CD recommendations:

It's Clear, Kenya Revisited Live!!!, AirBass, Mosaic

Bob Bernotas, WNTI's host of Just Jazz, makes the following four CD recommendations:

Gina Schwarz & Richard Oesterreicher: AirBass (ATS Records):

Bassist Gina Schwarz and harmonica player Richard Oesterreicher, two of Austria's most gifted jazz artists, have produced an engaging collection of tuneful pieces, most of them composed by Schwarz.

At various times the ensemble includes bass clarinet, vibes, guitar, percussion, and a string quartet, generating a fresh, original sound-palette that cannot help but surprise and delight the attentive listener.

Bob Bernotas / www.jazzbob.com

host of *Just Jazz*

Sunday nights 10:00 pm-3:00 am Eastern Time (US)

91.9 WNTI & www.wnti.org

***Just Jazz* with host Bob Bernotas is a production of WNTI and airs**

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30254 / 19. März ' 09

KLANG(&)BILD

Wolfgang Burgstaller

SCHWARZ/ÖSTERREICHER – „Airbass“

Gina Schwarz trifft auf Richard Österreicher oder Bass duelliert sich mit Mundharmonika!

Ein ungewöhnliches Jazzprojekt, bei dem sich durchwachsene Grooves mit Improvisationskünsten wunderbar ergänzen (ATS).