

The Great Harry Hillman

Press Kit 2020

Presstext

The Great Harry Hillman is a Swiss post-jazz quartet, which has been playing together for twelve years. You're correct to assume that a band named in tribute to an American athlete of the early 20th century is not your 'normal' jazz band adhering to staid standards. Their music combines jazz, rock, and improv into a subdued, layered, yet thrilling sound - quiet but powerful, played by four thoughtful musicians who are more than capable of rocking out when they feel like it. More often than not rather they wrap the listener in delicately constructed sonic webs of indefinable beauty. After Livingston (2013), Veer Off Course (2015, Klaeng Records) and TILT (2017, Cuneiform Records) The Great Harry Hillman now presents their first live album "Live at Donau115", recorded in Berlin.

Line up

Nils Fischer - bass clarinet
David Koch - guitar
Samuel Huwyler - bass
Dominik Mahnig - drums

Links

Website thegreatharryhillman.com

Youtube youtube.com/thegreatharryhillman

Spotify sptfy.com/4Ns0

Apple Music itunes.apple.com/ch/artist/the-great-harry-hillman/id730108273

Instagram instagram.com/thegreatharryhillman

Facebook facebook.com/thegreatharryhillman

Twitter twitter.com/tgharryhillman

Promo Text

When a record is referred to as cinematic what this usually means is that the music has something sweeping, epic and larger than life about it. Live At Donau115*, the fourth full-length release from Swiss post-jazz quartet The Great Harry Hillman, is also very filmic, but not in that big silver screen sort of a way. Instead, what it evokes is the institution of the arthouse cinema, the mercurial space where underground, experimental films are incubated. Where the language of film is abstracted, deconstructed and appreciated for what it is, without it having to adhere to calcified, functional blueprints designed and streamlined to serve the needs of standard narrative structures.

After 11 years of playing live shows all over the place, we developed a very unique way of how we interact with each other in a live setting. We stopped playing with a setlist and starting improvising the order of our tunes and the transitions between them. - TGHH

Listening to these seven songs is very much like watching a compilation of Stan Brakhage experiments. Colourful, amorphous things appear, flicker and pulse. The textures, the scratches, the paint on the celluloid and the amplified film grain become the very point of the work, a collection of visual poems - beautiful and open to interpretation like a Rorschach test. What's amazing is that the band painted these moving pictures in real time. A progression of ephemeral scenes resulted from free improvisation around themes lifted from previously written compositions, alloyed with the energy which was latent at the venue during the performance. You can almost hear them mining for this energy and transforming it through intense dialogue into a hypnotic reverie - tactile and textured sonics, teetering between the lyrical and caustic noise.

We come together to rehearse two to three times in a year. Usually, everyone brings some new material with them. We improvise around these ideas until we all know what each new tune is about. When that's the case then we can set the song free on stage and it can change its state every night, but without losing its core identity. - TGHH

There are also moments on this record - though they are few and fleeting - where there is a clear shift away from mere abstraction towards the formally familiar. Something reminiscent of retro jazz (whether fusion or traditional) might cut through a composition like a flash frame or what feels like a perpetual zoom might slowly cross fade into a montage sequence based around a strong Americana twanged theme. But like in a David Lynch film these moments are the definition of uncanny. Rife with atmosphere and utterly surreal, as if what is off-frame has equal importance to what was readily apparent and was interfering with the main signal, distorting it just a pinch. It's safe to say that The Great Harry Hillman make music which is layered literally and figuratively, very much like a short film based on multiple exposures.

The Band is the concept. The way we are and the way we feel. Every show is like a mixture of the four of us. We often hear that our music sounds cinematic, but we don't shoot for that. - TGHH

*Live At Donau115 is a document of a band achieving that telepathic level as an improvisatory unit. Their chemistry is impeccable, marked by a sensitivity to each other's playing and the ability to channel the emotional truth of the moment. The material found here was recorded live at club Donau115 in Berlin. The band played three consecutive concerts in three days, out of which the last two were selected for this release.

History of the Band

- 2020** Album Release Tour CH/DE/BE with 14 concerts
- 2019** Russia Tour, Live Recording Session at Donau115 Berlin, India Tour
- 2018** Springtour CH/DE/BE with 14 concerts, Bejazz Winterfestival, Schaffhauser Jazzfestival, Residence Südpol Lucerne, JazzOnze+ Lausanne, Jazz & The City Salzburg AT, 10 years anniversary tour in UK/CH/DE/AT/FR
- 2017** Japan Tour, Gig at Moods Zurich (Switzerland) with Live-Clip-Production, Production of a 360° Music Clip, Collaboration "The True Harry Nulz" with the Band "Edi Nulz" - Winner of the "BeJazz Transnational", Concert Tour in Italy and Germany, Release of 3rd Studio Album "Tilt" (2017; Cuneiform Records), Uncool Residence Poschiavo
- 2016** Festival Show "Kultursommer Germersheim" (Germany), Label Swiss Festival (Switzerland), Europe-Tour in BE/NL/DE/CH/LI, Studio Recording of 3rd Album (Label: Cuneiform Records)
- 2015** Festival appearance at the 'Suisse Diagonales Jazz Festival', Studio recording for second album "Veer Off Course", Winner of the ZKB Jazz Prize 2015, CD release tour in Germany, Belgium, UK, Switzerland)
- 2014** New Year's Tour in Switzerland and Germany (5 concerts), Video recording: 'Rabbit People'
- 2013** Festival appearance at the 'Stanser Musiktage' Switzerland, Masters degree concert in Lucerne, CD release concert in Zürich, Autumn tour in Germany and Belgium (13 concerts)
- 2012** Winter Tour in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (in co- operation with the Piotr Powlak Sextett from Austria), Bachelor degree concert in Cologne, Festival appearance at 'Kultursommer' in Germersheim Germany, Autumn tour in Germany and Switzerland (19 concerts), Recording session for the album 'Livingston'
- 2011** Bachelor degree concert in Lucerne, Autumn Tour to Germany and Switzerland (10 concerts), Demo-recording
- 2010** First concerts in foreign countries
- 2009** First concerts in Switzerland
- 2008** Establishment of the band in Lucerne

Past Gigs (Selection)

- Switzerland** Jazz Festival Willisau, Schaffhauser Jazzfestival, JazzOnze+ Lausanne, BeJazz Winterfestival Bern, Jazznojazz Festival Zurich, Stanser Musiktage Stans, Label Suisse Festival Lausanne, Theater Tuchlaube Aarau, BeJazz Bern, Moods Zurich, Café du Soleil, Saignelégier, Casa Cavalier Olivone, Jazz in Olten, EXIL Zurich, Literaturcafé Biel, Kleintheater Luzern, Bird's Eye Basel, Casa Hasler Poschiavo, Isebähnli Baden
- Germany** A-Trane Berlin, Loft Köln, Donau115 Berlin, Jazzclub Hirsch Moosburg, Kulturzentrum Lagerhaus Bremen, Café Wagner Jena, Galerie KUB Leipzig, Salon Hansen Lüneburg, Kulturhaus III & 70 Hamburg, b-flat Berlin, Dumont Aachen, Stecken Köln, C-Keller Weimar, Kiste Stuttgart, Schon Schön Mainz, Saxstall Pohrsdorf, Stadtkirche Darmstadt, Humboldthain Club Berlin
- Belgium** Hot Club Gent, Café Roskam Brussels, De Kleine Kunst Gent
- UK** Marsden Jazzfestival, Vortex London, Canteen Bristol
- Italy** JAM-Festival Venedig, Macao Mailand, Café des Arts Turin
- Austria** Jazz & the City Salzburg, Sargfabrik Wien, GMS Graz, KUG Graz
- France** Le Périscope Lyon
- Netherlands** Intro in Situ Maastricht
- Japan** Apollo Tokyo, Gig Yokohama, Star Eyes Nagoya, Mokiiriya Kanazawa, UrBANGUILD Kyoto, Left Alone Ashiya, Bird Hiroshima, Candy Chiba, Club Meguro Tokyo, Airegin Yokohama
- Russia** Kozlov Club Moscow, Nikitin Nizhny Novgorod, Tipographia culture center Tula, JFC jazz club St. Petersburg, Dreadnought Kaliningrad, Sound Museum St.Petersburg, City Jazz Center Yaroslavl, Jewish Culture Center Moscow, Petrovsky book club Voronezh
- India** Bay 146 Chennai, International Jazz Festival Hyderabad, Levi's Lounge Mumbai, The Piano Man Jazz New Delhi and Gurgaon, Shisha Jazz Festival Pune, Jazz Fest Kolkata, Jazz India Circuit Goa

Press photos

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