

The Great Harry Hillman

Reviews 2021

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Made up of Nils Fischer on bass clarinet, David Koch on guitar, Samuel Huwyler on bass and Dominik Mahnig on drums, TGHH describe their sound as post-jazz, a drawn conclusion that's quite understandable, though on this live set, taken from the second and third nights of a three-night stand at the Berlin-based venue of the title, should fully satisfy those who've followed some of the myriad courses avant jazz has taken over the last few decades. This is the Swiss combo's follow-up to TILT, their 2017 CD for Cuneiform, with the seven selections here, available on LP, CD and digital, branching out nicely from the flights taken on that set and their two prior efforts.

Those earlier releases are 2013's Livingston, which also appears to be self-released, and 2015's Veer Off Course for the Klaeng label, both available on CD; adding to Live at Donau115's already considerable appeal is that none of the pieces are taken from their studio albums. With this said, TGHH's strength is in launching from a sturdy compositional base and shooting off sparks of inspired improvisation rather than in striving for perfection in songwriting elevation. There are certainly passages with recognizable jazz tunefulness, but the band briefly visits these motifs instead of lingering upon them as they progress toward the ensemble fireworks of "Eidechsen Sie." Some rock textures are also present, particularly in the kickoff to what sounds like their "encore," but this is largely due to the amped-up muscle of the guitar, which also brings a few similarities to non-crap fusion. Live at Donau115 is a delightful record that explores a stylistic hybrid that's far from exhausted. A

<http://www.thevinylidistrict.com/the-tvd-record-store-club/2020/04/graded-on-a-curve-new-in-stores-for-april-2020-part-three/#more-380559>

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Von: Jochen Rindfrey

Das vierte Album des Schweizer Quartetts The Great Harry Hillman enthält Liveaufnahmen, die im Juli 2019 bei Konzerten in einem Berliner Club namens Donau115 stattfanden. Die Band spielte damals an drei aufeinanderfolgenden Tagen, von den letzten beiden Auftritten wurde dieses Album zusammengestellt.

“In unserer elfährigen Geschichte haben wir eine eigene Art und Weise des Interagierens in einer Live-Situation entwickelt. Eine Setlist gibt es nicht mehr - stattdessen improvisieren wir die Reihenfolge der Stücke und die Übergänge dazwischen.”

Mit diesen Worten wird die Band im Infozettel des Labels zitiert. Entsprechend gibt es auf Live at Donau115 eine Kombination aus freien Klanggebilden und strukturierten Abschnitten. Wenn sich das Quartett von seiner freiformatigen Seite zeigt, entstehen geradezu abstrakt zu nennende Gebilde, in denen sich brummendes Gebläse, plingende oder sägende Gitarre und hektisch agierende Rhythmussektion (die in diesen Fällen eigentlich gar nicht rhythmisch agiert) zu einem sperrigen, dennoch auf seltsame Weise ästhetischen Gemenge vereinen. Manchmal scheint die Band sich darin langsam voran zu tasten, dann wirken die Stücke wie impressionistische Skizzen, etwa Lost; ein andermal wieder prescht man stürmisch und kantig voran. Aber auch in solchen Stücken finden sich immer mal kurze Passagen, in denen die Musik so etwas wie eine melodische Struktur annimmt. Nur selten finden dich auch auch überwiegend strukturierte Stücke. In diesen zeigt sich das Quartett von einer kantig-jazzrockigen Seite, in Stellar auch mit crimsoidem Einschlag.

Live at Donau115 bietet faszinierende Klangerlebnisse, vorausgesetzt, man kann über weite Strecken ohne übliche musikalische Strukturen auskommen. Wertung 11/15

http://www.babyblaue-seiten.de/album_18755.html#oben

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Keep Yourself Busy!

Interview With DOMINIK MAHNIG

It's not often that we feature free jazz but, then again, THE GREAT HARRY HILLMAN are not your typical free jazz outfit. To be fair, they actually prefer to be called a post jazz outfit. The definitely quartet thrives in a live environment, but their sound has more in common with soundtrack music or even experimental than it does with standard jazz. Their latest release - and their fourth to date - is called Live At Donau115, and it also happens to be their first official live recording.

The seven songs featured on the record were recorded in Berlin, at a venue called Donau115, back in July of 2019. The songs which were cut to vinyl are a selection made from three consecutive shows. The sequencing on the record is impeccable, in that it feels not only coherent, but it manages to reach beautifully resolved dramatic tension points. To use a bit of a shortcut to describe the general stylistic direction: think of this as a very moody movie soundtrack. The fellas toy around with ambient, post rock, fusion and there are even a few one-off head nods towards americana, mainly courtesy of David Koch's guitar playing. Outside of its inherent eclecticism and the ease in distributing tension and mood, the biggest achievement here is what the band calls their brand of telepathy ie. the ability to be able to read each other's mind while playing and to be able to synchronise seamlessly. You can hear this! It appears that all of the songs on the record were pre-written, but were merely treated as departure points for free improvisation.

THE GREAT HARRY HILLMAN are scattered between Switzerland and Germany. They are best known for their 2017 record tilted Tilt, which was released on Cuneiform Records. The outfit consists of Nils Fischer (reeds), David Koch (guitar), Samuel Huwyler (bass) and

Dominik Mahnig (drums).

Here is a transcript of our short q&a with drummer Dominik Mahnig.

How have you been dealing with the lockdown?

I just finished recording some solo music which combines drums and modular synths. I planned to do this before the lockdown, but since all my gigs were cancelled I could spread the session out over two weeks, which was really helpful. Doing music helped me to stay positive. Overall, we are lucky, here in Switzerland, that we can still go outside, same goes for Germany. The fact that it's not a complete lockdown makes it easier to deal with.

What do you think will be some of the effects of this unprecedented break?

As a band we will go on no matter what! I suppose the longer the break will last, the better it will feel to play together again. I hope that the musicians and the audience will savour the live experience more, having been deprived of it for so long.

Your new record was recorded live in Berlin, in front of an audience. This is the first time that you recorded like this. What made you decide to avoid the safe-space of a studio?

The idea was to record not only the music we had written, but to document how we improvise our way in and out of the written compositions. This type of playing is what keeps us awake and in the moment. It's so cool to experience the four of us playing a tune in a totally different manner from how we had initially rehearsed it. This type of playing would be hard to achieve in a studio situation, but the studio has its own advantages, of course.

How did you prepare for this?

We prepared the same way we would have for any other live show. But, of course, it's definitely a different thing when you know that every note that you'll play can end up on your next record. Since we play a lot, and quite regularly, we don't have to rehearse excessively before any performance. It's more important for us to spend time together and to relax and catch a vibe.

When you're improvising - because most of this was improvised - does it make a difference to you whether the show is being recorded or not? I'm thinking about the self-consciousness and the added pressure of delivering something that you can eventually publish.

I guess the fact that you are recording an album will always be at the back of your head, regardless of whether you're playing live or in the studio, but at a venue it's the audience that makes it easier for you to enjoy the show.

This music really sounds like a soundtrack! And the comparison to early David Lynch is on point. Was this something that you were aiming for or is this soundtrack vibe something that coalesced on its own?

We often hear people saying that, but it wasn't our aim to produce cinematic music. We like to improvise, as a collective, and we don't follow the traditional solo after solo type of approach. I guess it just turned out that way, this time around, and it might turn into something else in the future.

Are you a fan of Mr. Lynch's work?

Lynch is an amazing person and artist. I started to watch Twin Peaks a month after the recording session, and it totally got me! It's such a masterpiece. The characters are so deep and interesting and there are so many stunning moments. It was really inspiring to watch it, and I wish I could watch it for the first time, again and again.

Being that touring is off the table for the foreseeable future, what will you guys be up to in the coming weeks or months?

My wife is gonna have our baby in June and that will be a hell of an adventure, I guess. Because of this we didn't have any plans for the summer, but hopefully small gigs will be possible again in the autumn.

All the best to you and your wife, and a safe landing to your baby!...

By FM

<https://www.famemagazine.co.uk/the-great-harry-hillman-keep-yourself-busy/>

brooklynradio.com

The Great Harry Hillman are a Swiss post-jazz quartet based in Switzerland and Germany. They are Nils Fischer (bass clarinet), David Koch (guitar), Samuel Huwyler (bass) and Dominik Mahnig (drums) Their music is what a hungry brother like myself - I'm really hungry right now! - would call one hell of a paella! Because these fellas somehow manage to amalgamate atmospheric jazz, post-rock, progressive / fusion with experimental soundscapes. There is also a bit of traditional American rock sprinkled on top of it all, like some finely chopped parsley or parmesan flakes on top of aglio e olio pasta. Either way you slice it, the fellas love to play around with strong flavours.

Live At Donau115 is the band's fourth record. As the title implies, it was recorded live and in front of an audience in Berlin, back in the summer of 2019. The record is a selection of the best bits lifted from three shows, for the purposes of this release boiled down to a solid seven songs. For the most part, the material is quite moody and murky. The press text compares it to hardcore experimental cinema - early Lynch, Brakhage etc. - and this comparison is fitting. The playing is full of drama, texture and emotion - with sounds which effectively trigger the imagination. Everything is pretty abstract, ie. it's not easy stuff, but if you give it a chance it's definitely hella rewarding.

Below, you can read about what it took to make this record, how the band has been dealing with the lockdown, and how they approach playing live and recording. Special thanks goes out to Dominik Mahnig for taking the time to chat with us.

It's rather ironic that you guys are publishing what is essentially a live record at a time when playing live is banned... Do you miss being on stage?

Yes, but I'm glad that nobody told me in February that it would be like this. The fact that we were thrown into this situation and that it's absolutely necessary that we step back for a minute, for the sake of humanity, that makes it a lot easier. It's important to get your mind and body something to chew on to stay positive and creative. We are lucky that we live in Switzerland and Germany where you can still go outside. We aren't really locked up in our apartments.

Live albums are not very popular these days, not even in Jazz. What prompted you to make one?

We've been playing together for more than 10 years now, and we've developed our own way of interacting with each other on stage. We stopped playing with a setlist and started to improvise the order of the songs and all the transitions between them. We wanted to capture this and the whole vibe between us, and this wouldn't really translate in a

studio. The audience is what creates the feeling ...

Why do you think that people aren't recording like this anymore? I would think that technically this is far cheaper and easier to do than ever.

There are so many reasons for that. We also made three studio albums before we decided to make a live recording. Most bands are more of a one-trick pony and they don't exist for that long. Furthermore, what I've observed is that there is a huge obsession with perfection nowadays and that artists want to have an overall control of their output.

There's a lot going on in Jazz, do you see yourselves as a part of this new wave? in the States you have Kamasi, in the UK Shabaka...

We have our influences from all kinds of music, both past and present. It's nice to see that musicians all over the world share the interest in each other's work, regardless if their music has the same roots. You could say that this is a new wave and we're definitely glad to be part of it.

Your new record is very cinematic. Was this the concept from the get-go, to make a live record using film language?

We did not shoot for that, but we don't mind if movie scenes appear in people's imagination. Maybe it's because we often improvise as a collective and don't serve the traditional approach, where everyone has their solo slot etc. We just play what we feel and try to be honest with ourselves. We definitely aim for a strong vibe and we love soundscapes.

Could you see yourselves scoring a movie, maybe live even? I guess the best modern example of that was Neil Young scoring Jarmusch's Dead Man.

That would be fun, but I think even though our music is often referred to as cinematic it would be quite different from what we do on stage. When we play live we're not thinking of our music supporting anything, not even a motion picture. It has to stand for itself and we can put as much detail in it as we want without having to be scared of it taking up too much attention. But hey! It's always possible to do a bit less, right?

If it was up to you, which director would you love to work with?

David Lynch, Wes Anderson, also Stanley Kubrick and Krzysztof Kieslowski. If they would ever decide to do an epic comeback.

Don't mean to rain on your parade Domink, but Mr. Kubrick and Mr. Kieslowski are no longer with us. In closing, maybe you would like to share any tips for dealing with the lock down? Maybe some links to resources or movies etc.

It's very important to find something for yourself to work on and think about. This helps a lot in staying positive. Don't forget to talk to people! Focus on the good things and don't let this loop of negative thoughts establish itself in your mind.

<http://brooklynradio.com/the-great-harry-hillmann-music-that-stands-for-itself/>

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GREAT HARRY HILLMAN - Text F. GONZALEZ / Photography BERT SPANGEMACHER

A post-jazz quartet from Switzerland named after an American Olympic gold medal champion may seem atypical but when you consider that Harry Hillman's greatest athletic achievement was setting the record in a team event the ensemble's chosen moniker begins to make sense. Just like a high-achieving team, The Great Harry Hillman brings together musicians from diverse influences to achieve and trust each other to create music by intuition rather than predetermined processes.

Live at Donau115, their fourth release in eleven years, shares their not-so expected "post-jazz" sound that weaves in ambient, electronic and rock with their take on modern jazz. Expectations aside, their live shows are a free-evolving experience where a "set list" is just a recommendation. Expect songs to flow into each other with improv moments trusting the band's intuition.

Interview: 05/2020 with David Koch from the Great Harry Hillman

Describe your band / music / style in three words.

Hypnotic-noise-wellness.

What did you listen to when growing up?

I grew up in a family of musicians, as did the rest of the band! My father is a classical flute player, so I was surrounded by classical music very early on. That had a huge influence on me, for sure. My mum listened to classical radio all day long! Literally. So, before I started going to school, I was also forced to endure this compulsion. I think this shaped my musical sensibility, gave me a feeling for melodies and harmonies. When I was ten, I went on the road with an Irish folk band, we toured a lot! That was a lot of fun, being able to play at all these adult pubs out in Ireland, as a kid.

Music icon(s) and the reason why.

I have to start with Gary Moore. I caught him at a Saturday night show when I was a teenager. It's because of him that I started to save money to buy an electric guitar. There was also John Zorn. During my college years I became a real groupie and a John Zorn addict. I had to know every record that he was on, and there are millions of them! As a result, I really dove into this New York downtown avant-garde jazz scene. I suppose this is what drove me to study Jazz at the university. Along the way, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Mark Turner were also really important to me. At the moment, my hero is the band LOW, with their latest album called Double Negative, produced by B. J. Burton. But I also love Bill Frisell with the Paul Motian Trio, St. Vincent, Dirty Projectors, Cant (the solo project of Chris Taylor from Grizzly Bear), Radiohead, Marc Ribot, Burial, and Danger Mouse.

What is the craziest or funniest thing that's happened on tour?

Because you guys are a Berlin-based magazine, a show that I played there comes to mind. We were in the car, driving to the gig and there was a total blockade on the autobahn. We were three hours too late, but somehow we still arrived right when we were supposed to go on. The room was packed with people waiting for us, and they clapped when we stepped on stage. Of course, we still set up everything and sound check, all of this in front of the audience, and then float directly into our set.

Favourite performance venues or music festivals? And why?

There's Jazz festival Willisau, a renowned festival in Switzerland, for avant-garde music. And then there are several smaller places that I remember because of the vibe there, the people, the energy. That would be Donau115, where our album is recorded. HotClub Gent, we go there at least once a year! It's actually more like a bar, but with the most incredible people who, over the years, also became our dear friends. I also remember pretty obscure places in Japan, India and Russia. Venues that have something David Lynch thing about them, or feel like they are straight out of trashy nineties cinema experiments. When you enter these places, from soundcheck until you leave, it feels like a trip.

Three words to describe your fans.

Open-minded, adventurous, enthusiastic.

What is next for you, an immediately upcoming tour or EP/Album?

In a few weeks, I'll be going to Switzerland to manufacture 100 pieces of a guitar effect that I developed. It's called The Pill Pedal. The coolest thing about making this thing is that I get to meet so many musicians and producers from all over the world. At the moment, due to Corona, there are no concerts planned until September. In autumn, we'll play in Switzerland and in early 2021 we have a tour planned for Russia. It'll be our second time there, and I am really looking forward to it. The people there are just so incredibly warm!

Where do you see yourself in ten years' time, where would you like to see your band / music and at what scale?

For myself, I hope that I can keep my curiosity, my dedication and the patience to create music and things related to it. I definitely don't have a ten-year plan, I just want to keep on moving, be kind and let walk this meandering path. For the band, we've been playing together for ten years! And with the same line-up. I guess there will be another 10 more. We're always searching, experimenting and researching. That keeps us stimulated and, most importantly, challenged. It's not always the easiest way, but at least we don't get lazy and this keeps all us and the whole band awake and alive. I see the band evolving, and I am really curious where it will take us.

<https://4seemagazin.com/en/spotlight-on-the-great-harry-hillman/>

stereogum.com

The Great Harry Hillman (he was a runner and hurdler who won three gold medals at the 1904 Olympic Games) are a Swiss quartet whose music is a combination of jazz and moody post-rock. This live album is composed of entirely new music which displays the same inner calm and experimental spirit as their three studio albums. "Cruise Tom Cruise" is built on a bluesy melody played by guitarist David Koch in a biting, Bill Frisell-ish manner, as bassist Samuel Huwyler and drummer Dominik Mahnig tick and boom their way along behind him. Bass clarinet player Nils Fischer isn't so much playing notes as making various squeaking and hissing noises, like someone let an animal into the room and it's a little frightened by what's going on. Gradually, the energy builds, and Fischer gets a little closer to taking a co-lead role with Koch, but always seems somewhat tentative. Also, there's no applause between pieces, making this album seem like a recording of a quarantine live stream.

<https://www.stereogum.com/2092165/the-month-in-jazz-july-2020/franchises/columns/ugly-beauty/>

Wer ist er bloß, dieser Harry Hillman? Gewissen Quellen zufolge ist es der US-amerikanische Leichtathlet (er lief über Hürden) mit selbem Namen. Lauscht man der Musik des Schweizer Quartetts, dann lässt sich behaupten, sie haben da so etwas wie einen Golem geschaffen, ein Wesen, ähnlich dem impliziten Autor in der Literatur, das unabhängig vom Erschaffer ein Eigenleben führt und dessen Werke verrichtet ... und nun unter dem Pseudonym Harry Hillman sein Unwesen treibt. In einer guten Band passiert das ja, wenn aus dem Zusammenspiel und Aufeinander-Reagieren eine Einheit entsteht. Das Album beginnt mit »Der Vogel« gleich recht bestimmt. Die Bass-Klarinette Nils Fischers tönt in die Welt hinaus, erst zaghaft, aber dann fährt sie auf, gemeinsam mit Gitarrenflächen von David Koch und Bassist Samuel Huwyler. Dem Zappeln im Gebüsch ertönen wunderschönste Melodien zum Durch-die-Lüfte-Schwirren, werden dann jedoch wieder zurückgeworfen auf die Erde, durch heftige, King-Crimson'eske Prog-Rock-Stampfer. Und dieser sensible Umgang mit verschiedenen Lautstärken und die Fähigkeit, Intensität nicht an diese zu knüpfen, macht Spaß und fesselt. Gerne lässt man sich dann von Harry in die Hände nehmen und durchkneten, denn man weiß, dass er einen danach wieder in seinen Armen wiegen wird. Wie in den ruhigen Momenten auf »Lost«, da klingt es zeit- und raumvergessen, verträumt wie in einem Stück von Bohren & der Club of Gore, Bass und Schlagzeug geben nur einen leisen Puls vor, während die Klarinette darüber hinwegschwirrt wie ein Schmetterling in einem verrauchten Lokal. Apropos Schmetterling: Eidechse. »Eidechsen Sie« ist auch eine tolle Nummer, das Blasinstrument schafft es gekonnt, zwischen Noise-Gespielt und den warmen Tonfolgen zu wählen, besonders hier funktioniert es mit dem groovigen Schlagzeug schön, erinnert von der Twilight-mäßigen Atmosphäre ein bisserl - vielleicht weit hergeholt - an den treibenden Fusion-Sound von Herbie Hancock's »Sextant«. Mit »Taube Taube« schwebt die Platte zum Ende, und gerne schickt man einen Golem zum Plattenspieler, um sie wieder umzudrehen. »Live at Donau115«, an drei Abenden im Berliner Donau115 aufgenommen, ist weder ein klassisches reguläres Studio-Album noch ein klassisches Live-Album, irgendwie. Aber das ist ja egal.

Text: Lutz Vössing

<https://skug.at/the-great-harry-hillman-live-at-donau115/>

Frankfurter Rundschau

EINE ART JAZZ - Über undefinierten Metren

von Hans-Jürgen Linke

Ist das Jazz, was die Band The Great Harry Hillman da spielt?

Auch der Musikbetrieb braucht eine Ordnung, und sei es, um im Markt halbwegs überschaubar zu erscheinen. Seit einigen Jahren hat sich eingebürgert, experimentelle Angelegenheiten einem erweiterten Jazz-Begriff zuzuordnen, wenn sie von irgendwo her kommen und eine unbekannte, ständig sich erweiternde Zahl von klanglichen, rhythmischen, idiomatischen, harmonischen und anderen Einflüssen aufweisen und keinen großen Wert auf Klarheit in Punkto stilistischer Zuschreibung legen, dafür aber umso mehr auf Eigensinn. Die so genannte Jazzpolizei hat mittlerweile aufgegeben zu widersprechen, und das Jazz-Publikum ist am ehesten in der Lage, mit solcherlei

Neuigkeiten und unbekanntem Entwicklungen zu leben.

Behaupten wir also, dass die Band "The Great Harry Hillman" eine Art Jazz gespielt hat, als sie ihr neues Album "Live At Donau115" an drei Abenden aufgenommen hat. Man könnte auch andere Wörter dafür suchen und finden, etwa "Post Jazz", "Beyond Jazzrock" oder "Silent Noise". Stimmt alles irgendwie.

Die Band gibt es seit über einem Jahrzehnt, was bei dem Durchschnittsalter des Quartetts erstaunt. Sie hat ihre Homepage in Luzern, und weil die Wohnorte der vier Musiker unterschiedlich entfernt davon liegen, fallen die Begegnungen zur gemeinsamen Weiterarbeit immer sehr arbeitsintensiv aus. Es kann sein, dass sich die Klang-Konzepte, denen die Band nachgeht, jedes Mal ein wenig ändern. Andererseits ist jedes Stück mit eigenen Klangideen ausgestattet, aber eine innere Verwandtschaft bleibt doch erkennbar oder spürbar.

Es herrscht keine Hektik, sondern ruhige Tüftel-Atmosphäre und zugleich eine kreative, suchende Unruhe. Auf lange, virtuose Berg-und-Tal-Touren wird verzichtet. Es gibt eine meistens sehr verzerrte und immer eigenartig überraschende Gitarre (David Koch), einen leise und feinsinnig über undefinierte Metren klangreich und gewebehaft groovenden Schlagwerker (Dominik Mahnig), einen Bläser, der unvorhersehbar mit der Bassklarinette kleine, freundliche Überfälle von verschiedenen Seiten inszeniert (Nils Fischer), und einen Bassisten, der immer irritierend genau weiß, was von ihm verlangt ist und verlässlich etwas anderes tut (Samuel Huwyler).

So entstehen aus verschiedenen Komponenten in unvorhersehbare Richtungen sich entwickelnde Sound-Bänder mit wechselnden Texturen, die gleichermaßen nach Forschungsarbeit klingen wie nach intensiven und unruhigen Auseinandersetzungen mit einer breiten Palette von Einflüssen. Man kann das avantgardistisch finden oder lustig oder erstaunlich oder alles zusammen.

Vielleicht sollte man noch erwähnen, dass Harry Hillman, dessen Andenken die Band sich verpflichtet zu fühlen scheint, kein Musiker war, sondern ein Hürdenläufer, der im Jahre 1904 - also 105 Jahre vor der Gründung des Quartetts - drei Goldmedaillen bei den Olympischen Spielen gewann, und dass das aktuelle Album das vierte ist, das die Band eingespielt hat und das erste Live-Album. Und dass ihr vermutlich umjubelter Auftritt auf der Jazzhead in Bremen am 25. April leider ausfallen musste.

<https://www.fr.de/kultur/musik/great-harry-hillman-live-donau115-ueber-undefinierten-metren-13746734.html>

nowamuzyka.pl

Pod powieką.

Intrygująca nazwa post-jazzowego kwartetu The Great Harry Hillman już od 11 lat przyciąga wzrok słuchaczy. No, ale ta ciekawość nie kończy się wraz z odczytaniem intencji artystów co do obranej nazwy, wręcz przeciwnie - w jakiś metafizyczny sposób łączy się z najważniejszym czynnikiem, czyli muzyką. Wypada wyjaśnić skąd wziął się pomysł na The Great Harry Hillman. Chodzi tu o słynnego amerykańskiego lekkoatletę Harry'ego Livingstone Hillmana, który zdobył 3 złote medale na igrzyskach olimpijskich w Saint Louis w 1904 roku. W 2009 roku, kiedy David Koch (gitara), Samuel Huwyler (bas), Dominik Mahnig (perkuszja) i Nils Fischer (klarnet basowy) zakładali zespół, obchodzono 105. rocznicę sportowych wyczynów Hillmana.

Być może gitarę Kocha już znacie z nagrań grupy Visitor, która w ubiegłym roku opublikowała bardzo dobry album Keep On Running. Znajdziecie go także na mojej liście z podsumowaniem roku 2019. Pozostali członkowie TGHH – jak i sam Koch – są niesamowicie uzdolnionymi i porządnie wykształconymi muzykami. Live at Donau115 to ich czwarte wydawnictwo i tym razem koncertowe. Poprzedni materiał TGHH – Tilt ukazał się nakładem prestiżowej amerykańskiej oficyny Cuneiform Records. Pod skrzydła tego labelu nie trafiają przypadkowi artyści – lecz tacy, którzy wychodzą z oryginalną stylistyką, brzmieniem itd. A ci młodzi Szwajcarzy zdecydowanie do takich należą.

To, co wyróżnia ich twórczość, to z pewnością brak sztywnych podziałów / zasad na koncertach, przybierających formę swobodnych improwizacji, lewitowania wokół konkretnego tematu czy spontanicznych wariacji z tzw. setlistą. – Po 11 latach występowania na żywo w różnych miejscach opracowaliśmy bardzo unikalny sposób interakcji ze sobą. Przestaliśmy grać z setlistą i zaczęliśmy improwizować z kolejnością naszych utworów oraz przejściami między nimi – tłumaczą TGHH. Mówią też o telepatycznym porozumieniu, co można zaobserwować wpatrując się w ich koncertowe wideo z zeszłorocznej edycji Jazz Festival Willisau. Materiał na Live At Donau115 pochodzi jednak z berlińskich koncertów w klubie Donau115. TGHH wyselekcjonowali siedem fragmentów, które ułożyły się w spójną, wielowątkową i nieustannie rozwijającą się podróż.

Otwierający Der Vogel jest splotem kolektywnej improwizacji w duchu fusion z przesterowanym noise'em gitary, który bynajmniej nie milknie, ale szarpie za nieco inne struny wrażliwości w kolejnym Cruise Tom Cruise mającym coś z muzyki drogi, avant bluesa i filmowych obrazów migoczących w ciemnej sali kinowej. Amorficzna hybryda The Bunch głaszcę lirycznym tematem, a jak trzeba to pobudzi noise'ową, szorstką frazę. Po czym zatrzymujemy się i "wsiadamy" do innego filmowego wagonu, gdyż Lost (Highway?) idealnie nadawałby się do surrealistycznych, nieoczywistych kadrów Davida Lyncha. Wręcz niepostrzeżenie, przy zamkniętych jeszcze powiekach, przy ledwie odrywających się rzęsach wyobraźni wpada pod nie powoli tłący się zgiełk free jazzu i echo szamańskiego rytuału (Eidechsen Sie). Ten trans przerywa euforia i aplauz publiczności, po którym nadciąga świetny podmuch w postaci Stellar. Kapitalnie brzmią w tym fragmencie! Zapachniało melancholijną stylistyką płynącą szerokim strumieniem z norweskiej wytwórni Hubro. Z wieńczącego Taube Taube emanuje filmowa intymność, przestrzeń, oddech i niepisane fin du film.

Wysłuchując się w Live at Donau115 pamiętajcie, że dzieje się to tu i teraz, to gęsty splot interakcji na scenie – i co ważne – nie są to kompozycje wcześniej przećwiczone i skrupulatnie zaaranżowane. The Great Harry Hillman wyróżniają się na tle setek tysięcy post-jazzowych kwartetów właśnie tym, że potrafią sceniczną kreatywność przemienić w swoisty proces bezszwowego sklejania wielu drobiazgów, po czym zaszczepić je w wyobraźni słuchaczy. Nie czekajcie dłużej, zajmijcie wygodne pozycje i stwórzcie własny film z muzyką The Great Harry Hillman.

16 kwietnia 2020 | self-released > Łukasz Komła

<https://www.nowamuzyka.pl/2020/04/21/the-great-harry-hillman-live-at-donau115/>

Radio 3-fach

Live Interview bei SAMSCHTIG-JATZ vom 25.04.2020

<https://3fach.ch/top-story/the-great-harry-hillman-isst-und-bleibt-dueruem>