

ROBERT BACHNER QUINTET

Heart Disc

Austrian low brass expert Robert Bachner is best known for his contributions to Matthias Ruegg's Vienna Art Orchestra, the similarly inclined (but less well-known) Upper Austrian Jazz Orchestra, and bassist Achim Tang's quintet. In each of these settings, the consistent and inspired excellence of Bachner's trombone and euphonium improvisations have clearly marked him as a player to watch on the European jazz scene. *Heart Disc*, I believe, is Bachner's first recording as a leader.

Though it is a little bit more stylistically conservative than I expected (given Bachner's previous musical associations), *Heart Disc* demonstrates that Euro-jazz can cook with all the fire of, say, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers or Horace Silver's late '50s/early '60s quintets, while employing the sort of harmonic language that typifies the post-free output of European based jazz labels such as ECM and Soul Note/Black Saint during the '70s and '80s. The gutsy-yet-cerebral sound of Bachner's quintet—dominated by Christian Salfellner's superb drumming and a very fat front line of trombone and Christian Maurer's saxophones—is rather reminiscent of some of Dave Holland's recent quintet projects, albeit with piano instead of vibes.

The seven original compositions that comprise *Heart Disc* run the gamut from genial, yet hard-charging modern jazz ("Heart Disc," "Moments of Noise," "No More Doubts") through pensive balladry ("One of Two," "Crucial Qualities") to ECM-ish impressionism ("For Gary"), and the sort of raucous stuff that peers over the edge without entirely disappearing into the chasm ("Minor Mood"). On every track, the ensemble digs in deeply, playing with unrelenting fire and urgency.

Bachner's playing is as cogent as his writing—his affable trombone sound combines the expressionistic bluster of, say, Roswell Rudd and Gary Valente with the limber precision of Glenn Ferris, J. J. Johnson and Julian Priester. Drummer Salfellner has worked with Bachner in Achim Tang's group—and the flexible, swinging beauty of his playing here is a large part of this disc's success. Christian Maurer—who plays soprano saxophone on most of *Heart Disc*—is also a versatile and accomplished player. He tends to be more expressive and abstract on the smaller horn, with an overall sound that is not unlike Dave Liebman's. On tenor, Maurer has a cooler, Rollins-derived approach—somewhat like that of his countryman, Hans Koller.

Heart Disc is a varied and engaging debut CD—Bachner remains a player to watch.

All About Jazz

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**ATS
RECORDS**



Track Listing:

1. HEART DISC
2. ONE OF TWO
3. MINOR MOOD
4. MOMENTS OF NOISE
5. CRUCIALQUALITIES
6. NO MORE DOUBTS
7. FOR GARY

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