

Saxofour + Maria João

Cinco

The connection of voice and saxophone always has a little bit amusing in itself. Whether Astrud Gilberto - Stan Getz or Nancy Wilson - Cannonball Adderley, it were always legendary combinations.

Quite an other kind of the connection is the meeting of Saxofour, the Austrian ensemble of saxophonistischer blessedness, and Maria Joao, vocal virtuoso, however, also of Portuguese romantic. Maria Joao is as it were the fifth voice of the verstimlicht become Reed - quartet.

The programme exists of a careful choice of Maria Joã o's songs which were orchestrated warily for 4 saxophones or flutes and clarinets, and from original the compositions of Saxofour which were written especially for this project.

Besides, are if one knows Saxofour, the compositions, as usual, also with pleasure "start ramps" for the improvisatorische high-altitude flights with which Maria with a marvellous self-image links up. An essential factor of the mutual understanding is of course the joy and the humor with and in the music.



SAXOFOUR

The ideal combination of grooving, genuineness, mind and virtuosity with which also the humor does not come too briefly. Four individualists who submit logically to a unity, and at the highest musical level. Four most asked saxophonists between Scheibbs and Nebraska

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RECORDS**



Track Listing:

01. Em Táo pouco tempo escureceu tanto (3:11)
02. Mock (4:07)
03. A lua partida ao meio (5:13)
04. From Innsbruck to Porto (4:00)
05. Um amor (8:31)
06. Um Choro feliz (5:47)
07. Anjos de papel (5:11)
08. Há gente aqui (5:19)
09. Corazon perdido (6:31)
10. Preto e branco (6:07)
11. Charles on a sunday with
sunday clothes (2:51)
12. Edelweiss (1:57)

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Musical Soulmates: "Cinco"

What links a Portuguese singer with a swimming instructor's background to an Austrian saxophone quartet that achieved the unusual feat of filling all of three albums with Christmas sounds in its otherwise not over-burdened discography? Surprisingly a great deal. Both Maria João as well as the men from Saxofour understand how to accelerate like a flash reflective moods in the direction of unconsciousness, in spite of repeated Advent-like touches, or rather fits of this nature. And João, nonetheless one of the strongest European profiles in voice, as well as Masters Florian Bramböck, Klaus Dickbauer; Christian Maurer and Wolfgang Puschnig, four of the most intelligent as well as well-versed Austrian woodwind experts who, in addition, have already since 1991 placed their creative egos in the service of the common cause, are open-eared impulsivists whose playful intensity means celebrating the moment, the here and now: the singer as a veritable bundle of energy, changing between a nursery rhyme-shy open-eyed, babbling, panting brat and a dramatic diva and the multi-instrumentalists in their virtuoso playfulness, their cleverly balanced music antics, in the structural-technical polish always remaining directly able to communicate.



In the meantime, both the Portuguese as well as the Austrians have largely left their wild years, in which free improvisation played a central role, behind them. Not without sublimating, so to speak, the well-earned experiences and stretching the freedom of given forms to the freedom of choice of substance: blinderlessness and candor of style in all directions are constitutive, aesthetic credos for both. For some, even wash machines can dance the tango and pieces bear culinary titles like "Bakhlava" and rather enigmatical ones like "Inexplicable Set of new Country Waltzes;" whereas Africa and Brazil and the resulting imagined fantasy-landscapes have become inexhaustible sources of inspiration for their current colleagues. The dictates of purity one entrusts to the grail keepers of New York's Lincoln Center. It's allowed to have fun. Whereby one can expose himself more calmly to other influences when one knows his own position, knows about his own strong roots: one remembers with what passionate fervour Maria João sung "Estranha Forma de Vida" at the end of the 1980s in the duo concerts with pianist Aki Takase and later with Mário Laginha, one of the well-known elegies from Amália Rodrigues, the icon of the Portuguese song of life's weariness, the Fado. That music, whose unconditional directness and intensity is still evident in all the fibers of her vocal art, became a part of João's vocal identity.

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One remembers as well the captivating choral version of the covert Carinthian provincial anthem "Is schon still uman See" with which Wolfgang Puschnig ended his debut album of 1988 "Pieces of the Dream" and with which he also exposed the roots of the melancholic cantability found in the Slavic-Germanic tradition of the Carinthian folksong, which was regarded even then as his trademark. Even Puschnig's successors in the Austrian mother-big band-boat of the Vienna Art Orchestra, Klaus Dickbauer and Florian Bramböck, experienced their early musical socialization - in addition to classical ensembles - in brass bands; Christian Maurer, who leads his own large ensemble with the Upper Austrian Jazz Orchestra, lives in the same way from the rich foundation of folk music.



One can hear all of this and much more on this record. Jazz is the cement in between the stored music-making traditions. Whereby João with all of her melodic-expressive skill handles her voice instrumentally, the Saxofour men, who not coincidentally recorded a CD anno 2002 with the name "Vocalizing Reeds" (for once without Christmas songs), appear for their part inspired by the ideal of the Vox humana. In this sense, the unpretentious title "Cinco" ("Five") signifies absolutely a program: first of all, not one Portuguese and four Austrians are making music here with one another. Rather five strong, individual European characters, who have found themselves and now fortunately also one another.

By Andreas Felber

Translation: Carol Koch