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UPPER AUSTRIAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA ~ IN THE SPIRIT OF HANS KOLLER
ATS 0918 (Barcode: 9005216009183) ~ AUSTRIA ~ Jazz
Recorded: 2018 Released: 2018

This is an album by the veteran Austrian Jazz Big Band called the **Upper Austrian Jazz Orchestra**, which is a tribute to the Godfather of Austrian Jazz, saxophonist / composer / bandleader / painter **Hans Koller**, who is also the most internationally famous Austrian Jazzman (except perhaps for **Joe Zawinul**, which most people consider an American anyway). The album was recorded live at the legendary Viennese club Porgy & Bess and presents the orchestra, led by saxophonist **Christian Maurer**, in its full glory: four trumpets, five saxophones, four trombones and a rhythm section (piano / guitar / bass / drums). The double CD album presents fourteen superb compositions by the orchestra members, all inspired / based on original compositions by Koller.

Koller, who was one of the great pioneers of European Jazz, working with many German and other European musicians from the 1950s onwards recorded some of the most pivotal Jazz albums of the emerging European Jazz scene, some of them for the legendary **MPS** label, truly deserves this loving tribute and it is great to see that his achievements are not forgotten.

The music, as expected, is absolutely sublime from start to finish, an exquisite example of European Big Band Jazz music, with sophisticated arrangements, clever balance between the sections, elegance and lyricism, all combined to create a powerful, moving experience.

Although recorded live, the orchestra manages to perform the intricate arrangements perfectly and with full emotional engagement. The performance offers many exquisite solos by the orchestra members and the music flows wonderfully for the entire duration, a true feast for the ears.

Although Austria is rarely at the center of attention as far as Jazz is concerned, this album clearly proves that the country has a lot to offer in that field. Over the years the Austrian Jazz schools educated generations of excellent musicians and the lively local scene is certainly worth checking out.

Many heartfelt thanks to Christian Maurer, who sent me a bunch of his recordings, enabling me to catch up with the Austrian Jazz scene, which I have admittedly neglected lately. Chapeau bas my friend – great job keeping the music alive!

Updated: 14/04/2019

CD 2

Mini-Sleeve

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