

Adam Baruch - The Soundtrack Of My Life

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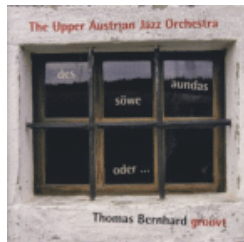
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UPPER AUSTRIAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA ~ DES
SOWE AUNDAS ODER... THOMAS BERNHARD
GROOVT

ATS 0605 (Barcode: 9005216006052) ~
AUSTRIA ~ Jazz

Recorded: 2006 Released: 2006

This is an album by the veteran Austrian Jazz Big Band called The **Upper Austrian Jazz Orchestra**, led by saxophonist / composer **Christian Maurer** and comprising of some of the best Austrian Jazz musicians, including four trumpets, four trombones, five reeds and a four-piece rhythm section. Vocalist **Ali Gaggl** adds some vocal parts and recitation. As almost all the albums by the UAJO, this one was also recorded live and again as usual it offers a concept, which can either be a tribute to a composer or an author, in this case the highly controversial Austrian novelist / playwright / poet **Thomas Bernhard**. The album presents eight original compositions (one a two-part piece), each composed by a different member of the orchestra, which also follows the usual modus operandi of the UAJO, and each based on a different text written by Bernhard. Since the album is out of print it took me quite a while before I managed to find a copy (absurdly in the US), but now I am a proud owner of all the eleven albums recorded so far by this wonderful orchestra.

The music is a superb collection of modern Jazz compositions, all melody based but diverse stylistically, all elegantly arranged for the Big Band Jazz idiom, skillfully using the entire palette of sounds that such an ensemble is able to produce. Each of the composition reflects the spirit and idea contained in the text it refers to, which offers as a bonus an opportunity for the more inquisitive listeners to read the text in question. The fact that Bernhard was an avid Classical Music lover, which is reflected in his texts, gave the composers another incentive to write something he might have perhaps loved as well. I am grateful to trombonist / composer **Robert Bachner**, who disclosed to me some insights about this album and its making. I

Robert Palmer in Vienna in October 2019, where we had an opportunity to chat together about music and have some great food together.

The performances by the orchestra members are all stellar, as expected. Considering the fact that this music was recorded live, the synchronicity and interplay are nothing short of astonishing and the orchestra functions like a well oiled Swiss chronometer. As I have already stated, UAJO is a perfect combination of the American Big Band model and the European affluence of elegance and grace, which together create an irresistible musical accomplishment.

Hopefully this CD will be back in circulation soon so fans of Big Band Jazz can listen to this music, as it is definitely too good to be forgotten. Each of the orchestra's albums is a treasure chest of ideas and a schoolbook example of how to do things right in this idiom, this one included of course. Therefore any of them you can lay your hands on is a must have, the sooner the better.

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