



Release October 7, 2016

ENJUTI

Schönheit durch Zerbrechlichkeit

Andreas Völk: guitar & effects

Laurenz Gemmer: piano

Kenn Hartwig: bass & effects

Thomas Sauerborn: drums & things

indigo cd 125932

upc 70530463628

file under: jazz

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ENJUTI - Schönheit durch Zerbrechlichkeit [*Beauty Through Fragility*]

To get right to the point: Enjuti combine rock emphasis and jazz ideas with current electronic sounds. To further understand the individual charisma of the quartet, it takes a few more words. Almost catchy melodies meet surprising harmonic changes and roving passages. Straight grasping beats disintegrate into broken rhythms or intermit completely for a while. Abstract sounds spurt out from effect and looper pedals or are formed by manipulations inside the piano. Meandering motifs, clear riffs and complex structures meet, merge together and unleash tremendous bursts of energy. The love of freedom of the four musicians manifests itself in a constant tension between cleverly worked out compositions and pointed improvisation, whereby the latter generally refrains from traditional solos and seldom drifts off into complete dissonance. When playing live, also the originally quite compact pieces can stretch to unforeseeable trips with hypnotic intensity. Enjuti's dramatic composition is as unconventional as fascinating: fine, barely audible single notes gradually grow into powerful, at times drone-like monolithic walls of sound, which eventually dissolve time and space and transfer the fascinated audience into other spheres.

Who would have thought that an encounter at the Landesjugendjazzorchester Hessen [State Youth Jazz Orchestra of Hesse] could lead to such an individual, progressive quartet? During a tour through China with this big band in 2010, the four instrumentalists got to know each other more intensively. A little later they founded Enjuti in Cologne. They perceived their partly quite differing personal backgrounds and musical inclinations as a perfect basis. They had and still have the conviction in common, that music should be more than nice acoustic wallpaper. Enjuti arouse emotions, can provoke and polarize and challenge the zeitgeist.

Andreas Völk was born 1989 and as the main composer of the pieces he is at least formally somewhat of a primus inter pares of the cloverleaf. He is originally from the Hessian city Marburg and at the age of 10 he began learning guitar. After finishing high school he studied at the college in Osnabrück, among others with Frank Wingold. A workshop there led to the first encounter with pianist Laurenz Gemmer, who for his part studied with Hubert Nuss and completed his master's degree with Florian Weber. Gemmer's performance impressed him deeply, Andreas Völk remembers, "especially when he beat on the body of the piano and listened carefully to the emerging sounds." The next "sign" for collaboration was that Gemmer unexpectedly came along as a sub on the aforesaid China-tour of the big band.

According to Völk, the connection of the two musicians, with an age difference of 9 years between them, stems from their wide-ranging taste in music and a fondness for spontaneity. As a guitarist he is most notably influenced by progressive rock and crossover, Völk says, and names bands like Radiohead, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Rage Against The Machine. At the same time he developed a predilection early on, for playing existing compositions against the grain, for improvising and rearranging. Of course he masters common jazz phrasing; variable tonal colors definitely suit him more though, than fret board frenzy. Music has always been a substantial form of expression and communication for Andreas Völk; even his bachelor thesis revolved around the phenomenon, how waves of sound can trigger emotions. In Laurenz Gemmer he especially values his broad horizon, which reaches from classical to modern music, including contemporary improvised music and interdisciplinary forms like Dance Theater. Gemmer's creative will also fascinates the listeners, particularly in Enjuti's magical concerts with their spectacularly wide arcs of suspense.

Bassist Kenn Hartwig (29) and drummer Thomas Sauerborn (28) met about 10 years ago in the Bujazzo [German National Youth Jazz Orchestra]. Sauerborn began his studies in Amsterdam; from there he switched to Cologne and completed his master in Copenhagen. Hartwig already spent his nights at techno parties during his college days in Cologne. Today he plays "everything, that's fun to play", from hip-hop to metal and electro. He initiated the side-project of Enjuti, named Das Ende der Liebe [The End of Love], which revolves around electronic dance music. "For that we bought ourselves plenty of digital effects, which we sometimes also use with Enjuti now, especially when it comes to spacy sounds," Völk explains.

From the start it was important to Andreas Völk that Enjuti consider themselves a band. The interaction of the cloverleaf is just as essential to the overall sound as his notated compositions. They are often based on relatively simple melodies, to give listeners a kind of foothold. To the band however these serve as steppingstones to sometimes concise, sometimes more extensive improvisations. On stage pieces can flow into each other, can change their guise like a mysterious form of life. Furthermore they often amaze through extreme dynamics with epic developments that bring to mind the legendary Goodspeed You! Black Emperor from Montreal. It is this mixture of determination, concentration and patience that makes up the character of Enjuti. "I am a big fan of developing pieces together over a longer period of time," Andreas Völk explains: one of the reasons why the debut album is released only now. Two and a half years ago the band already took an attempt at the studio, but wasn't satisfied with the result and let the production disappear in the closet. That's what you call consequent quality awareness.

"Our fundamental openness probably brings us to results more slowly than the usual way of writing pieces and then practicing them", Völk assumes, "but it is much more satisfying in the end." Besides the collective reflecting the band is united by the feeling of experiencing something together while playing, descending therein and wanting to repeat this experience. Thereby the audience and its reaction play an important role, although Enjuti don't cater to expectations, but much rather wish to surprise. It is about freedom, about living out your true self, of course without ignoring or harming the rest of the world: a sort of transcended categorical imperative. With their music and approach Enjuti are making a clear statement against conformity without blatantly emphasizing it. Also the title of the album, Schönheit durch Zerbrechlichkeit, reflects fundamental aspects. "Whether in music or in a conversation, it gets interesting when you open yourself up and drop all masks," Andreas Völk says, "many things would be easier, when you admit mistakes and fears without losing face - and when you don't take yourself so seriously."

These days the utopia of a societal opening up has to defend itself against fierce attacks of the present. Enjuti however are not getting tired of musically pleading this openness. With juvenile courage and creative urgency in their pieces and their concerts, they create open spaces, in which one can let go of many things for a certain time. A cathartic power that is rare even in contemporary jazz and rock is inherent in Enjuti's dynamic, unusual music.

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