

TRIO LAUER WESTERGAARD SMITH

Johannes Lauer's Trio with Danish bassist Jonas Westergaard and American drummer Joe Smith is a prototype of how one may perceive tradition, not as a burden but as a condition of liberation. Humorous, subtle and at the same time powerful, they dance through standards such as "Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho" or "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child", dedicated to their common love of swing and the songs of Billie Holiday. Original compositions also place the spirit of tradition into the music of today.

The melodies are varied violently and turned around until legs twitch. The results are bold leaps from prelabeled drawers, full of devotion, creating a wonderful live-experience. This music is handmade and brimming with power and tricks from the gut. It plays blissfully with tradition but is nothing like a nostalgia project without vision. In the end, this is a musical claim of responsibility and a rousing tribute to the forefather's of a large and vital history.

History has always taken place. It would be arrogant and pointless to try to ignore it. You do not have to reinvent the wheel, but its operation can be perfected. To accomplish this, one has to have learned his craft well and must knuckle down and work. The trombone is a good instrument to knuckle down with, at least in someone like Johannes Lauer's hands.

He makes it sing and swing; lets it sound leathery or metallic, balladic or swift.

It's timeless because it goes beyond the day, full of power, and is so plausible, because it never loses its earthiness. The moment lasts forever because the spark of enthusiasm jumps across to the receiver.

Joe Smith is a drummer who can flatter with the brush and accentuate with pinpoint accuracy. His stupendous technique is placed in the service of the music that he advances with virtuosity and playful trickery. Just like Jonas Westergaard, he is far too good to want to overpower the other. The bass player can drive straight or present melodic counterpoint that leaves us all with a clear view back to the future.

This energetic and affectionate music is a feast for the listener, it has pressure, dirt and urgency.

Ulrich Steinmetzger

PRESS:

'Listening between the lines'

minimalistic, sparse and unobtrusive listening to each other, unagitated, but profound communication

Peter Füssl, Kulturzeitschrift, 04.10.2014

Chamber music like interplay on the highest level from the concentrated earnestness of the musicians. lyrical originals and interpretations in a new guise convince in an acoustically sonorous and very transparent way.

Vorarlberger Nachrichten, 9.10.14