



DEVELOPING GOOD HABITS

Vertigo Trombone Quartet

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Release Date: 16.05.2014



Nils Wogram – Trombone, Melodica

Andreas Tschopp – Trombone, Recorder

Bernhard Bamert – Trombone

Jan Schreiner – Bass, Trombone, Tuba

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No other musical instrument exhibits such a strong similarity to the human voice as the trombone. In jazz, the large horn seems, perhaps here and there, a bit less maneuverable than the trumpet or the saxophone. Only a trombone player completely conscious of the vocal magic of his instrument will be able to pry out the instrument's magic. That Nils Wogram has a very intimate relationship to

his blowpipe should have gotten around by now; it's one that goes far beyond jazz-typical phrasing pedantry. In bands such as Root 70, Nostalgia and his septet, as well as in duos with Conrad Bauer, Simon Nabatov or Bojan Z., he has displayed very different ways to access the trombone.

In other words, Nils Wogram knows every trick in the trombone book. Indeed, you might ask yourself who could pull over something on him on this instrument. Actually it's he himself who is always demanding new challenges, ways to express himself through his instrument. Now, when he unifies himself with three other trombone players into a quartet, well, that sounds in parts like a choir with many surprising voice and mood changes. But that is not what he's after, since Wogram and his three companions – Jan Schreiner, Bernhard Bamert and Andreas Tschopp – consciously want to transcend beyond any obvious pure choir-like sound.

Now, a constellation such as a trombone quartet with its sacred, antique charm does not want to impose itself upon a visionary such as Wogram. And yet exactly the lightly dusty image of the trombone quartet appeals to him – to approach this subject from an entirely different point of view. That a band with four trombone players is not very fixated on him as front soloist may be only one of many aspects. The Mangelsdorff award winner has long had the idea of putting such an ensemble together, but Jan Schreiner anticipated him: *"The idea needed someone who takes it in his hands,"* said Wogram, *"At first, Jan wanted to commission some pieces for us, but Bernhard Bamert and I preferred to give the quartet our own signature. There are a few trombone quartets already, whose artistic niveau is often, however, quite low. Mostly, it's only a matter of showing what they can play on the trombone. You rarely find there an artistic vision of any kind. An exception was, many years ago, the project Slide Ride with four individualists. With us, the individualism is, perhaps, not that distinctive, we are more interested in a real ensemble sound."*

In fact, the access to the Vertigo Trombone Quartet is, comparatively speaking, rather untrombone-like. To be sure, all four members are avowed trombone players, but flutes, tuba, melodicas or handclaps resonate here, as well. In acoustical interplay, they succeed in suggesting electronic effects, in synchronizing the fire of a rhythm section and exploiting the possibilities of the trombone – the special air effects, via mutes to beat boxing. In doing this, Wogram wanted to place the trombone in a completely new context. *"As a trombone player you are socialized in brass bands, in trombone choirs and in brass orchestras. Four trombones together sound so wonderfully harmonic and obligingly soft. Most trombone players are also very social people. This homogeneity can, however, also become boring very quickly. My aim here was to form such a quartet differently. Each of us has his very own sound. From that we can create something. If each has the chance to integrate himself with his own personal approach, the music remains fresh and one can appropriate the different styles."*

In this context, Nils Wogram openly professes himself to the principle of pleasure. He simply feels like exploring new terrain with this quartet and seeing how far he can go with them. That his three companions have completely different backgrounds than he does, this makes the adventure for the participants as for the listeners all the more forceful. The creative arc bends out extremely far, as the premises of the main composers Wogram and Bamert are quite oppositional, And yet or precisely for this reason, the music comes together into an organically compelling suite. Wogram himself is astonished at how this happened: *“Bernhard comes from classical music, whereas I wrote pieces more in the sense of jazz, but in the end, the attitude is decisive as to how we implement these pieces. If you don't think in categories such as perfection and performance, but you try to get the maximum out of the music, there is a chance to make a real artistic statement.”*

Developing Good Habits is genuine four-trombone album, whose protagonists do not blunder into the trombone trap, but rather leave the inner circle and turn to the completely normal listener, playfully and true to life with a wide range of preferences. An equally inspired as well as delightfully designed musical meal, which, simply as an exception, is not served in typical jazz instrumentation, but rather richly garnished with four trombones. Since in the end, it's always a matter of nothing else but unheard-of music.