



PERSPECTIVE SUITE (CD)
CARL WITTIGS AURORA OKTETT
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CARL WITTIGS AURORA OKTETT - PERSPECTIVE SUITE

*“Carl Christian Wittig (...), with his ensemble, is a new voice in music both as a double bass player and a composer, who ventures his very own path between jazz and classical music.” - **Michael Wollny***

*“You seldom hear music that appeals to both the heart and the mind. Intelligent but still accessible and emotional. Full of surprises.” - **Nils Wogram***

Wittig’s “Perspective Suite” is a fascinating debut. Wittig’s Aurora Octet ensemble, founded in 2016, moves freely in both jazz and classical traditions. The ensemble’s diverse compositions demonstrate how refreshing a blend of string quartet and jazz quartet music can sound.

Having been interested in both classical music and improvisation right from the start, Wittig begins his musical career at the piano before finally switching to the double bass at the age of 13. Before studying jazz and classical double bass at the HMT Leipzig, he wins the Deutschlandfunk–studio award at *Jugend*

Jazzt (national Jazz festival for young musicians) with his band *moment's concept*. Wittig then spends half a year at the HSLU Lucerne to study composition with Ed Partyka and Nils Wogram. Shortly afterwards he joins the German Federal Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Jiggs Whigham and Niels Klein. His passion for composing inevitably made him look for a larger line-up. Wittig says, "I want to make music that combines many different timbres and structures, and working with a larger ensemble really appealed to me. An important inspiration for the Aurora Octet was Nils Wogram's album *Riomar*. With its sparkling strings and lyrical improvisations, *Riomar* seamlessly connects the finesse of classical sounds with the rather easygoing sound of Root 70." And he goes on explaining, "Right now, I think, I focus more on conceptual aspects and compositions that allow both the strings and the quartet to meld and merge. There is also strong autobiographical component in this because both these two poles very much feel like home to me."

Wittig tapped into his numerous contacts from the Federal Jazz Orchestra and his studies to found his ensemble. With Ada Maria Schwengebecher (violin), Anna Prysiaznik (violin), Marie Schutrak (viola), Franziska Ludwig (Cello), Matti Oehl (saxophone), Pascal Klewer (trumpet) and Tom Friedrich (drums), he found seven congenial partners to form the Aurora Octet.

Wittig's conceptual summary of his compositions sounds almost prophetic: "The fundamental idea with this album is to adopt a different perspective on life and all its hardships. For example, I like to imagine what it would be like to look at the Earth standing on the surface of the moon. I like this feeling of being above it all, of being able to look at things from a remote point of view. That helps me especially when I feel insecure." Wittig's music deals with trepidation and yet offers comfort. For Wittig, the rapprochement between classical and jazz is of central importance in this. Many times on this album you can sense his devoted enthusiasm for classical string quartet sounds. The great quality of the music, in turn, is to grow beyond it. Wittig says, "During my studies at the HMT Leipzig, I learned that classical musicians rarely improvise even though they do feel they're interested in it. I wanted to work with them to find out how improvisation can be integrated into their play." In the piece "Circles End", which is reminiscent of Béla Bartók's musical language, you can hear, for example, how the cellist Franziska Ludwig combines experimentation and poetry in her improvisation. It is precisely from this clever balance of thought-out compositions and the freedom of improvisation that the album draws its great vitality.

The composition "Placed Displaced" stands exactly for that, says Wittig. "This piece talks about the idea of being put into a world by someone else. That makes you feel insecure, and your start to explore, you try to find your way around and get an overview." From the improvised sound layer of the strings, reminiscent of György Ligeti's and Morton Feldman's works, a lyrical dialogue unfolds between the saxophone, trumpet and the double bass. In its search for stability, the music elegantly shifts into an ensemble passage. Nils Wogram writes with admiration, "Not only the compositions but also the interpretation shines. Creative improvisations, beautiful sound and truly great ensemble dynamics. A beautiful symbiosis of classically trained musicians and jazz players."

The European jazz landscape is not only becoming more and more diverse and innovative, it also reflects more than ever the desire of young musicians to straddle stylistic boundaries. Ears can't lie: the Aurora Octet makes an essential contribution. Michael Wollny applauds, "Detailed in its conception, this is a cleverly written, elegant and unfettered debut!"

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