



PUSHING THE LIMITS
FYNN GROSSMANN QUINTETT

nwog 53

EAN 0 653415179818

Release Date: 24 FEB 2023



© Jasper Grätsch

FYNN GROSSMANN QUINTETT - PUSHING THE LIMITS

Every rule is meant to be broken, at least when it comes to the oboe. For half a century, Paul McCandless has been the rule, bringing the infamous duck from “Peter and the Wolf” into a jazz context. With the chamber-jazz group Oregon, McCandless set the standard which jazz oboists have tried to match. But Fynn Großmann from Hanover brings the jazz oboe into a new, fascinating and so far unmatched dimension.

But let’s start at the beginning. In 2019 Fynn Großmann released the album “Halbwahrheiten” (“Half-Truths”) with his quintet. The press marveled at the indescribable ease and complexity of this debut. Conceptual yet passionate in equal measure, saxophonists Fynn Großmann and Phillip Dornbusch, pianist Marko Djurdjevic, bassist Clara Däubler and drummer Johannes Metzger constantly challenged each other and themselves while still giving each other room for expression. Nobody could comprehend why Großmann would call this masterpiece “Half-Truths”. But with his new album, “Pushing the Limits”, the whole truth becomes apparent. The five band members have not only matured individually and collectively, added subtlety to the constant push and pull between lightness and complexity, and opened up undefined spaces between improvisation and composition – in their second album, the band has built upon all the musical and non-musical

parameters of “Halbwahrheiten” and brought them to a level of perfection that even they would not have thought possible.

To be clear: “Halbwahrheiten” doesn’t lose any of its validity as a brilliant album, but it is just that: half of the truth. The full truth is now told on “Pushing the Limits”. Upon first listen it becomes clear that all five band members have gained experience as bandleaders and composers. Fynn Großmann downplays the quintet’s astonishing progress in his typical, down-to-earth manner. “We’ve all grown older and continued to look for meaning in life, what we really want to do in this world. When we were recording “Halbwahrheiten”, I felt the need to impress people. With “Pushing the Limits”, that aspect went away. I write what I want to hear and put my focus on melodic expression and the band’s collective experience.”

What Fynn Großmann describes here hints at a naturalness, an effortless self-evidence in the music. Like a river, a mountain or a forest, the music simply happens, without needing to be questioned or thought about. The pieces don’t seem like the product of intensive work or artistic contemplation - they simply exist, each one inevitable in its own right. Each piece has one thing in common, though: the essence, what is left when everything superfluous is stripped away. Großmann and Co. play with varying density. Sometimes the music is a mass of convoluted intensity, sometimes the listener seems to hear nothing but pure light. For this, Großmann credits drummer Johannes Metzger: “I love to play with Johannes because he has such control over density, style and energy in the music. He is like a movie director. Once I’ve finished the script, Johannes comes in with his own ideas and creates the story as it’s meant to be told.”

The biggest difference between the albums, though, comes from Fynn Großmann himself. In “Halbwahrheiten” he showcases himself as a saxophonist, using the oboe sparingly. For “Pushing the Limits”, he’s metamorphosed into an oboist who occasionally plays the saxophone. In all honesty, the oboe is an instrument with great potential to annoy, should be used sparingly and definitely not extensively showcased. Until now. Großmann has a playfulness, virtuosic elegance and irrepressible imagination that will give listeners a completely new view of the finicky double reed. The oboe has never sounded like this before, and that is not an overstatement. Großmann frees the instrument from her cage, overcomes all of her inherent troubles and allows her to fly. At times the oboe could be mistaken for a soprano saxophone with a very unique sound. The other members of the quintet take oboe and masterfully embed it in the band sound in a way that leaves the listener constantly craving more.

“Pushing the Limits” gives us five musicians who not only know exactly what they want to say, but also how to say it in an authentic, upfront manner. They don’t reinvent jazz in this record, though they do dress it in brand new sonic attire. But they tell their stories together and individually in a way that only they can. They invite listeners to come with them on their journey, cross borders and discover new sounds, wherever it may lead them.

NWOG RECORDS // LABEL- & PRODUKTMANAGEMENT & CONTACT: IMKE MACHURA // MGMT@NWOG-RECORDS.COM