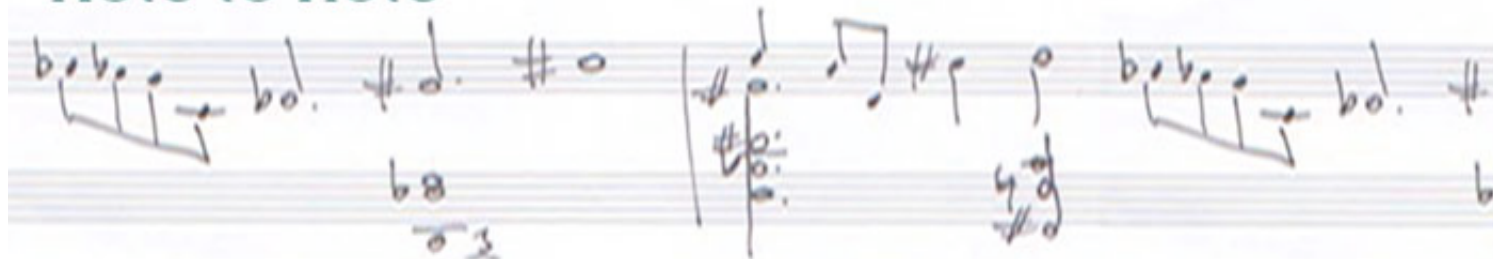


note-to-note



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Andreas Schmidt Trio - Hommage a Tristano

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Info (English)

"Nothing is static. Improvisation is all." These key sentences from the liner notes to "The New Lennie Tristano" are still effective and valid today, 57 years after that album's release. Especially when writing about this eventful and emotional "hommage" to the blind American Piano-pedagogue, Bebop-philosopher and Free Jazz-pioneer Lennie Tristano - an oftentimes unrecognized genius in this day and age, even "the mystery man of Jazz", as Rolling Stone-author Robert Palmer calls him. The almost seventy minutes of these thirteen improvised musical-pieces have a very conscious and concentrated sound, absolutely in and for the moment. That they are also essential and relaxed, reaching the listener with perennially newer melodies and "lines" while bearing fruit in an almost telepathical interplay, speaks for Tristano's ideas as well as for their virtuosic realisation. The spectrum reaches from a Bach-prelude via Tristano-melodies and masterpieces by his students Connie Crothers and Jimmy Halperin to two consequential standards and a host of fascinating compositions by Andreas Schmidt himself. The album ends - typically Tristano - in an almost ten-minute long loop - meditative and magical. The top-notch trio convinces with an unparalleled consistency in sound and musical truthfulness. You inevitably hear it and without fail start to really listen. There are quite a few reasons for this. Pianist and arranger Andreas Schmidt is well known in Europe for his highly lauded and deeply felt work with the Lisa Bassenge Trio, the Katja Riemann Octet and Ute Lemper, as well as via recordings and appearances with Michael Schiefel, Lee Konitz or Gary Peacock. Colleagues praise the "surprising beauty and originality" of his music and his "lyrical virtuosity with deep personal feeling" (Connie Crothers), even his "inner sense of lyricism" (Borah Bergman). "Hommage à



"Tristano" is Andreas Schmidt's third album, but his first recording in a piano-trio setting. The teacher and répétiteur at the Academy of Music "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin recorded this CD at Berlin's A-Trane on September 19th 2005, the very club in which he played a few hundred sessions (almost every Monday) and concerts over the last few years. In this trio with John Schröder on drums and Christian Ramond on bass Andreas Schmidt expands the teachings of the Tristano-school, enjoyably respectful and, at other times, enjoying the necessary disrespect. Schmidt, who keeps playing and/or communicating with Tristano-students like Connie Crothers, Jimmy Halperin, Paul Bley, David Liebman and Lee Konitz (check out their album "Haiku") emphasises the essence of improvisation. His "hommage" expands the playing of the master through "the interactive, interwoven and at times abstract improvisations of the three musicians". These are spontaneous snapshots with a deep feeling for the truth and realness of the music, independent of trends or concepts. "We are documenting the genesis of the music, the improvisation, life in the moment", Andreas Schmidt explains. "It is a very conscious experience in which every note counts." Or, as Lennie Tristano once said: "It's not instant composing; it's not following any kind of a formula. All you do is hear music in your head and reproduce it." How true and well, stirring and overwhelming this can sound, can be heard all over this extremely exigent "Hommage à Tristano". A successful concurrence of creativity and competence - nothing is static, improvisation is all.

Goetz Buehler

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