

April 23, 2020

[PREVIOUS](#) ▶

Reviews of over 5,000 musicians

Axel Dörner & Tomaž Grom

Omejeno gibanje/Confined Movement

Zavod Sploh ZASCD 19

Sylvain Kassap/Benjamin Duboc

Le Funambule

Dark Tree DT 12

Stripped down to a single horn and a double bass are two improvisational CDs that source extraordinary textures despite the instruments' supposed tonal limitations. Savvy and specific, each of players involved uses distinct techniques to stretch past conventions to create distinctive animation. Le Funambule or The Tightrope Walker features two French specialists in this delicate art, bassist Benjamin Duboc, who has worked with the likes of Daunik Lazro and Eve Risser, and Sylvain Kassap, whose clarinet skill have been challenged by playing with experimenters such as Günter "Baby" Sommer and Hamid Drake. Multinational, Omejeno gibanje/Confined Movement is a meeting between Slovenian bassist Tomaž Grom who plays with Zlatko Kaučič and Michel Doneda among others, and German trumpeter Axel Dörner whose list of exploratory associates is nearly limitless.

Building on the reed extensions expressed by Jimmy Giuffre and others, Kassap switches between standard and bass clarinet for sounds that can be individually mellow, clarion, squeaky, curved, buzzy and splintered, or sometimes all at once in the course of a single exchange. Not to be outdone Duboc moves his string arrangements among thickened stops and strokes to relaxed strums and sound exposure from all parts of his instrument. Showpiece of the session is designated to be the almost 20-minute "le ventre de socrate" preceded by the brief Giuffre-like- splintering tones from Kassap and intense sul ponticello strokes from Duboc on "c'est narcissse qui danse". The extended "le ventre de socrate" begins with wiggly chalumeau affirmations from the clarinetist and powerful low-pitched double bass thumps that swiftly accelerate to stretched triple-tongued flutters from Kassap, while Duboc's plucks go southwards. Working up to a crescendo of cornucopia-wide reed timbres mixed with de-tuned scordatura-like stops from the bassist, the ending reverts to near-swing that also includes basement tones from both. This fusion between swing and searching is taken to its logical conclusion on the final track as dark string bowing and strident reed peeps give way to a brief summation of diffuse circular breathing from Kassap.

The strategy of propelling textures from multiple sound sources is reversed on Confined Movement. So while Dörner makes do with the distinctive textures he can wrench for his three valves and tubing, Grom extends his double bass textures with a prepared speaker and whatever a "freeze" may be. Over the course of six abstract sequences, the bassist appears to expand his spiccato smacks to create percussive power, which at points sounds as if brushes are being used on a snare drum. Meanwhile the trumpeter manages to suggest a secondary capillary line as he plays, adding agitated vibrations to his already dissonant expositions. Dörner's frequent alternation between delicate grace notes and spittle-encrusted thrusts settle into static air and finally is completed by an open-horn brassy exit strengthened by col legno thumps and string slices from Grom. However the key to this session lies in detecting the variation each player later brings to earlier sounded narrative variations.

On one hand Dörner can produce a fanfare that's as shrill and augmented in its tonal variations as any air shaking surge from a military bugler. Elsewhere, his brass tone fragments into a series of modest unaccented air gulps that replicate the downward movement of water flushing. For his part, at times Grom outputs sul ponticello slaps at stratospheric speed or as cunningly calms the brass-string connection with kalimba-like vibrations. Then there are those sequences during which both players' dissected timbres

| [A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) |
[K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) |
[U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#) |

A

Espen Aalberg (1)
 Jonathan Aardestrup (1)
 Dave Aaron (3)
 Anders Aarum (1)
 Håkon Aase (1)
 Ben Abarbanel-Wolff (2)
 Rez Abbasi (3)
 Paul Abbot (3)
 Brian Abbott (1)
 Tom Abbs (14)
 Christine Abdelnour (16)
 Sakina Abdou (2)
 Ahmed Abdullah (5)
 Kaoru Abe (1)
 Chris Abelen (2)
 Rabih Abou-Khalil (1)
 Chris Abrahams (24)
 Muhal Richard Abrams (10)
 Joshua Abrams (31)
 Beñat Achiary (1)
 Idris Ackamoor (1)
 Bruce Ackley (21)
 Carlo Actis Dato (20)
 Serge Adam (1)
 Rino Adamo (1)
 Steve Adams (23)
 John Adams (2)
 Norman Adams (1)
 Jason Adasiewicz (30)
 Cannonball Adderley (1)
 Nat Adderley (1)
 Christopher Adler (2)
 Stan Adler (1)
 Chris Adriaanse (1)
 Irene Aebi (5)
 Konrad Agnas (1)
 Sophie Agnel (21)
 Béla Ágoston (2)
 Gianfranco Agresti (1)
 Gustavo Aguilar (1)
 Ajaramu (1)
 Jason Ajemian (9)

attain such a level of dissonant pitches that they're virtually indistinguishable from one another. Sizzling tones through prepared speakers adds additional string motifs to the bassist's program that could actually be cymbal slaps or crashes, while sometime his below-the-bridge strokes reach such kinetic intensity that it appears he could be rubbing the finish off his wound strings.

Like the other duo, "Confined Movement 4", a mid-point extended showpiece provides a climatic instance of both players' vanguard techniques. Despite the CD's title, its movements and others throughout the disc are anything but confined; plus the track is particularly rhythmic. Approaching Dörner's growling plunger effects and mouse-like squeaks at the highest range, Grom moves from detuned strumming to col legno slaps that could be confused for drum ruffs. After the trumpeter uses flutter tonguing to the push his thin tones skywards, an equivalent lofty texture is advanced by the bassist. Finally capillary grace note lowing and sweeping bell-like chiming from the bass strings connect and cease simultaneously.

Appealing improvisation doesn't depend on the instruments used or the creation of definite sound statements. The interactive and inquisitive patterns developed are as fascinating. So it is with these worldly duets.

—Ken Waxman

Track Listing: Funambule: 1. vers le bleu 2. c'est narcissse qui danse 3. le ventre de socrate 4. métamorphose de la poussière 5. le soir descendu sur la piste (entre les rêves)

Personnel: Funambule: Sylvain Kassap (clarinet and bass clarinet) and Benjamin Duboc (bass and voice)

Track Listing: Confined: 1. Confined Movement 1 2. Confined Movement 2 3. Confined Movement 3 4. Confined Movement 4 5. Confined Movement 5 6. Confined Movement 6

Personnel: Confined: Axel Dörner (trumpet) and Tomaz Grom (bass, freeze, prepared speaker)

Yusuke Akai (1)
 Rashied Al Akbar (1)
 Noël Akchoté (8)
 Ulf Åkerhjelm (1)
 Ali N. Askin (1)
 Sevket Akinci (2)
 Ambrose Akinmusire (1)
 Tetuzi Akiyama (5)
 Pheeroan akLaff (7)
 Guillaume Aknine (4)
 Branislav Aksin (7)
 Ahmad Al-Khatib (1)
 Yonatan Albalak (1)
 Liz Albee (1)
 Jeff Albert (5)
 Gianluca Alberti (2)
 Kristoffer Berre Alberts (4)
 Susan Alcorn (1)
 Ken Aldcroft (10)
 Alaeddin Aldernest (2)
 Mats Äleklint (14)
 Milan Aleksić (2)
 Marijus Aleska (2)
 Ralph Alessi (21)
 Aaron Alexander (4)
 Alexander Alexandrov (1)
 Romulo Alexis (1)
 Esteban Algora (3)
 Rashied Ali (9)
 Muhammad Ali (4)
 Luqman Ali (2)
 Sean Ali (8)
 Cristina Alioto (1)
 Michael Alizon (1)
 Liz Allbee (5)
 Lina Allemano (7)
 Marshall Allen (20)
 Geri Allen (2)
 Gordon Allen (8)
 Kris Allen (1)
 Ben Allison (5)
 James Allsopp (1)
 Goncalo Almeida (8)
 Chefa Alonso (4)
 Alessandro Altarocca (1)
 Maarten Altena (1)
 Martine Altenburger (3)
 Andy Altenfelder (3)
 Laura Altman (2)
 Barry Altschul (16)
 Lisa Alvarado (1)
 Remi Álvarez (3)
 Rodrigo Amado (20)
 Farida Amadou (1)