

crow with no mouth

small & significant



brutal vnemo



Tomaž Grom, the 42-year old Slovenian double bassist, can evince real concern for his instrument, even from a seasoned listener like myself. *Sam, Za...*, his remarkable home-recorded solo bass document from November 2013, has sections of such tortuous attack and brutal ardor, the resultant sobs, groans and alien yawps prompted me more than once to remind myself that the instrument is not, happily, sentient. This is not intended as a negative, but to say Grom, like early Gary Peacock, Peter Kowald, Fernando Grillo and, most saliently and contemporaneously, Christian Weber, truly animates the ancient instrument. On several of *Sam, Za's...* nine tracks this enlivenment is so intense as to sound as if Grom is playing from inside the bass, deft pizzicato on the entrails, hammering out inharmonics from the scroll to the tailpiece. Grom approaches the contrabass with that sort of totality, and utility, as if it *were* sentient, and in his regard and respect for the beast, he intends to use every part of its eviscerated form.

Like Grillo, who released the stunning solo bass record *Fluvine* in 1976, Grom integrates noise, ambiance and extended techniques with lucidity and humanity. The last time I recall hearing a solo bass record with a similar sense of grappling with the viscera of wood and strings was Christian Weber's 2006 *Osaka Solo*. Similar to Weber's solo approach, there are stretches on *Sam, Za...* of rich, sustained arco work, evidence that Grom regards the bass as a sounding source for the carnal and the calm.

Mention should be made of the cover art, the ink and brush work of another remarkable artist in Ljubljna, Matej Stupica. Visit his site [here](#), you're likely to stay awhile.

Tomaž Grom

Sam, Za...

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