



## **JOHANNES BAUER / THOMAS LEHN / JON ROSE**

### **Futch**

## **STEVE LACY**

### **Live at Jazzwerkstatt Peitz**

Over the past year, Berlin based Jazzwerkstatt label is seemingly taking the place of FMP as the most important creative outlet for improvising musicians in Germany's capital. Since FMP has slacked in releasing new materials [and in re-issuing their extensive back-catalogue], the Jazzwerkstatt collective has seen it fit to issue new [and older] recordings that fit the mould of FMP's listening audience.

Having been around for only the last few years, trombonist Johannes Bauer, synth player Thomas Lehn and violinist Jon Rose have finally seen it fit to release their debut release. On his web-site, Jon Rose ponders the importance of "Futch". He rambles on about "Futch" and its variations as well as its importance in today's society: "When FUTCH arrived, there were people who said 'Oh there is FUTCH' as if it had always existed - that there had always been FUTCH.

You mean there was a time that could be considered pre-FUTCH?

Is it of use to anybody? Can you sell it?

Can you catch the FUTCH? These days you can never be too careful who you shake hands with. I didn't realise it was so intense - dangerous.

Wrong again. FUTCH is behavioural and not yet a medical condition. Whole populations could be infected by chronic FUTCH but it is too soon to say. As a virus, it could take over the leadership of the free world and cause a breakdown of the social will. We might forget who we are and where we are going. It could result in a breakdown in the transmission of language."

None the wiser in Rose's explanation of the Futch phenomenon, all I know is these recordings from June of last year are a worthwhile investment of the listener's time. Deriving from the German slang, "futsch" denotes someone who is gone, spoiled or simply fucked up. On first inspection, we grapple with the trombone-violin duo shifts presented by Bauer and Rose. As the shifts between the hearty trombone and the pinnacle and pointillistic violin squeaks escalate, the two are joined by the glitchy analogue synth played by Thomas Lehn. As the track moves on, the violin soundscapes are replaced by even more hearty trombone mutations that are played in tandem with synth babblings. Near the end of the first 25 minute track, Rose is found plucking the strings lightly, while Lehn's synth work is slowed down, which is when Rose enters the picture with electronics scrapes. Lehn seems to act like a glue between the polar opposites of the trombone and the violin worlds. There's much common-ground evident in all three player's work. Their interaction is flawlessly realized and immensely well played. I find this surprising considering this is a relatively young ensemble. As the disc comes to an end, I'm already a convert. Jazz, improvised music or simply new music - "Futch" rules.

When Lacy stepped onto the stage of the Peitz cinema [former East Germany] back in 1981, he was assuredly getting his life back on track. After a number of years looking for a true home, he settled down in Paris with his wife, Irene Aebi. He was playing regular gigs with his ensembles, as well as his long standing musical partner, pianist Mal Waldron. His life was full of promise. No wonder that he started his solo program on that February night in 1981 with three Thelonious Monk numbers. "Reflections" being the most gorgeously articulated, this is where Lacy has an

opportunity to stretch out and showcase the work of his teacher. His soprano rarely sounded this confident and refined. On "Gallup's Gallop", he pulls a similar feat. I can't remember ever hearing a version of this Monk tune that was done in as original a way. Lacy continues to go off on tangents and makes his horn hit the highest highs with the utmost confidence and virility. On his own material, he is equally adept. When his horn squeals in consecutive order on "Wickets" and then reverts back to a melody line, you know the guy is baring his soul. He's making his horn sing, yet he's still interested in finding new ways to introduce new processes into his repertoire. Pervasive feeling of the album is joy. Lacy loves Monk's music. He loves to play his own material and this joy shows in everything that was played that night. Solo concerts are never easy for a performer. This is where they have to bare their soul and don't have the comfort of a band to drown in. Having said that, this Lacy solo disc is an unparalleled success.

- Tom Sekowski

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