

Seven Things

It is indeed an unusual experience to be able to work with a group after a 15 year mandatory break, something which most musicians are fortunately spared. After careful beginnings to put new life into my old Jazz Live Trio with new, young musicians, we have now decided to add two wind instrumentalists. This was done with conflicting feelings: since I love the jazz trio and through my obligation of almost twenty years to accompany soloists of all persuasions and from all over the world in the Swiss radio series "Jazz Live", the jazz trio was always far too brief. But also: wind instruments bring so many new colours, ideas and musical possibilities to a group that one does not miss the simple jazz trio for very long.

A high point of my long musical career was of course being able to accompany world class musicians like Johnny Griffin, Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, Lee Konitz, Slide Hampton and many others in the studio – sometimes also outside the radio studio on short tours. (The record label TCB released the best of this "Jazz Live" as a 12 disc set; and it is of course a fiendish joy that some of these CDs won international recognition.

A second high point was without doubt, in the middle of the seventies, the idea to add to our trio with three wind players and now, for once detached from the difficult task of delivering spoiled wind player stars from the international scene with a "grounding" which is as comfortable as possible, to try out our own ideas and concepts under the name "Magog", and, at a time when modern jazz rejected different directions and concepts, putting forward our own formula as an alternative. In this, youthful high spirits came to the fore, but both records from that time (which TCB has re-released as CDs) show that, together with the large success which manifested itself (very surprisingly for us) both at home and abroad in an abundance of more than complimentary opinions, a lot of effort and idealism had been worth it.

Today, almost 40 years later and again working with a line-up including wind instruments, is for me both instructive and – unexpectedly – an enjoyable experience. My colleagues in our "Seven Things", all around the same age from the times of Magog, some already honourable college professors, offer a completely different picture as we did back then. The many jazz schools in this country and study visits in the USA, which are today almost a matter of course – all four of my colleagues have this experience – have created a much more professional type of musician compared to before. If my Magogs were mainly loveable anarchists who brought more brimming lust for life than discipline for arduous, if also necessary experimental works, the few experiments which we have needed as "Seven Things" in order to get my not always fully streamlined music in line were simply a pleasure for me; the disciplined, swift experimental work is very similar to that which I know from classical music.

Today's jazz is certainly not as colourful as it was, no longer so carefree and consequently takes on very different concepts. But its masters are very clearly better prepared, they are more professional than most in my generation were when they were younger.

I believe that we are currently experiencing a classical phase in our music. The historical achievements of jazz once again have a high status. One is no longer searching for something new and undefined, but is oriented, stronger than before, on that which over 100 years of jazz has brought to us.

I love - and know a fair amount about – Gothic architecture. The earlier architects of this epoch in France were extraordinarily bold, creative, unconventional, sometimes also too bold. The High Gothic period barely knows these characteristics any more: one has experience, surety around the problems, architecture becomes virtuoso, elegant, sometimes also smooth and cool, which has its own charm, but the creativity – one cannot have everything at once in life – begins to step into the background. A classical period is achieved.

Perhaps with jazz we are now in such a period. Jazz is art, and art is life; life which is always moving. How wonderful it is to be able to take part in a small part of it.

Klaus Koenig.

SEVEN THINGS

DANIEL SCHENKER, tp, received his first trumpet lessons at the age of ten. After studying computer sciences at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, he was awarded his concert diploma by the Swiss Jazz School in Berne. Since the 1980s, Daniel Schenker has been a sought-after sideman in many Swiss bands and has played on more than 60 CDs and LPs. He has played in concert and on tour with Kenny Werner, Joe Haider, Bill Holman and many others. He has paid several visits to New York. Schenker performs regularly since 2001 with his own quartet and released the albums "Iridium" (2002), "soundlines" (2004, with the New York tenor saxophonist Chris Cheek as a guest) and "Jardim Botânico" (2009). Schenker teaches trumpet and ear training at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK).

CHRISTOPH Merki, as, studied history at the University of Zurich (Dr.phil.) and alto saxophone at the Lucerne School of Music (passed with distinction). He completed his musical training in New York, specifically with Dave Liebman. He now works as a jazz saxophonist, composer and music publicist. He has been teaching at the Zurich University of the Arts since 2001 and has been Professor of Ensemble Performances and History of Music since 2007. His albums "Ambient Conception of Jazz" (Universal Music), "Circles" and "Psychedelic Mountain Vol.1/2" were very well received, along with his own formation "Christoph Merki Music.01". As a music publicist, he made a name for himself with the standard band "Musikszene Schweiz" ("Swiss Music Scene", Chronos-Verlag, 2009) and has been a cultural journalist for the "Tages-Anzeiger" (since 2001). Christoph Merki built up the CD label ZHdK-Records at the Zurich University of the Arts and managed it from 2006 to 2012 with more than 30 CDs produced. 2012: selected by the Expert Commission of the Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia for the field of music.

KLAUS KOENIG, p, composition, studied at the Acoustic Institute of the University of Music in Detmold, which he left in 1962 with a degree in sound engineering (with a distinction). He worked as a recording manager for the Swiss radio station SFR in Zurich until 1997. Alongside this he developed several hundred shows for the jazz department. In 1964 the radio station made him responsible for accompanying guest soloist in the radio concert series "Jazz Live". His "Jazz Live Trio", the most important players in which included Isla Eckinger, Peter Frei as a bassist, Peter Schmidlin and Pierre Favre as drummers - could be heard in more than 100 live broadcasts with soloists from around the world until 1982. The performers included many top American and European musicians such as Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, Clark Terry, Benny Bailey, Phil Woods, Cliff Jordan, Kenny Wheeler and Albert Mangelsdorff. A 13-CD series by TCB documents this series of concerts. Longer-term links were established with Johnny Griffin, Lee Konitz, Sal Nistico, Franco Ambrosetti, Gianni Basso, Roman Schwaller and others. The group "Magog", made up of Hans Kennel, Andy Scherrer, Paul Haag and the Jazz Live Trio, was formed on his initiative in 1973 and enjoyed a great degree of international success. The collaboration with the actor and reciter Gert Westphal in a "jazz and lyrics" programme spanned several decades. A "classics and jazz" programme developed over several years with the classical pianist Annette Weisbrod. Participation in around 25 commercial recordings. Work on musical theory (on the tempering of keyboard instruments in old music) and musical education (piano voicing). In 1998 he had to stop his musical activity due to an illness in both of his hands. After many years of therapy, the 2012/2013 season with the old/new "Jazz Live Trio" and the 2013/2014 season with the "Seven Things" quintet with Dani Schenker, Christoph Merki and the trio meant a return to the music scene.

PATRICK SOMMER, b, born in 1976. Patrick studied contrabass and electric bass at the Swiss Jazz School in Bern and in Los Angeles. He lives in Zurich and works as a freelance musician. A solid feeling for timings, a broad stylistic and instrumental range, an unswerving taste and his ability to adapt make him one of the most in-demand bassists on the Swiss music scene. He holds regular concerts both in Switzerland and abroad and is involved in theatre and dance projects as a musician and composer. Selected discography: Tony Renold Quartet: Places (Unit Records 2011); Pius Baschnagel's Latin World: Son Song (Altrisuoni 2011); Martin Lechner: Gentlemen Are Hard To Find (BHM 2011); Bucher Sommer Friedli &

Aeby: Expanding (Dryrecords 2011); Bucher 5: Here And There (Unit Records 2010); Limber Lumber - Rvðsli
Sommer Sartorius: Diapassion (Unit Records 2010); Tim Kleinert Trio: Free Passage To Now (Covariance 2010);
Peter Zihlmann & TOW Orchestra: Tales Of The Old World (Unit Records 2010); Roli Frei & The Soulful Desert:
Strong (Sound Service 2010); Adrian Frey Trio: No Flags (Unit Records 2010); Julian Amacker Universe: A Tea
And Me (FF Records 2009); Marianne Racine Quartet: Jazz (2009); Patrick Sommer: Speechless (Rock Archive
2009); Bucher Sommer Friedli: Farb (Dryrecords 2008); The Moondog Show: Marfa (Fazerecords 2007); Tony
Renold Quartet: Timeless Flow (Universal Records 2005); Lisette Spinnler Quartet: in Between (TCB Records
2004). He has been playing for the Jazz Live Trio since 2012.

ANDI WETTSTEIN, dr, born in 1978. Studied the drums at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and at the Zurich
University of the Arts. His active involvement in concerts has brought him together with, among many others, Franco
Ambrosetti, Peter Madsen, Theo Kapiladis, Adrian Frey and Tobias Preisig. In addition to his artistic work, he also
teaches at the Staufen School of Music. Future projects: The Murder Of Amus Ames, Mistura, Markus Bischof Trio, Ray
Bourbon, Kabel, Jazz Live Trio.

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