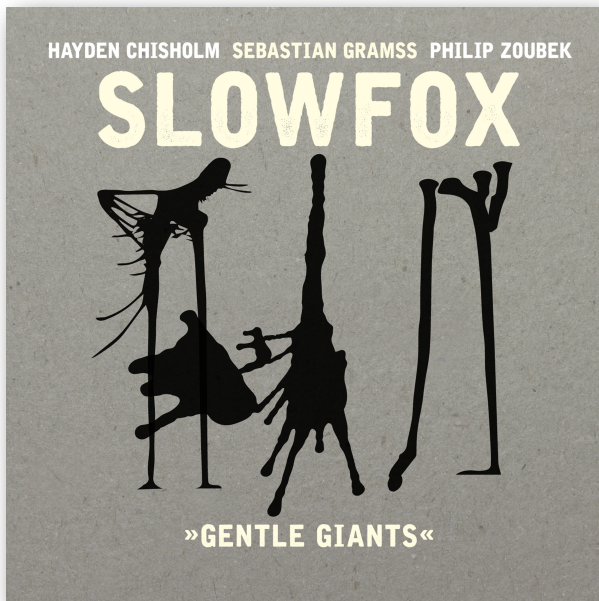


TRAUMTON Records

Grunewaldstr. 9 D-13597 Berlin Germany

030 331 93 50
info@traumton.de
www.traumton.de



indigo cd 138262
upc 70530464526
file under: jazz

Release May 5, 2017

SEBASTIAN GRAMSS
SLOWFOX
Gentle Giants

Sebastian Gramss: double bass
Hayden Chisholm: sax
Philip Zoubek: piano

SEBASTIAN GRAMSS SLOWFOX - Gentle Giants

*And those who were seen dancing
were thought to be insane by those
who could not hear the music*

From all the unconventional projects Sebastian Gramss has initiated, Slowfox is the most melodic. Essentially that is true; nonetheless, also this assessment should be seen in relation. Of course ECHO-award-winners Gramss, Hayden Chisholm und Philip Zoubek are much too reflective to stray onto the thin ice of entertainment. "We invite the listener by connecting to something familiar," Sebastian Gramss describes the starting point from which the trio develops chamber-musical aesthetics of sharpened senses. Gentle Giants comes alive through a subtle profoundness, in which there is a lot to discover: harmonic finesse, elegant sound ideas, and fine imaginative powers.

Bandleader Gramss, who also functioned as the producer of the record, calls the music "Melodic Avant-garde". Different from the subversive avant-garde of earlier decades, Slowfox only changes a few specific rather than all established parameters. The open approach of the trio brings together crafty structures and improvisations and appeals to intellect and heart alike. Instead of bold speed or muscle flexing there are atmospheric nuances and slender sounds, which interlock in transparent arrangements.

At the first listening the omission of any percussion already becomes apparent. Certainly Slowfox is not unique in this aspect, although the concept still seems quite uncommon in a jazz-context. Of course Slowfox can also swing without a specific beat, however, other qualities are the focus here. Unlike the debut album released in 2014, all compositions on Gentle Giants are written by Gramss specially for this formation. "On the first record we explored the possibilities of the new formation and therefore I resorted partly to tried and trusted material," Gramss recalls. "Thereafter the band sound was generally clear." Subsequently the trio played live a lot and carved out its contours more and more clearly. It was essential to this new work, to carry

on the individual path. It took about a year to find fitting pieces and to formulate them, Gramss says. In the summer of 2016 there was an extensive tour, so Slowfox had the chance to bring many of the pieces from Gentle Giants to life on stage before they went to the studio in mid-September.

Born 1966 in Wilhelmshaven, Sebastian Gramss began playing guitar and electric-bass, which later led him to the double bass and it was Louis Armstrong, Progressive-Rock and Weather Report that brought him to jazz. In the past decades he has worked with sound-rebels like Fred Frith and Elliot Sharp, as well as free jazz pioneer Peter Brötzmann and has written music for Pina Bausch and Hans Kresnik. Gramss' most unusual project is probably the orchestra consisting of 50 bassists named Bassmasse [Bass mass]. Gramss already played with Hayden Chrisholm before Slowfox; back in 1996 they were already sharing a rehearsal room. The saxophonist with the clear tone came to Cologne through a DAAD-scholarship and in the mean time also studied in Japan and in India. On his solo debut Circe he amazed with a self-devised microtonal system and since then Chrisholm played with Root70, David Sylvian and others. Furthermore, he created music for films and installations of Rebecca Horn. In 2013 he was awarded the SWR-Jazz-Prize. Philip Zoubek studied in Vienna and from there resettled to Cologne in 2001. For over 10 years the unconventional pianist has been in contact with Gramss and also played with Louis Sclavis, Rudi Mahall, Simon Nabatov, Clayton Thomas and many more. His trademark is extensive preparation of the grand piano with aluminum pots, glasses and plastic toys, which decisively expand on Cage's basic idea.

Just like for their debut album, Slowfox has found a poetic guiding motif for Gentle Giants as well, and its words were interspersed throughout the titles in the track listing. Since the order of the compositions on the album obviously follows a tonal dramaturgy, some of them now randomly carry peculiar names like "Were", "To Be" or "The". The entire quote - "And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music" - is accredited to Friedrich Nietzsche, Gramss says, but it is uncertain if it really originated with the philosopher. What is for sure though, is that the clarity and deeper meaning of the sentence Slowfox very well. The trio's nuanced music can make the mind dance and its listeners will definitely not be declared insane.

Links

Web: <http://www.sebastiangramss.de/slowfox>