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ESCAPE ARGOT You. Me. Them.

Christoph Grab: reeds
Florian Favre: piano & synthesizer
Christoph Steiner: drums, compositions

Live

19.09.2019 DE-Darmstadt, LIVE!JAZZ in der Stadtkirche
17.10.2019 CH-Basel, Bird's Eye
18.10.2019 CH-Winterthur, Esse Musicbar
25.10.2019 DE-Hörstl, Münsterland Festival
30.11.2019 CH-Burgdorf, Kulturhalle Sägegasse
05.12.2019 CH-Bern, Heiliggeistkirche
12.12.2019 CH-Bern, BeJazz
18.01.2020 CH-Uster, Zum Hut
tbc

ESCAPE ARGOT - You. Me. Them.

Escape Argot, the trio of eminent musicians from Switzerland led by the drummer Christoph Steiner (known from the band *Hildegard lernt fliegen*), released their first album together in March 2018. *Still Writing Letters* celebrated very positive international resonance. *Der Bund* from Bern praised the “improvisational playfulness” of the “daring and tremendously nimble trio” and *Bird Is The Worm* was amazed, “how suddenly they’re able to shift into the most delicate phrasings, making the transition seem as natural as thunder to lightning, pressure into peace.” The *Badische Zeitung* [Baden Newspaper] from Freiburg stated: “Escape Argot accomplishes the feat of transferring the seemingly disparate into an overall homogenous sound.”

Their second release, *You. Me. Them.*, builds upon the established concept and refines it. The energy level is similar, but dynamically Escape Argot moves up a gear. Christoph Steiner placed great value on this aspect while writing the new pieces. Consequently the range now reaches from lyrical, almost somewhat melancholic passages, like in the opening piece *The Remains Of Lightness*, to lurking restraint in *Get That Poison Off That Tongue* and all the way to forcefully gripping crescendos, which particularly escalate in improvisations. Some tracks might begin relatively calmly, but gain volume and tempo over time. Just like on the debut album, the music’s straight vibe can also fascinate rock fans and takes you along on journeys full of discoveries. Deliberately the some of the pieces do not return to their starting point in the end. Along the way they sidestep surprisingly or are jauntily shaken up by bumpy terrain.

Inspired by the interaction in concerts, the band has polished their characteristic sound even more. It is noticeable how pianist Florian Favre is spurred by the composer Steiner to go to extremes every now and then. For example in *Never Enough Not Enough*, when he hammers massive staccatos and cascades into the keys virtually throwing himself into it with his physical force. At the other end of his sound spectrum there are passages in which Favre's knowledge of European classical and modern music can be heard. Occasionally the clairvoyant pianist, born 1986 in Fribourg, plays bass lines with one hand on the Moog synthesizer. Steiner already met Favre during their studies in Bern and at the start of Escape Argot in 2015 he brought in the now 52-year-old and considerably older Christoph Grab on saxophone and live electronics. The Zürich native has played with Ray Anderson, Irène Schweizer, Mark Egan, Danny Gottlieb and many others, exhibited determination and wit with his project Science Fiction Theatre and is still praised for his band Raw Vision (with Ronny Graupe). On *You. Me. Them*. Grab focuses on tenor and alto saxophone and captivates with variable musical language, which reaches from airy and melodic sounds through rhythmically edged phrasing to erratic, rough expression.

Christoph Steiner notated some pieces of the new album quite precisely and thoroughly, like the volatile, contrasting *Allowing (The Pride Questionmark)*, the playful *Plutimikation* and also *Absent Ascent*, with spinning character and offset rhythm. For *The Remains Of Lightness* on the other hand, Steiner specified little more than the melody and for *Get That Poison...* merely three short written fragments, to initiate ideas. Escape Argot, the committed trio of very diverse characters amazes again with non-dogmatic and imaginative jazz that sounds absolutely contemporary without quoting any short-living trends. The distinct aesthetic, in which sobriety and witty playfulness, transparency and earthy force are well balanced, does not only please

Homepage <http://christophsteiner.net>

Traumton http://www.traumton.de/neu/records_e/index_escapeargot.html