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Lisbeth Quartett There Is Only Make

Charlotte Greve: alto-saxophone, composer
Manuel Schmiedel: piano
Marc Muellbauer: bass
Moritz Baumgärtner: drums
special guest:
Christian Weidner: saxophone

Lisbeth Quartett - There Is Only Make

Not only philosophers and quantum physicists know that time is relative. The Lisbeth Quartet has always had its own concept of time. This becomes apparent through the inner ease with which the band develops its sometimes transparent, sometimes dense music, in the studio and on stage. And through Charlotte Greve's profound, partly lyrical and in the best sense timeless compositions that unite depth and unobtrusive lightness. The latter primarily results from Greve's sensitive and masterful playing as well as her vibrant, floating saxophone tone. With patient determination, the Lisbeth Quartet has come a long way. It was founded in 2009, divided equally between New York and Berlin since 2012 and awarded a Jazz-Echo as newcomer of the year for its second CD *Constant Travellers*. The follow-up *Framed Frequencies* (01/2014) also received high praise, even internationally. "[Greve's] music is an exciting and energetic process with subtle movement, stripped down to the bare essentials, down to an aesthetic of distinctive moods and intense emotion," the *Financial Times Germany* wrote, and the *Fono Forum* said, "The quartet entices with compositions that are truly of our time, with a seasoned technique and a multi-faceted sound."

In spite of their residence on both sides of the Atlantic, the mostly still quite young Lisbeths meet regularly for tours. Their intuitive and intense accordance is captured on the impressive CD *Lisbeth Live*, which was released in the end of 2015. Just over a year later Charlotte Greve formulated a retrospect and prospect: "After we really went out on a limb in improvisations on the live recording, we are thinking of clearer forms and melodies for the new album." However, in the end *There Is Only Make* did turn out quite open and

copious. Greve's compositional storytelling and the band's attentive, focused joy of playing create arcs of suspense that easily carry over eight minutes. "Many pieces consist of several parts," Greve explains, "and then of course we still need space for improvising." The bandleader has clear ideas, at times meticulously notates even details, and then again is glad about the multifaceted creative drive of her partners. Marc Muelbauer's "singing" bass lines are more than just a foundation, Manuel Schmiedel's dappled or accentuated piano vignettes create imaginative panoramas, and Moritz Baumgärtner's unconventionally sonorous drumming fuels rhythmic finesse. Together with Greve's warm timbre and crystalline modulations, the genuine Lisbeth-sound develops.

With its combination of rhythmic groups of 5 and 3 and its flowing atmosphere, the opener of the album "5.3." gently, but inevitably pulls the listener into the Lisbeth-cosmos. Due to its tempo, the distinctive, erratic "Daily Task" (Track 8) is reminiscent of its place of origin, New York. Actually it is based on a quote by Patti Smith and was inspired by the attendance of a Tim Berne concert. The variable "Echo & Skill" (Track 5) also develops drive and Charlotte Greve explains its seemingly strange title, "It is about repetitions. Echoes reciprocate what you yell into the mountains. And skills also develop their quality through repetition." "Shirley" begins as a pensive ballad and ends with verve and energy; "Piece" on the other hand stays restrained throughout in an elegant manner. It came about in a rather unusual way for Greve. "I was sitting at the piano and within a short time the ideas just flowed so clearly and distinctly that I could complete the piece quite quickly. On many of my compositions, I write for weeks, some are unwieldy and just don't want to be finished. Thus spontaneous inspirations like 'Piece' are a rare and very welcome change."

Just like in earlier productions, Greve invited a guest on *There Is Only Make*. Greve composed the meandering "Original Source", which is almost evocative of a meditation with its circulating motifs and unemotionally-hymnal aura, for two alto saxophones on the occasion of her show together with Antonin Tri-Hoang as part of the *Jazzdor-Festival 2015* in Berlin. Instead of the Frenchman, Christian Weidner now plays the lower register and his husky tone contrasts Greve's bright sound. "He came into the studio and his first take went onto the album," Greve says with a mix of admiration and excitement.

Like some of the song titles, the name of the album has to do with Charlotte Greve's life in New York. It is about one of the "10 rules for students and teachers", which were largely written by Corita Kent and amended and propagated by John Cage. Rule number 6 states, "Nothing is a mistake. There is no win and no fail. There is only make." For Greve it was a motivation that matched her nature and the spirit of the band. "When we recorded our first demo in 2009, we weren't even thinking of releasing it, but then it became our debut *Grow*. Meanwhile we don't all live in Berlin anymore and yet still we're now releasing our fifth album," she contentedly sums up the eight-year continual history of the Lisbeth Quartet.

Charlotte Greve perceives *There Is Only Make* as a consequent advancement. "The new album developed more so from a band process than our earlier productions. Before we went into the studio, we carried the pieces with us for a longer time and had performed them in many concerts together." During the recording at the *Traumton Studio* they succeeded in preserving the liveliness of the concerts and at the same time working out the nuances. Greve compares the process to that of a painter, who develops the details and depth of his picture bit by bit. The result is multi-faceted pieces that oscillate between quiet passages and vigorous intensification. Melodic lines and clear forms, subtle interplay and modern approach give the Lisbeth Quartet an even more distinct character and an international profile.

Back-Katalog:

Lisbeth Live (Traumton Records 2015)

Framed Frequencies (Traumton Records 2014)

Constant Travellers (Traumton Records 2011)

Grow (Double Moon Records 2009)

Links:

Charlotte Greve: <https://charlotteelisabeth-greve.squarespace.com>