

TRAUMTON Records

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## Matthias Boguth Milk Wood

**Matthias Boguth:** vocals, compositions  
**Philip Frischkorn:** piano  
**Stephan Deller:** double bass  
**Philipp Scholz:** drums

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## Matthias Boguth - Milk Wood

Such a debut is rare! Matthias Boguth, born 1996, already has quite some stage experience as leader of various bands and projects, but hasn't released an album before *Milk Wood*. All the more impressive are the depth and compelling diversity of this production. Clearly Boguth gave great thought to concept and composition and furthermore found like-minded and sensitive musicians. With Joh Weisgerber (alias Monojo) he also has a producer at his side, who possesses a fine sense of timbre and sound aesthetics. Together they explore an allegedly familiar terrain, namely setting the poetry of one writer (in this case Dylan Thomas) to music, but they amaze at it with their unusual musical perspective. Boguth's individual, genre-busting sonic language reaches far beyond jazz, at times references Joe Jackson's intelligently catchy melodic or the playful complexity of progressive rock. Whereby these are not conscious references though, because Boguth has never dealt with such music.

Some of Boguth's declared sources of inspiration are Theo Bleckmann, John Hollenbeck and Michael Wollny. "I'm going by the compositional traits there; Bleckmann has a very pure sound, Wollny writes comprehensible, clear forms and all three of them are focused on serving the music." A high degree of clarity fascinates Boguth, no matter how versatile, variable and full of twists and turns the piece might be in the end. This approach contributes a lot to the extraordinary character of *Milk Wood*. On one side Matthias Boguth exhibits great range with his choice of vocal techniques, but on the other he never drifts off into exalted or even artificial spheres. His sonorous baritone can shift abruptly from warm timbre to insistent or sharp expression and occasionally he also plays with free, suggestive sounds or large gestures.

Boguth only began developing his compositions when the specially therefore formed band was fixed, certainly also considering the particular qualities of his partners. He relies on often detailed, but very brief lead sheets, to leave room for interaction and spontaneous ideas. In June 2017 Milk Wood celebrated their stage premiere; in the months after more gigs followed and thanks to the open playing, they always develop other facets. At the Traumton Studio the quartet recorded several versions of the pieces within two days and in the end chose mostly takes with somewhat calmer atmosphere. Already during the recording process Joh Weisgerber contributed precisely detailed producing-ideas, including selectively implemented electronic effects, everyday sounds and nature sounds. Boguth created some special vocal timbres (for example in "The Corner" and "What Seas Did You See") directly in the studio, some of them he accentuated even more strongly later with Weisgerber. The notion behind that was to sonically bridge from the band sound back to an audio drama character.

The original *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas is a radio play from 1954 that tells a day in the Welsh coastal village Llareggub. "Thomas artfully describes how the people wake up and go about their day and evening. Nothing spectacular happens, instead it is about little everyday scenes." For the album Boguth selected individual motifs to turn them into songs. The densification leads to some welcome disruptions, but Boguth maintained the chronological course of events from midnight to midnight. This results in some relatively quiet pieces in the beginning of the CD, while powerful boosts of energy and expressive passages light up in the second third. Like elsewhere in the world the day in Llareggub also ends in a bar with a few surging moments, before stepping out into the night, which belongs to the owls.

Boguth's sonorous, versatile voice, the finely nuanced and at other times vigorous playing of the musicians and the dramaturgic curve of the music draw the listener into the stories more and more. The partly spoken "Intro" is followed by the atmospheric "The Draper" with restrained singing, impressionistic piano and a mysterious, bowed bass passage. "Whose Name Was Tom" sounds distinctly jazz-inspired; here Boguth voices rapturous melodies and melismatic upswings. The first striking, rock-inspired boost of energy surprises with almost violent dynamics in "What Seas Did You See". The melodic lines of "When I Wake" come close to advanced pop music and yet still stay grounded in jazz, the euphoric-seeming hook line of "Oh There's A Face" contrasts the initially lurking, later crescendoing middle part of the song. Matthias Boguth says of himself, that he has always felt at home in many genres and among other things also values precisely this talent in his band partners. *Milk Wood* is truly a successful example for undogmatic musical openness. Because despite all versatility, the album appears well-rounded and consistent: a determined and remarkable debut of a smart singer and composer, for whom one can predict a great future.

**Web:** <http://www.matthiasboguth.com>

**Traumton:** [http://www.traumton.de/neu/records/index\\_boguth.html](http://www.traumton.de/neu/records/index_boguth.html)