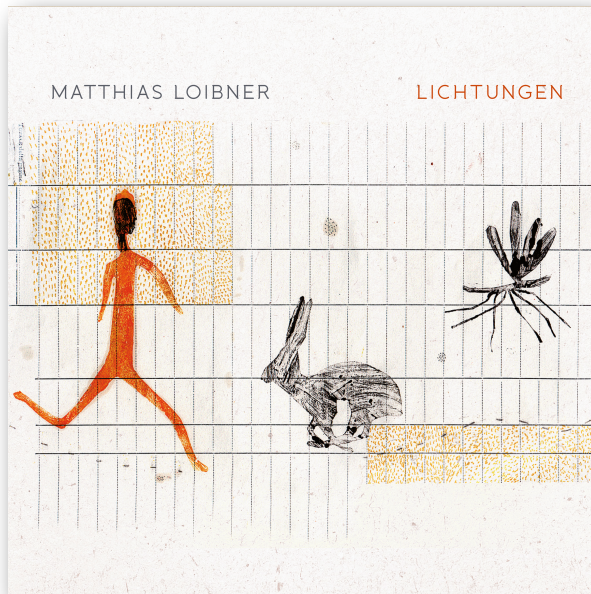


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Matthias Loibner
Lichtungen

Matthias Loibner: hurdy-gurdy

Live solo:

<http://matthias.loibner.net/schedule/>

Matthias Loibner - Lichtungen [Glades]

Europe-wide there are not many musicians, who have committed themselves entirely to the hurdy-gurdy. Virtuosos, who sustainably widen the ancestral horizon of this instrument, are even more rare. Matthias Loibner has played and studied folk and baroque music. He was the first to record Joseph Haydn's compositions for Lira Organizzata, the organ lyre, as well as pieces from Vivaldi and Chedeville. But furthermore, Loibner entered new terrain for the hurdy-gurdy, was inspired by traditional music from the Balkans to East Africa, interpreted Schubert's "Winterreise" [Winter Journey], fathoms connections to jazz and experiments with electronics. Thereby he often works with prominent and sometimes equally style-defining partners, for example the nonconformists of folk music Deishovida, the pan-European Sandy Lopicic Orkestar, the Jazzbigband Graz, the avant-garde trumpeter Franz Hautzinger, the singer Nataša Mirkovic and the Ensemble Baroque de Limoges. In addition, Loibner was involved in film and theatre productions with Hubert von Goisern, Henning Mankell, Dimiter Gotscheff and many others.

In the past 25 years Matthias Loibner has developed a dazzling and idiosyncratic hurdy-gurdy sound and at the same time distinguished himself as a multifaceted composer. For his way of playing and his creative will he has been awarded several prizes, among them the renowned French "Choc du Monde de la Musique". Among his many releases, "Lichtungen" is only his second solo production, with only a hurdy-gurdy and without electronic effects. His instrument was crafted in the Viennese workshop of Wolfgang Weichselbaumer, a specialist for modern hurdy-gurdy models. Compared to traditional versions, they have more strings, a wider range and multi-channel amplification possibilities.

“On my first solo record I told various separate stories. This time there is an overall theme, which centers around glades, the title of the album ‘Lichtungen,’” Matthias Loibner explains. “Sometimes you experience something that makes your mouth fall open and pauses your thoughts. Such moments were the inspirational source for the compositions.” It is the small observations that inspire the hurdy-gurdy virtuoso, contemplations that are sometimes almost meditation-like. “Sitting at the kitchen table and studying a notch in the wood,” Loibner suggests as a motive, “or looking into glowing embers that are constantly transforming. You get the same impression when watching a leaf-bearing tree in the wind. It moves ever differently and never looks the same.”

Part of the essence of the hurdy-gurdy and of Matthias Loibner’s self-conception as a composer, is the nearness of heavenly-clear and raspy-rough sounds. Cleverly placed contrasts are important to him and thus his pieces change between optimistic and melancholically tinted atmospheres, delicate melodies and zestful rhythms. Many passages exude a reposing energy, a sovereignty that concentrates and intensifies moods through purposeful reduction.

“I have a relatively unusual background”, Matthias Loibner recapitulates his early years as a musician. He was born in 1969 as the son of an organist, was soon introduced to the theory of harmony and started playing piano, before learning guitar and trombone later on. He enrolled for classical and jazz composition, as well as orchestral conducting, at the conservatory for music and performing arts in Graz. “Of course I learned all kinds of things during my studies, but some of it seemed to lack content, despite its technically superb performance. On the other side, folk music was often belittled and dismissed as sloppy and impure.” Back then already, he found this evaluation inappropriate. Nevertheless, Loibner somewhat unavoidably concentrated predominantly on classical music, until a certain festival butted in: “There I heard Serbian and Bulgarian folk music that moved me much more deeply,” Loibner remembers his key experience.

He found like-minded musicians in the Austrian movement “Neue Volksmusik” [New Folk Music]. A friend gave him a hurdy-gurdy, which he played self-taught at first. Eventually he gave up his composition studies and devoted himself fully to his new favorite instrument. After various collaborations with musical partners of various styles, it became clear to Loibner, that he could quickly integrate his sound into different constellations. Though he emphasizes the realization, what music is primarily about to him, even more strongly: “I ask myself, how I would explain to a stranger, how to play an Austrian waltz. Thereby I noticed, that probably every second musician would answer this question differently. So it depends much more on the personality of the musician, than on the genre he is currently playing. Ever since, I concern myself mainly with the people that I meet in the different scenes.”

By not fitting into any prevalent genre or category “Lichtungen” matches Loibner’s open-minded nature and his artistic attitude. “I like it when styles converge. It should sound like something of its own, not concretely like Balkan or jazz or baroque.” In the end, music is about the contents and not the form. “I find it uninteresting to demonstrate everything that is possible on the hurdy-gurdy. I would much rather like to share a part of myself and of my story with others.”

For Matthias Loibner, his second solo record is a matter very near to his heart, especially because the Viennese-by-choice expects his next productions to be with other musicians or ensembles again. Matthias Loibner reached many decisions about “Lichtungen” intuitively. In addition, he took his time for the recording, in an idyllically located mountain church. Although some pieces unfurl a broad acoustic panorama, there are no overdubs. What aficionados knew all along, becomes clear to anyone now, who has so far only marginally concerned himself with this particular instrument: an imaginary chamber orchestra is inherent in the hurdy-gurdy. And Matthias Loibner knows how to masterfully conjure up and flash on the manifold richness of sound of the hurdy-gurdy.

Links:

<http://www.matthias.loibner.net>

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