



indigo cd 943632
upc 705304453926
jazz/vocal

LC 05597

Listening tips:

- [1] My Home Is My Tent
- [3] KHI
- [4] BOS / Benjamin

Release May 7, 2010

Michael Schiefel My Home Is My Tent

Michael Schiefel: voice

Live:

25.03.2010 DE-Amberg, Stadttheater
26.03.2010 DE-Schwäbisch Hall, Jazz Art Festival
07.05.2010 DE-Jena, Umspannwerk
12.05.2010 DE-Berlin, A-Trane : Record Release Concert
tbc

Michael Schiefel - My Home Is My Tent

MICHAEL SCHIEFEL - My Home Is My Tent

Up and away, the time's are-a-changing, the world is getting smaller, and people are always on the go. Whether virtually or physically hardly seems to make a difference; live streaming makes everyone available all the time. Just as distances seem to be disappearing, disappearing into them is what threatens the individual. Mobility harbors the risk of sensory overload and uprooting, but singer Michael Schiefel has reached his destination, on the road, at home. The title of his new solo album "My Home Is My Tent" was well-chosen. The tent is no snail's shell that the loner carries around as a hard-case mobile cave for beating a quick retreat, serving as both protection and burden in equal measure. As a virtual home, the tent is easy to transport, and quickly set up. The tent wall swings and becomes a magic membrane to the outside world, allowing concentration and permeance at the same time, filtering impressions and distilling them down to personal experiences. Or, using the words of the great visionary Vilém Flusser, who much preferred moving "containers" and tents to houses: "The tent wall blowing in the wind collects the experiences, processes them, and sends them out, and we have it to thank for making the tent a creative nest".

"My Home Is My Tent" is Michael Schiefel's fifth solo work and his fourth CD for Traumton. It is an album that takes a conceptual double burden onto its narrow shoulders, and this much we can tell you, it is carried with ease.

First of all it is a "theme album" that casts a lyrical and musical look at nine cities that the singer (with one exception) travelled to in recent years and months. On the other hand it is a solo album in the truest sense of the word, consisting 100 percent of Michael Schiefel's vocal utterances. This covers, as his fans and critics know, a wide spectrum: from generic jazz singing to creative expression, from feminine to masculine, from natural acting to digital effects, from scatting to beatboxing. The only tools he uses are a looping device, especially designed for him, with which he can flip

his voice back onto itself and, if need be, layer into multi-voiced choirs or complete vocal ensembles, and a laptop with software that gives its user unlimited possibilities of deformation, distension, and configuration of voice fragments. With these tools, Schiefel can create complex, other-worldly, madrigal-like polyphony, or even a complete band with drums, bass, and harmony instruments.

"My Home Is My Tent" was recorded in Traumton-Studio in Berlin. Some arrangements that Schiefel had already finished "on the road" were given new lead vocals and finalized, other songs were born from spontaneous improvisation. Several tracks, like the emblematic title song, are based on lyrics (by Max Hirsh and Michael Schiefel) and follow their very own type of song format. Others remain nonverbal and abstract. The idealistic coherence is given by several three-letter acronyms which we all know from the little tags on our luggage. In "TLV" for example, we dive right into the multilingual babel from Tel Aviv, with its discos, high-rises, mobile phones and short fuses that quickly drive visitors straight to the water. As it says in the lyrics: I prefer the beach. And so it goes on, like to Moscow, where the darkness and coldness become tangible with long sustained notes and a frosty reverb on the lead vocal. Then, in complete contrast, comes Hong Kong, which, in spite of its hustle and bustle, Michael Schiefel always perceives as being "like a warm bath tub". Stations like San Francisco, Karatchi, New York and Boston follow, the last of which inspired the maybe most touching song of the album: Eponymous hero "Benjamin" is blessed with extraordinary talents, but prefers to keep them to himself. The story contains a couple of themes we've run across rather frequently in Schiefel's songs to date: Being an outsider, estrangement, and the power of creativity. In the end, we get back down to earth and hard reality: "TXL (Back In Berlin)" is a meditation on arriving in a familiar, but depressing world. After that there's only Funafuti – the only airport on the record that Schiefel's never been to. And that is exactly what he's talking about. As he sings in the first song, "I think I should be in Funafuti / get lost in the sea". Funafuti becomes an idealized faraway place whose appeal grows even more with its airport code of FUN.

Fun is, for all the profundity and apparent virtuosity, a factor which should never be underestimated with Michael Schiefel. Fun with the art of tonal fabulation, fun with increasingly sophisticated technical devices, fun with his own voice, fun with tinkering around by himself as well as with collective music-making, which he shows again and again by being a regular in the formations Jazz Indeed and Nicolai Thärichen's Tentett. On "My Home Is My Tent" he combines this ease with personal observations, experiences, and highly diverse musical approaches. It is an invitation to everyone who would rather feel challenged by music than lulled to sleep, and those who don't need a hotel bed for an extraordinary experience, when sometimes a tent does quite nicely.

Bio:

Michael Schiefel, vocals

Studied jazz singing and composition at the UdK (University of Fine Arts) in Berlin and has played concerts since the beginning of the 90's with David Friedman, Jazz Indeed and Thärichen's Tentett, among others. With his solo-vocal programs Invisible Loop (1998) and I Don't Belong (2000), Schiefel has been on tour in Europe, Africa and Asia sponsored by the Goethe Institute, among others. He has played concerts at the International Festival Jazzkaar in Tallin/Estland, Jazz Across The Border, Jazz Units, Mindener Jazzfrühling, Synthesizer Festival - Braunschweig, St.Wendeler Jazztage, Europhonics Festival, Rudolstadt - Tanz und FolkFest, Stimmen 99, Jazz in Hamburg, Kulturarena Jena, Allgäuer Jazzmeeting, Gostenhofer Jazztage, jazzfestival Frankfurt, Summer Jazz Pärnu/Estland, North Sea Jazz Festival (Netherlands), Mediawave Festival (Ungarn), and the Jarasum Jazzfestival (Korea).

In 2001 Schiefel was appointed professor for jazz singing at the Hochschule für Musik "Franz Liszt" (the Liszt School of Music) in Weimar.

Links:

Web: <http://www.michaelschiefel.com>

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/michaelschiefel>

Traumton: <http://www.traumton.de/label/artists/?id=schiefel&lang=de>

Discography:

Michael Schiefel:

Invisible Loop (Traumton 1997)
The Visible Loop, CD-Rom (Traumton 1997)
I don't belong (Traumton 2000)
Gay (Traumton 2003)
Don't touch my animals (ACT 2006)
My Home Is My Tent (Traumton 2010)

mit Thärichens Tentett:

Grateful (Minor Music 2005)
The Thin Edge (Minor Music 2003)
Lady Moon (Minor Music 2001)
Farewell Songs (Traumton 2009)

mit Jazz Indeed:

Under Water (Traumton 1996)
Who the moon is (Traumton 1998)
Blaue Augen (ACT 2005)

Press:

"Germany has never seen a singer like Michael Schiefel before."

Sueddeutsche Zeitung, May 2005

"Schiefel is an exceptional vocalist. His incredibly malleable voice rises majestically from his navel to his head. His voice is ironic, laconic, and sounds wonderfully androgynous."

Der Tagesspiegel, January 2006

"Michael Schiefel is one of the few German jazz musicians who possesses a truly original style. He is a gifted solo performer who uses electronics to playfully expand and distort his voice in his a cappella performances. When performing in group formations, the androgynous quality of Schiefel's incredible vocal range helps to diversify and problematize the often macho world of jazz musicians."

Das Jazzbuch (German jazz encyclopedia), 2005

"Among jazz singers, Michael Schiefel has created a genre all his own.... His music reveals both a highly developed sensitivity for the impact of simple sounds, as well as an evident delight in combining them to create sophisticated structures."

Welt am Sonntag, November 2005

"Schiefel knows all about the magical power which lies in his vocal chords. He is an entertainer, although his art would more likely be classified as avant-garde. Someone who is not afraid to make 'serious' music while flirting with the light-hearted muse."

FAZ, Anna-Bianca Krause, 17.7.2000

"Apart from Michael Schiefel, only few master the voice so well that they can create an entire orchestra in their listeners' ears. Al Jarreau and especially Bobby McFerrin are names that come to mind, but Michael Schiefel is really doing something completely new."

ZDF.MSNBC, 5/2000