

GRÜNEN

ACHIM KAUFMANN – PIANO
ROBERT LANDFERMANN – BASS
CHRISTIAN LILLINGER – DRUMS

NEW RELEASE:

disenjambment Trokaan Press 005

grünen : Pith and Twig Clean Feed CF 311

grünen

Clean Feed CF 202

Grünen (“the greening”) was formed in April 2009 when Landfermann invited Kaufmann and Lillinger to participate in his ongoing concert series of improvised music at the Loft in Cologne.

Their first – completely improvised – encounter was recorded and subsequently released by Clean Feed Records.

For their second disc, the trio mixed spontaneous improv with some predetermined structures – taking new turns with written material, some of it rhythmically quite intricate, evoking images of surrealistic jazz and song: a strategy the three have adopted for their highly unpredictable concert performances as well.

On the occasion of Achim Kaufmann's receiving the Albert Mangelsdorff award, *grünen* performed at the Berlin Jazz Fest in November 2015 where they were joined by poet gdr guenther.

In 2017, the trio toured in Canada and Chile.

In January 2020 *grünen* released their 3rd cd entitled *disenjambment*, a documentation of a week-long residency at the Loft in Cologne.

REVIEWS (disenjambment):

“The most exciting trio from either side of the Atlantic. The best of the free spheres. A new definition of the format of the piano trio. It is a complex yet comprehensible narrative that Grünen is putting forth here. What a wonder.”

Adam Olschewski, Jazz Podium (Album of the Month 3/2020)

“The best band in the world.”

Jazz Podium's Cover Story, 9/2020

“I'm wondering if a new jazz hybrid is emerging. Though I'm not a huge fan of either rock or hiphop, I love much of jazz-rock – and if this album is any guide, the same applies to jazz-hiphop. To use a wrongly-maligned term, *Disenjambment* is at the cerebral end of the genre, and it's a remarkable achievement. There's a lot more to say about this amazing music, but I need to listen to it more first.”

Andy Hamilton, Jazz Journal (UK) : 5 star review

“The more intensely you listen to the album, the more interesting details are revealed. This is what the future of piano trio music could sound like.”

Martin Schray, freejazzblog

“Despite the stringency with which the trio Grünen navigates unknown territory at the highest of levels as a matter of course, you never fail to hear the lightness in the movement and their joy in the unknown. You never know what kind of development you will encounter at the beginning of each piece, there being a lot of unexpected turns. Grünen is a summit of sorts of jazz chamber music. All three players engage in the most challenging of conversations with each other on an equal footing.”

Tim Caspar Boehme, taz (Germany)

“What a delightful listening experience — not only during these times during which so many of us should actually have a bit more time to concentrate things. And particularly after the pandemic.”

Michael Rüsenberg, jazzcity

concert review:

“The thicket of what is happening on stage is flourishingly dense. If there are green shoots sprouting there, then not in a ponderously organic manner but smoothly, eruptively. (...)”

If much sounds as though freely improvised, that is mostly due to Achim Kaufmann’s ingenious compositional work built on a communal layout which fixates agreements, establishes connections, depicts processes (...)

If you just close your eyes for a bit and listen to what’s going on, you’ll quickly realize how closely these three musicians are working together. How their energies and music are creating a communal streaming flow replete with indelible rapids.”

Hans-Jürgen Linke, Frankfurter Rundschau (Germany), May 2018

about Grünen / Pith and Twig:

“...a mélange of proto-classical, subversive swing and folksy impudence. (...) Here Lillinger can punctuate, cajole, react, ignore and bring to the fore all of his breadth as a player, it’s heartening to see that European avant garde keeps attracting new adherents.”

Andrey Henkin, All About Jazz New York (review of grünen)

“They create something new with a ‘traditional’ piano trio, with a high level of musicality and creativity. These three artists do not play music, they are music.”

Stef Gijssels – Free Jazz Blog (review of grünen)

„The music leads you in many directions, of nervous agitation, playful boppish treats, calm precision and avant-garde explorations, into the nature of sonic interaction, and most often all in the same track. Again, three outstanding musicians who bring us some of the best piano/bass/drums music around.”

Stef Gijssels, Free Jazz Blog (review of Pith and Twig)

“*Pith & Twig* is the second disc by cooperative piano trio Grünen. Alongside Lillinger the outfit comprises compatriots pianist Achim Kaufmann and frequent collaborator bassist Robert Landfermann, who operate firmly in the tradition of fully participative egalitarian piano combos. The program mixes compositions by Kaufmann with group improvisations, though the separation between them can be slight; the same nervy feel permeates both. In large part that’s down to Lillinger’s fractured sense of time and pulses of sound, in which he is abetted by Landfermann’s offkilter counterpoint. Even the written elements of Kaufmann’s charts are not straightforward. *Toquesenh* and *Mazeem* both present a melodic line underpinned by edgy start-stop rhythm, almost immediately subsumed into gloriously skewed group interplay. *Mobililar I - Mooswerdung* provides the best example, as an intro of swinging Morse code gradually deconstructs into first atmospheric then percussive improv. Kaufmann’s accumulating patterns assert architecture not always otherwise evident amid the clanking piano preparations, rubbed strings and gamelan sonorities. Lillinger proceeds in irrepressible bursts of rhythm, tight rolls, tappy eruptions and precise bish bash bong. He slips easily into partnership with Landfermann, who wields his bow with abrasive physicality. Their oddly accented phrases and stabbed interjections conspire to keep listeners on the edge of their seats.”

John Sharpe, NYC Jazz Record

Clean Feed press text for *Pith and Twig*:

“No, the piano jazz trio format is far from being at an end, and here is one more example of that, one of the best to boot. German players Achim Kaufmann, Robert Landfermann and Christian Lillinger show us that the traditional combination of a grand piano, a double bass and a drumset can adopt experimental configurations and explore new situations. When the pianist isn’t the leader of the band – in Grünen, no one is – it could even be problematic to call it a piano trio. The usual hierarchy of the instruments dissolves, and the functions of the three musicians change radically. There’s no soloist and there’s no rhythm section which means everybody solos and everybody supports the others. And when you have three virtuosos with an eccentric, or even punkish, anti-virtuosic approach to the music, anything can happen: lots of tension and lyricism, powerful playing and deconstructions en miniature, crazy flights and rigorous organization of sounds. Prepare yourself (again: “Pith and Twig” is Grünen’s second opus) to be surprised.”

contact:

achim@achimkaufmann.com

www.achimkaufmann.com

<https://achimkaufmanntrokaan.bandcamp.com/album/disenjambment>