

Press - Reto Suhner Nonett

Reto Suhner's Jazz Nonet: Asceticism and Opulence

As an incredibly flexible alto-saxophonist playing with an airy, dulcet sound, Reto Suhner (40), born in Herisau, has archived an impeccable reputation as a Jazz musician. But now Suhner presents himself as an arranger. For the CD "Colors" Suhner has arranged 13 pieces for Nonet. Suhner plays the "Intro" alone at the contrabass; a lot of improvisatory attitude is palpable. Later soloists opt out of the ensemble over longer spots and thus are really exposed - because Suhner uses no pianist and thus has no accompaniment chords. Therefore the Nonet often seems ascetic. Repeatedly only one brass-player is playing improvisatorially, accompanied by bass and drums only. Anyway, with Suhner you do not get music knitted after the general pattern of a medium sized band. He is little interested in a compact (and clichéd) sound. Much more he is into chamber music. No wonder, he includes a tuba and a French horn in his band. And if the "Intro" speaks of a free improvisatory attitude, the "Outro" shows the other side of Suhner's music - the careful orchestra work. Only four chords unfold here, but what a richness of colors! Suhner's ensemble (Adrian Pflugshaupt, Matthias Tschopp, Lukas Thöni, Mark Gebhart, Andreas Tschopp, Antonio Neille-Menendez de Llano, Dominique Girod, Dominik Burkhalter) weaves a opulent carpet - constantly changing colors. And thus Reto Suhner connects the opposites: asceticism and opulence.

Tages Anzeiger, Christoph Merki 4.3.2014

Colorful

Reto Suhner from Herisau, who now lives in Zurich, is an excellent Saxophonist with a lot of independent and original ideas - the Jazz-community has noticed this long ago. But with his latest album "colors" Reto Suhner takes it further. The nonet, which he founded two years ago, includes four brass players - trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba - and three woodwinds, who can work the whole arsenal of saxophone, clarinets and flutes. In addition, there is a bass and a drum. Reto Suhner presents himself as a composer with a sure feeling for dramaturgy, and as an arranger and master of instrumentation, who reveals the complete chart of color range his instruments can muster. He and his colleagues also set highlights as soloists, which is a wonderful supplement, which we acknowledge gratefully.

Beat Blaser, Aargauer Zeitung 4.10.2013

Link to [SRF2Kultur-Podcast](#), report in which Beat Blaser comments on the recording.

SFR2Kultur, 17.9.2013

Reto Suhner Nonet-Colors

What started in 2009 during his Artist-in-Residence at the Moods, now finds its closure in the recordings to the CD Colors. For the recordings of some of his original compositions Reto Suhner has put together a nonet, which presents his pieces in new vibrant colors.

"The relation between color and sound has always fascinated me. In this regard, recording with a large line-up offers special options." Reto Suhner is strongly rooted in the Swiss big band-scene, he plays in the Swiss Jazz Orchestra, the Zurich Jazz

Orchestra and also has international connections, for example to the project Lauer Large of the German trombonist Johannes Lauer. Suhner explores on his new record the spectrum of acoustic colors and soft shadings. Most of the pieces come from Suhners own pool. He has composed only a few new pieces for this production. "There was a selection of compositions from the Moods-sessions. In addition, I have selected a few more by intuition. And finally, I have rounded of the whole thing, so that it has become complete."

Because the pieces did not have to be written, Suhner could concentrate fully on his new role as arranger and leader. "Because most of the musicians knew my songs well – they had played them before at the Moods or else in a smaller line-up – everything went quite smooth, without me interfering too much."

The idea of arranging his pieces for a medium-sized instrumentation, Suhner has had for a long time. Still, he needed a few tries, before the result matched his conception. "In the past, I used to pack a lot into the intro and thus lost the overview, so that I could not get to the bridge. With the help of my computer, it is now a lot easier to organize a piece and to keep the overview." But it remains difficult to find a balance between control and emotion. Thus, Suhner has cast the members of his nonet carefully. Hence, the medium-size of a nonet, which is no small line-up, but is not as large as a big band, is the ideal canvas to show individual personalities. In a band of this size, each instrument has its room. But in return, they have to play a little more." As he uses no harmonic instruments, each of the instruments gains extra room. In the arrangement, the background and the harmonic information is distributed to the different voices. Suhners plan works: The nine voices are coming together wonderfully and individually, not only in the soli. Each one has a lot of room in the harmonic arrangement of the whole picture. "That's the most important thing for me. Also in larger bands, it is the personalities, which define the acoustic colors."

Christof Thurnherr, Jazz'n'More 09/2013