

Jazz and Electronics

Friday, 18th October 1982, 8 p.m., Brucknerhaus, Großer Saal

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ALPHONSE MOUZON-QUARTET

Joe Albright (saxophone)
David Iwataki (piano)
Welton Gite (bass)
Alphonse Mouzon (percussion)

Ars-Electronica WORKSHOP ENSEMBLE

François Jeanneau (saxophone)
Wolfgang Dauner (keyboards)
Jasper van't Hot (keyboards)
Harry Pepl (guitar)
Adelhard Roidinger (bass)
Daniel Humair (percussion)
Conception: Robert Urmann

7 pm -8 pm: public workshop, Brucknerhaus, Großer Saal

ELECTRONICS IN JAZZ

The fact that electronics have invaded popular light music to such an extent and have influenced so many related spheres of music might lead to the assumption that relations between music and electronics had first been established in pop and rock music. This quantitative dimension, however, is due to the enormous publicity of the rock media. As a matter of fact, the first attempts were made in jazz, first of all by electrification of acoustic instruments -and this was not merely electrical amplification. Hitherto unknown, new dimensions of sound were opened up, practically new instruments were being created.

Charlie Christian introduced the electric guitar in 1937, Fats Waller brought the electronic organ to jazz and Jimmy Smith after him made it known to the general world of music. The electric piano also was accepted by white rock music only after Miles Davis had consistently used this instrument in 1968 and had opened up completely new worlds of sound. Electronics were first applied to instrumental sound by black musicians. In the thirties, the black singer Billie Holiday was the first to make use of the microphone, an absolutely novel technique for human singing which has become the accepted usage today.

The "genuine" aleatory instruments, however, came from the electronic studios of concert music. When jazz and rock were fused in the early seventies, all the electronic instruments invaded jazz: electric pianos, organs, the mellotron and other electronic keyboard instruments, electronically manipulated guitars, saxophones, trumpets, even percussion instruments, at times coupled with wah-wah- and fuzz-pedals, reverberating and echoing equipment, phase-shifters, ring-modulators using feedback effects, equipment for octave-doubling and

automatic harmonization, and also various synthesizers. Electronics are so fascinating to jazz musicians because of the expansion of the tonal range and its spectra exceeding by far the limits of oscillations and frequencies of conventional acoustic instruments, even to the range of noise that can no longer be defined in frequencies. This marks the actual historic introduction of electronics into jazz. Any other musical characteristic of "electronic jazz" had existed before: in the blues, the swing, the be-bop, in cool jazz and free jazz. What was new, what brought about the radical change, was electricity. It corresponds to a trend of our age; not only the instruments, but also the acoustic needs of modern man have become "electronized". If electronics dominate everyday life, music cannot remain that of yesterday. The German author and critic J. E. Berendt says: "Jazz needs new sounds! This, too, is part of the history of jazz: in constant quest of new sounds. We are only on the threshold of that unknown, challenging white zone on the map of music called electronics."

Ars-Electronica Workshop Ensemble

There are important reasons to integrate jazz at Ars Electronica. But not less important are the reasons for arranging a jazz workshop in the course of this event, where the dominant tendency will be to play the electronics. Doing such is not quite so rare -at least not outstanding in Europe's jazz-scene. Nevertheless this might become an event, to evoke a stunning cascade of sparks. Seven of the top musicians in Europe have been invited, all of them appreciated both as outstanding soloists and composers: the keyboard-players Wolfgang Dauner and Jasper van't Hof, the saxophonist Francois Jeanneau, the guitarist Harry Pepl, the bassist Adelhard Roidinger, the percussionist Daniel Humair. An illustrious meeting - an "All-Star-band", as it would have been called in former Jazz-areas.

Anyway, this meeting wouldn't be justified, if besides demonstration of great virtuosity and brilliant skill in improvisation, no further creative pretensions would be claimed. An additional demand in creative areas, in the field of composition and in different constellations -from duos to the big ensemble - must be met as well as the realization of new ideas in a working process of organization and spontaneity -excluding any hierarchical structure. Each of the artists is known for giving preference to creating the new out of by-gone dimensions. At a non-public workshop, the artists will integrate and practice music together, with the hopes of finding creative cooperation. The results, as elaborated at this meeting, will be heard in concert.

Alphonse Mouzon is one of the most famous percussionists of rock-jazz - he is said to be the most musical, most ingenious and most sensitive of this genre. Typical for performances by this Mister "Masterfunk" - with the status of a star - is his inexorable, vigorously beaten rock-pulse which he, as Jazz requires, enriches with a wide variety of rhythmical figures superimposed by polyrhythms. For creating his ensembles he makes extensive use of electronic sound-producers.

Before forming his own bands, he got known in 1968 for his work with Gil Evans. He reached world-wide fame as a founding member of "Weather Report" in 1971 with Fusion-Music, where playing music on electronic equipment plays a dominant role.

In 1972 he demonstrated with McCoy Tyner that he can play "Acoustic Jazz" of Coltrane's heritage just as virtuously. In the second half of the seventies Mouzon remarked several times that he felt himself to be a rock musician. Obviously the "Rock World" had difficulties in accepting him one of themselves. That is probably because he pretentiously plays jazz-style within a rock context .

FRANÇOIS JEANNEAU

Whoever starts listing up Europe's leading saxophone players has to mention Francois Jeanneau, belonging to the "Creme de la creme" of French musicians for many years. His sound - influenced in it's origins by J. Coltrane - is famous for it's characteristic melodious and impressive clarity. But his world-wide reputation derives not only from his virtuous improvisations, he also is esteemed as a creative composer with a conception, reflecting a wide contemporary area. In Paris he conducts his orchestra "Panthémoneum", consisting of twelve musicians, which has shown certain similarities with the "Globe Unity Orchestra".

JASPER VAN'T HOF

It is curious that the Dutchman Jasper van't Hof had been polled Europe's second best synthesizer-player by readers of "Jazz Forum Magazine" years ago, although he had never before played a synthesizer in a public. Before the poll he had only played piano, electric piano and a plain organ, using wah-wah and distorter pedals. Meanwhile this equipment has been enlarged by a synthesizer. His career on the keyboards started in 1970 with the "Association P.C." Quartet, one of Europe's first groups to pull down the barriers between jazz and rock significantly. After a few years Jasper van't Hof had reached a leading position in Jazz Europe's keyboard-players.

WOLFGANG DAUNER

For more than a decade the German Wolfgang Dauner has been an outstanding, world-wide renowned personality -on various keyboards from piano to synthesizer -amongst Europe's jazz virtuosos. He has never thought in simple terms. He carefully transformed his creative style from bebop to free jazz and rock. He also tested the capacity of musical-theatrical actions in his very own original way. He is able to master wide stilistic ranges in a brilliant way. Holding a prominent position as a composer, his contributions to the fusion of jazz and rock are outstanding. He also founded the "United Jazz & Rock Ensemble" -a remarkably successful "Band of Bandleaders" - in which he plays with musicians like Charlie Mariano, Barbara Thompson, Albert Mangelsdorff and Jon Hiseman.

HARRY PEPL

Vienna-born Harry Pepl is an autodidact. His playing, nevertheless, grew to an outstanding mastery. Today he ranks high among Europe's leading jazz guitarists. Since 1978—when he joined W. Pirchner in "Jazz Zwio"—he has been heard at various jazz festivals, from Montreux to Berlin. He has played in concert with Lee Konitz, Stan Getz, Erich Kleinschuster, Toots Thielemans, Art Farmer, and was a member of "Vienna Art Orchestra" and the "Austria Drei Quartett". He also teaches at "Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst" in Graz.

ADELHARD ROIDINGER

Adelhard Roidinger - well equipped with classical studies in double-bass and a rich experience throughout almost all varieties of modern jazz, but also with a diploma in architecture - is up to now Upper Austria's only jazz musician of international reputation. His esteem as a virtuous double- and electrobass player is not limited to Europe. Already years ago he was invited to Japan, where the jazz-scene is the most lively and active next to the USA's, to be on concert (tours) with Yosuke Yamashita. He also could introduce himself at nearly all the jazz festivals in Middle-Europe. He has played with a large number of European

and American musicians, such as Wolfgang Dauner, Albert Mangelsdorff, Hans Koller, Kenny Clarke, Bennie Wallace, Attila Zoller, Akira Sakata, and Zbigniew Seifert. He is author of "The Double Bass in Jazz" and "The Electronic Bass in Jazz", both published for teachers. Furthermore he directs a jazz seminar at the "Bruckner Konservatorium", Linz.

DANIEL HUMAIR

Geneva-born Daniel Humair has been living in Paris for so many years that he rather should be counted to the French jazz-scene than to the Swiss. Already in 1962 he was polled "Jazz-France's outstanding percussionist". Since that time he has been the top-leader among Europe's masters of percussion. He has worked with many a star: Martial Solal, Chet Baker, Jean-Luc Pointy, Phil Woods, The Swingle Singers ...