Camille Claudel Jazzpodium Februar 2023

The outstanding arranger of large and medium formats Steffen Schorn sketches in his current work so as profoundly as filigree the sculptress Camille Claudel and describes in his contribution how he came to this.Schorn places in the centre of the work the stunning singer Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer, whose career Ljubisa Tosic traces - resulting in an almost five-page thematic block.

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The instruments used by multi-instrumentalist Steffen Schorn and his tentet tower almost 2 metres high in some cases. They are custom-made, resembling sculptures.

Their mere presence could put you on the right track: that this evening is dedicated to the sculptor Camille Claudel. Schorn, like his opposite Michael Heupel, then blows powerful double bass flutes, which not only, but also in the interplay with the bass clarinet of Rebecca Trescher, the tenor saxophones of Julian Bossert and Stefan Karl Schmid, essentially set the breath and breath-laden mood of this evening; even then on Tubax, the hermaphrodite between sax and tuba.

Despite the preponderance of (flutes and) low tones, there is a complete lack of vagueness or viscous transfiguration; instead, a delicate topography opens up, including extreme states of mind, through which Camille Claudel had to pass throughout her life; Schorn calls his piece "Camille Claudel - An Inner Opera". This opera, which avoids all exaggeration and pathos, is performed in two sets, each about an hour long.

And it produces a state of suspension throughout, as if one were already far from the world, in an otherworldly wind tunnel or at least removed from the force of gravity.

The fact that the evening is not only worth listening to because of Schorn's extremely varied, highly sensitive and highly original arrangements for no less than seven wind players - among them Roger Hanschel (much of it on alto saxophone), a harpist (Anton Mangold), a pianist and keyboarder (Johannes Billich) - but also because of the singer Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer, whom Schorn met in Norway. She approaches the material and the music with both rapt attention and involvement and yet - in this dramatic life story - manages without any superficial drama. Meyer is an archaic before the Lord. Her singing originates from the beginnings of language, where things still had to be comprehensively felt, were not yet formed from speech sound - wordlessly, with clicking sounds, questioning breaths, she involves herself and us in a fundamental conversation about nothing in particular and everything in particular. Meyer does not even raise her voice. Her discord in the intricate and loose duets with bass flute or the monologues over the tuba rhythms of Lars Andreas Haug or a base of several harmonicas are among the highlights. Meyer makes definitive that the evening of searching as well as exceedingly tight tentet actions lasts long.

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