



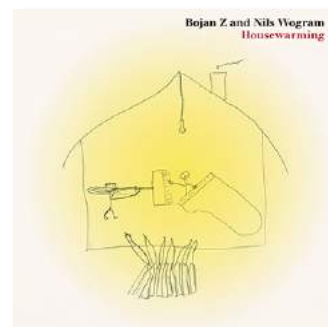
## HOUSEWARMING

Nils Wogram & Bojan Z

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Nils Wogram - Trombone

Bojan Z - Fender Rhodes, Piano

## NILS WOGRAM & BOJAN Z // HOUSEWARMING

Two men, one word! Some stories simply write themselves. They are inevitable and must be written for the simple reason that they would otherwise remain unwritten. And that is unacceptable. There is one such story about the duo of Serbian pianist **Bojan Zulfikarpasic**, living in France, or **Bojan Z.** for short, and of the German trombonist **Nils Wogram**, living in Switzerland. Europe in a square format, yes, but there is much more to it than that.

When the two musicians stood on the stage together for the first time in 2012, at the Jazzdor Strasbourg-Berlin festival, their performance seemed so staggeringly self-evident. There, two musicians intuitively found a common narrative level, not because they needed to make any sort of effort, but because this playground was simply there. While it might be a platitude that they searched and found each other, that's

exactly what happened. If ever two musicians actually played the moment, without plan, ambition and other frippery, but rather to simply tell the audience and each other what they had to say at that moment, as unpretentiously as possible, then these two did just that.

Whoever was allowed to experience this encounter didn't doubt for a minute that sooner or later an album would follow. Yet four years had to pass – in the life of a jazz musician not overwhelmingly long – and now the album is here. Everything is as it was then, and yet everything is completely different. “When we played the first time together, there were still running paths that we hadn't yet agreed upon, as they say in soccer,” **Wogram** recalls. “Since December 2013, we have played regularly together so that we could develop our potential much better. Despite all the common intuition, you need a path on which you can agree upon a common language.”

On *Housewarming* we hear two repeat offenders. They encounter each other not only with the utmost respect, but also with an unbridled desire to play together. “I know of no other trombonist who plays with such rhythmic force as Nils,” says **Zulfikarpasic**, enthused. It speaks for the unarranged impact of this interaction that **Wogram** says exactly the same about the pianist. “I immediately noticed that I liked various aspect of Bojan's playing very much. He has an exceptional timing in which I can completely let myself go a wind instrumentalist. Bojan radiates such sovereignty, even if he plays over simple pieces, and this has certainly taught me a thing or two in these few years. His way of playing has an incredible peace and can still groove in an entirely unpretentious way.”

The interplay of the two still works like a collection of stories, all of which condense at a higher level to form a novel. **Wogram** as well as **Zulfikarpasic** tend to productions that – each in his own way – are always very complete. Along with the holistic general impression their interplay makes, they add a component of casual openness in which listeners can enter with all their imagination. **Wogram** and **Zulfikarpasic** have appropriated a sharpness of detail that not only makes the pulse emanating from piano and trombone pale into insignificance, but in its lustful logic cancel principles such as improvisation and composition. Ultimately, everything is composed, only – to stay with **Wogram's** comparison to soccer – the paths both must walk for each composition are very different. At times, the volley is composed from the playing, at others there are rehearsed set pieces that have been carefully prepared by the two musicians and composers. In the end, as they invent, they do not need to ask for directions. **Wogram** speaks of special moments that could not have been accomplished ad hoc. Together, they look over a panorama whose horizon goes far beyond the musical. That is why they succeed so well – as player personalities they recede behind their pieces and simply tell stories.

For neither of the two musicians is the duo situation something new. **Wogram** has maintained a regular duo with pianist **Simon Nabatov** for many years; its dramatic passion recalls great moments of classical music. **Zulfikarpasic** has played, among others, with the French saxophonist **Julien Lourau**. But as soon as the two once entered the same orbit, they could no longer be apart. They do not have to prescribe either creativity or special concepts, but, by relying on the other, can give rise to a common third from their double self. Within this natural state, as relaxed as it is based on reality, they pick each other up at the exact point where they have been headed, separately, in their various projects for years. They get by without the package information leaflet and simply let it happen.

“Even in conventional performing situations he always finds magic” – that is how **Wogram** describes the approach of his duo partner. “Probably it is simply in his personality.” And **Zulfikarpasic** gives this observation back, almost literally, to **Wogram**. Only in one point do the two differ from the pianist's point of view. “Nils was incredibly well prepared. I, however, delivered everything at the last minute. In this respect he is German, and I am Balkan. Well, it is good that there are also differences. But they cannot be heard on *Housewarming*.”