



THE GOOD LIFE
NILS WOGRAM VERTIGO
TROMBONE QUARTET
nwog 22
EAN 0 782321268184
Release Date: 16.11.2018



© Lena Ganssmann

NILS WOGRAM VERTIGO TROMBONE QUARTET || THE GOOD LIFE

Lineup: Nils Wogram, Andreas Tschopp, Bernhard Bamert und Jan Schreiner

Who would like to write the same book twice? And why should you record the same CD twice? With the album *The Good Life*, the Vertigo Trombone Quartet winds up for the second blow, but it does not just pick up where the band started in 2014 with *Developing Good Habits* – rather it goes all the way back to the start again. The four trombonists – Nils Wogram, Andreas Tschopp, Bernhard Bamert and Jan Schreiner – not only act as performing musicians, but also take joint responsibility for the compositions. While the individual signatures of the four protagonists remain recognizable, the compositions play a much more prominent role than on the debut album. Or to say it with the words of Nils Wogram in a double sense for a trombone quartet: Everyone can voice his move.

The hallmark of the quartet's second album is the unity, strength and rigor of their inner relationship to each other. Indeed, this cohesive force is based on a high density that has not been imposed externally by a preconceived plan, but has emerged from within. The band has

decided against deliberately orienting itself to some plan – in order to keep their options open on all sides. Thus, the two titles of the Vertigo albums precisely describe the development of the band since 2014. The motto *Developing Good Habits* sounds like the manifesto of a new formation that has to assert itself, while *The Good Life* is the commitment to serenity, with which one just lets things happen, which is what happens anyway. “On the first album,” confirms Wogram, “it was much more about showing what we can offer in this constellation, while we were able to take it a lot more relaxed this time.”

This decision involved taking risks. Trusting in one’s own power and not giving it a common thread could eventually result in arbitrariness and eclecticism, or a lowest common denominator. But here, four musicians act on an equal footing. Instead of neutralizing themselves in the individual, they confidently work out their common strengths. All of the songs on the album came along with their awareness they were writing them for this squad. From the beginning, they focused on the common, on the connecting elements. And the calculation pays off, completely. As if magic hands had lowered over the four separate sheets of music, the pieces converged from the beginning to the same center of gravity from different directions. Although they are four individual composers, the tracks as a whole seem like a suite planned in advance in this form. On their second album, the four members of the Vertigo Trombone Quartet turn out to be masters of intuitive collective stringency.

At center stage of CD is even an actual four-part suite. “The Good Life Suite,” composed by Bernhard Bamert, provided the album with its title. However, the suite is so harmoniously integrated into the creations of the other three members that the narrative thread is elegantly passed on from one composer to the other. Unlike popular jazz, where tension must first build up until the climax is achieved, the momentum on *The Good Life* reveals itself from the first note, and the tension does not break at any moment.

Some moments on the new CD sound like chamber music, others tend more towards jazz or ambient, in as much as one wants to orient oneself to such fixed genre points in the topography of the sounds. In addition, comparisons of a trombone quartet such as Vertigo with string, guitar or saxophone quartets are already doomed to limp before they even learn to walk. The Vertigo Trombone Quartet is neither the World Saxophone Quartet nor the Kronos Quartet. From the beginning, the question was how the quartet would go its own way. Ultimately, Wogram, Bamert, Tschopp and Schreiner have decided against tying themselves down to a specific style. Instead, according to Wogram, they wanted to “just allow their preferences expression and see what comes out.”

With self-deprecating thoughtfulness, Wogram postulates that “a trombone is a trombone. There is no point in emulating other instruments. The trombone has its limits. These must be accepted. Above all, we want to focus on the strengths of the instrument.” The Vertigo Trombone Quartet defines its own sound, which doesn’t need to be derived from something else and can do without labels and leaflets. The four musicians move with the greatest possible freedom within the open-ended framework that they have genuinely created for themselves. Moreover, no other instrument is as similar to the human voice as the trombone. You can make something out of it. Unimagined intermediate and overtones result in the choir of the four blowpipes. Some remind us of strings, others of keyboards or percussion, especially as tuba, melodica and discreet percussion are used. In some moments, you even think you can hear a full big band.

By simultaneously accepting the limitations of their instrument and broadening the spectrum of its possibilities, the four great trombonists combine their voices to make the best of what music can be.

NWOG RECORDS // LABEL- & PRODUKTMANAGEMENT & CONTACT: IMKE MACHURA // MGMT@NWOG-RECORDS.COM