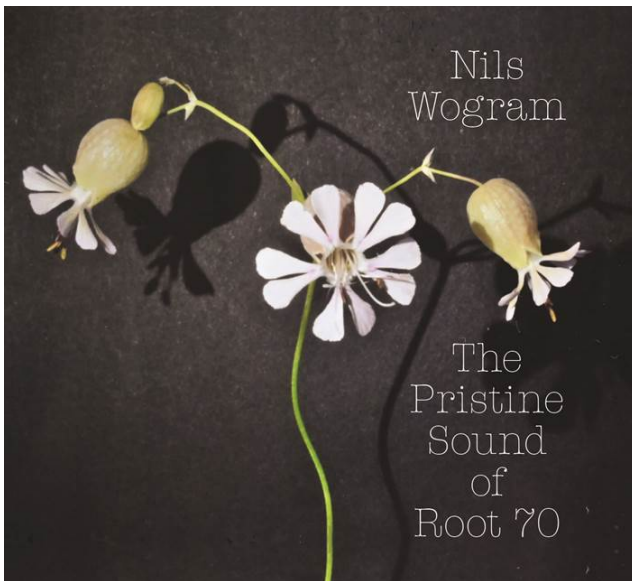




THE PRISTINE SOUND OF ROOT 70

NILS WOGRAM & ROOT 70

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## NILS WOGRAM & ROOT 70 - THE PRISTINE SOUND OF ROOT 70

"Old-fashioned" is a wonderfully old-fashioned word that exists in almost every language. "Old fashioned" or "démodé" - while this term had a dusty connotation just a few years ago, today it expresses the opposite of being outdated, instead conveying a self-determined resistance to rapidly incoming new trends and technological developments that shape our lives but at the same time detach us from them because we always have to keep an eye on the next new thing. "The Pristine Sound Of Root

70," the new album by Nils Wogram's band Root 70, is, in the best sense of the word, old-fashioned in a very lively, refreshing, and authentic way. It allows us to pause, reflect, breathe, and decelerate. From the first note, it offers something familiar that only wants to be rediscovered and adapted. If you want to refer to the past, the album sounds like a meeting of the Gerry Mulligan Bob Brookmeyer Quartet with the Albert Mangelsdorff Quartet of the late 1960s. Trombonist Nils Wogram, saxophonist Hayden Chisholm, bassist Matt Penman, and drummer Jochen Rueckert manage to open entirely new doors and windows for our time with the combative serenity of those years.

"I wanted to create something timeless," Wogram emphasizes. "I do have an affinity for the old-fashioned. The challenge is that it shouldn't be stale. I wanted to completely free myself from a specific zeitgeist or directed concept. As you get older, and as a band ages, it becomes increasingly difficult to continuously find something new within the possibilities of a particular instrumentation and personnel composition. The framework is predetermined. But you can feature and celebrate the existing peculiarities and nuances."

Root 70, as a band, has reached a point where they have presented all imaginable versions of themselves. They no longer need new musical programs. Now, the four of them can simply let go and tell their stories unreservedly. Wogram consciously wanted to create material with a narrative structure that minimally restricts the participating musicians conceptually. He relies on clear forms and simple textures. The character of the tracks emerges from their mood, within which the

individual and collective narratives unfold. With Chisholm, Penman, and Rueckert, Wogram can draw on the human and playful resources that fulfill this demand. After his 50th birthday, he has found a tranquility that eluded him earlier.

In addition to this composure, the high recognizability of the songs runs as a common thread throughout the album. This may lie less in the melodies themselves than in the narrative approach with which the band experiences each individual song. Each piece has a plot, and that plot is recognizable, although not readily retellable because only Root 70 can tell it. In terms of sound, "The Pristine Sound Of Root 70" is the most beautiful album the band has ever recorded. Wogram has always been a sound fetishist, but here he surpasses himself in this regard. The soft sound of these songs literally presses you into a plush old cinema seat, and you eagerly await the opening of the curtain. The visual quality of the music is immensely heightened by this passionate immersion in sound. Thus, the band seems to say to their audience: We will tell you a story that you all know, but we know that you want to hear it again and again. Because that's exactly what we want to hear too.

"It's a very classic format," Wogram describes this attitude. "A jazz band plays together in a room. These are pieces where the themes are introduced before being improvised upon. With this easily understandable form, nothing is overpainted. For years, I have been engaged in the discourse of where the new currents of jazz are actually leading. Sometimes, I feel that in the pursuit of novelty, the nuances of individual statements recede too much into the background. We didn't want to subordinate our own narrative structure to a concept anymore."

He sees the risk he takes with this postulate as an opportunity. He deliberately relies on the moment of reliable repetition, on which not only stories but also trust can be built. The challenge for him is to find legitimacy for this classic format without betraying the decades-long aspiration he has built. Nothing on "The Pristine Sound Of Root 70" contentedly settles for copying something already existent; it solely exists in the context of the four musicians' biographies and the band as a whole. Root 70 remains true to itself by once again breaking expectations. Within their own framework, the band is indeed searching for something new.

Last but not least, "The Pristine Sound Of Root 70" is a product of its time because due to the involuntary hiatus of the global lockdown, Wogram, Chisholm, Penman, and Rueckert were thrown back onto themselves. Freed from the incessant touring routine, they individually and collectively had the leisure to put all their values to the test. Suddenly, personal memory becomes a driving force of the musical creative process again. Root 70 has no fear of the famous and infamous guilty pleasures and honestly allows what happens in and with them.

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