



New Jazz and Audiophile Release

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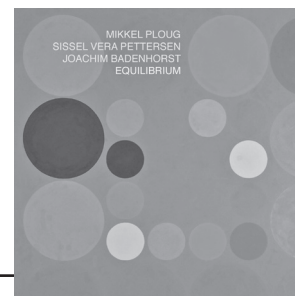
**Mikkel Ploug / Sissel Vera
Pettersen / Joachim Badenhorst**

Equilibrium

Genre: creative jazz / new music

SGL SA1578-2 Hybrid SACD (2+5 channel)

Mikkel Ploug, electric and acoustic guitars;
Sissel Vera Pettersen, voice, soprano sax, live
electronics; **Joachim Badenhorst**, clarinet,
bass clarinet, tenor sax



“...one is struck by the flow of Sissel’s improvisations. She makes screams, squeaks and noises dance over rhythmic patterns like pirouettes on ice, while stretching time to its very limit.” – *Lira Music Magazine* (Sweden)

“Ploug is impressive with melodies that do not become clichéd, quite ethereal chordalscape augmentations, intricate improvisations and slickly complex picked-out lines.” – *AllAboutJazz.com*

“[Badenhorst] combines a never-ending search for adventure, a natural direction and a warm tone into an interesting and personal story....A wonderful storyteller...” – *Knack Magazine* (Belgium)

A Danish guitarist, Norwegian vocalist/saxophonist, and Belgian reed player, in their late 20s/early 30s, have pooled their talents, combining elements of jazz and classical chamber music/new music, Nordic folk music, western and non-western vocal traditions, free improvisation, and looped electronic voicescapes. *Equilibrium* balances the sensuous and the stark, melodic grace and textural interplay, counterpoint and freewheeling invention. At times it is quite eerie and primal, at other times the enchantment is more ethereal.

One touchstone for this trio is the New York duo of vocalist Theo Bleckmann and guitarist Ben Monder (whose latest record, *At Night*, was released on Songlines in 2007). However, it’s not a matter of direct influence, as Sissel relates: “I actually didn’t hear the Monder/Bleckmann records before we recorded this album. The first time I heard Theo was with Meredith Monk Ensemble in 2005, and his voice just hit me in the stomach and made me cry....Three years later both Theo and I were invited to teach in a workshop in Copenhagen, and we immediately connected and started our duo Audiopool.” Mikkel knows Ben Monder and feels a close connection: “There are definitely similarities between the work of Ben and Theo and what we do, but we come from totally different backgrounds and places and I believe that is evident in the music.”

The trio formed when Mikkel and Sissel (who both live in Copenhagen) started playing sessions together, and Mikkel suggested bringing in Joachim. Mikkel: “It’s really a democratic pile-up of all of our ideas, tastes and perceptions of the moment that creates the output. We like to leave a lot of space for open improvisation. Taking a lot of risks and feeling exposed is desired....We are all fortunate to work with great musicians from a generation or two ahead of us (Mark Turner, Han Bennink, Marc Ducret etc.). The force of this trio is that all three of us melt into a sound really quite different from the respective bands we perform with.”

Working on sound is something they all like doing anyway. Says Joachim: “Someone like Arve Henriksen has been a big inspiration for me. He found a way to make the trumpet sound more like a flute or a shakuhachi....[Here] I try to see if I can find my way to a sound on my instruments that is close to the human voice. Sissel adds: “I’ve often been told that I sing through the sax and play my voice like an instrument. To me it’s just two voices, and I feel they are very closely related in this airy organic sound, in the way the sound is actually produced and in the natural rhythm of breathing. [Vocally] I’m influenced by joik, pygmy songs, cattle calls, South Indian music, Inuit throat singing, Chinese opera, West African griots, Balinese kecak, birds....The traditional music of different people and cultures inspires me a lot – music that has evolved through history from a deep human need to belong, and to express feelings. These different styles are reflected in my vocal improvs, without me necessarily trying to imitate them.”

After recording in Copenhagen, they went to Rainbow Studio in Oslo to mix with Jan Erik Kongshaug. Mikkel: “Jan Erik is a genius with sound. He has an incredible understanding of how instruments blend and how to get the tiniest little details just right.” Songlines produced the multi-channel mix in Vancouver, opening up the music in another dimension.

For further information and bios: sisselvera.com, mikkelpoug.com, myspace.com/ploug, myspace.com/joachimbadenhorst, www.jazzinbelgium.com/person/joachim.badenhorst. The complete interview is at www.songlines.com/interviews/equilibrium.html.

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