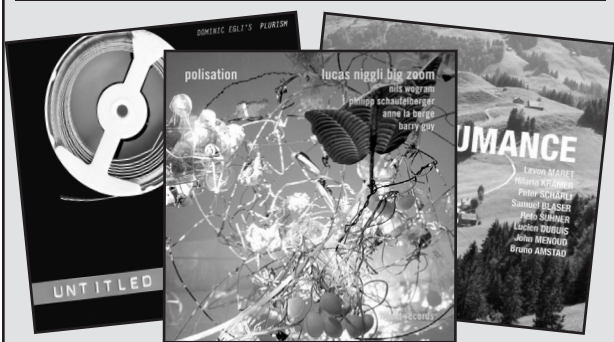


GLOBE UNITY: SWITZERLAND



Untitled Yet Dominic Egli's Plurism (Unit)
Transhumance Béatrice Graf (Altrisuoni)
Polisation Lucas Niggli Big Zoom (Intakt)
 by Tom Greenland

Like jazz, Switzerland embraces a mix of cultural identities, including French, German and Italian. This month's recordings, all drummer-led, attest to the musical variety and creativity to be found in the high- and lowlands, from the Danube to the Rhine.

Dominic Egli's *Plurism*, an adventurous but accessible trio effort with Donat Fisch (tenor/alto sax) and Raffaele Bossard (bass), features the leader's originals, mostly long-form modal melodies underpinned by rock beats, fleshed out with ardent esprit de corps. Fisch's sax, casually urgent, has a sleeper effect: initially understated, it gently weaves in and out of tonality, building subtle tension to arrive at vital musical moments, evident in his outro blowing over "Flames" and fine work on the final four cuts. Egli sets up two tracks with toy piano ostinatos, later plying a kalimba (thumb piano) and delivers a short but dynamic solo on "AFAP", demonstrating throughout his empathetic and highly supportive commitment to group playing.

Béatrice Graf's *Transhumance* is a two-disc anthology of free duets with John Menoud (guitar), Nicolas Maret (vibes), Reto Suhner (alto sax), Peter Schärli and Hilaria Kramer (trumpet), Lucien Dubuis (bass clarinet), Samuel Blaser (trombone) and Bruno Amstad (vocals), all recorded live and "on location" - in a field; a forest; by the waves of a beach or the waters of a fountain; in a Greek pavilion; an elegant manor; even on a mountainside. Separate sessions segue seamlessly together, 'glued' by a common ambient track; ironically, the hi-fi unidirectional mic-ing often minimizes environmental elements, which are mixed in separately. Graf's playing is patently imaginative, at times tastefully reserved, at others fully extroverted, drawing on an array of found percussion implements. Her eclectic cast of musical character actors renders a satisfying pastiche of soundscapes and styles that holds up well over two discs.

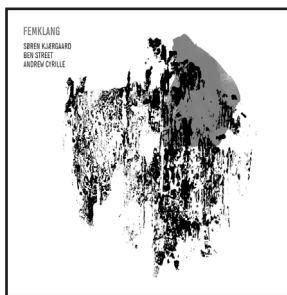
On *Polisation* Lucas Niggli propels his Big Zoom quintet through a powerful set of lightly scaffolded improvisations. Joined by longtime collaborators Nils Wogram (trombone) and Philipp Schaufelberger (guitar), enhanced by the more recent addition of veteran avant improvisers Anne La Berge (flute/electronics) and Barry Guy (bass), the group's sound falls somewhere between a Grateful Dead-esque space jam and the pointillist timbral experimentation of Edgard Varèse. A sonic seismologist, Niggli shifts musical textures like tectonic plates, creating murmurs, tremors, even full-magnitude 'ear(th) quakes', particularly on the epic closing track, where mercurial musical moodswings create an unsettling outworldly effect reminiscent of a *Twilight Zone* score.

For more information, visit unitrecords.com, altrisuoni.com and intaktrec.ch. Niggli is at The Stone Mar. 1st, 2nd and 6th. See Calendar.



Route de Frères
 Andrew Cyrille &
 Haitian Fascination
 (TUM)

by Anders Griffen



Femklang
 Søren Kjærgaard/Ben
 Street/Andrew Cyrille
 (ILK Music)

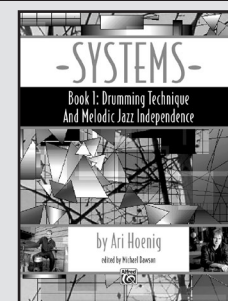
Haitian Fascination is the apt name for the unified group on *Route de Frères*. Indeed drummer Andrew Cyrille is "fascinated" with sincere exploration of his family's cultural memory. While his parents had come from Haiti, Cyrille was born in Brooklyn, first visiting the island at age seven. Likewise, the title, *Route de Frères*, or "Road of Brothers", is perfect. Even while Cyrille initiates the direction, there is a mutual feeling, a kinship among the players and the music sounds joyful. Cyrille is joined by Haitian musicians Frisner Augustin on percussion and vocals and Alix Pascal on guitar along with fellow Americans Lisle Atkinson on bass and Hamiet Bluiett on baritone saxophone and their rapport is great. The traditional song "Marinèt" opens the album and Augustin's percussion and vocals are evocative of Haitian tradition. The emphasis is on the drums rather than the cymbals, Cyrille playing cáscara clavés, patterns sounded on the drum shells, to carry the time. Pascal's acoustic guitar is beautiful, particularly on his own "Deblozay" and Cyrille's "Hope Springs Eternal". Atkinson personifies balance as he both leads and follows and has a nice arco solo on "Isaura" by Bluiett. The title track, composed in three parts, is a highlight.

Femklang presents a wide-open atmosphere. Pianist Søren Kjærgaard has a nice touch on the piano and a keen interest in harmony. He allows a lot of space for his notes to speak. Cyrille's melodic accompaniment adds dimension to the compositions and his performance initiates exchange. There is more of an exploratory feeling here than one of celebration. All of the compositions are attributed to Kjærgaard except "Pedestre Pantonale", which credits authorship to all three musicians (bassist Ben Street completes the trio) and also plays like one of the most collective performances on this disc. "Row No. 18", accompanied by Street's walking bassline, inspires a lively interaction as well. "The Loop, variation one" and "variation two" open and close the album. Each employs a modification on a drum pattern reminiscent of a rhythm associated with Rara Festival music from Haiti, an element that

no doubt comes from Cyrille. But the trio does not always seem to embark on common purpose. The bass is innocuous at times and the piano, in service to the compositions first, is almost superimposed over the drums. The piano rings out and the melody takes its time to unravel. Sometimes this is to great effect; "Formindskede Smuler" unfolds like a developing story. *Femklang* is the kind of album that can surprise you. On subsequent listens the tunes will reveal themselves in new ways.

For more information, visit tumrecords.com and ilkmusic.com. Cyrille is at The Stone Mar. 11th and Village Vanguard Mar. 20th-25th with Bill McHenry. See Calendar.

IN PRINT



**Systems, Book 1: Drumming Technique
 and Melodic Jazz Independence**
 Ari Hoenig (s/r)
 by Francis Lo Kee

Since the '70s there has been an explosion of instrumental instructional books. In drumming alone, books like Gary Chaffee's *Patterns* series, Jack DeJohnette & Charlie Perry's *The Art of Modern Jazz Drumming*, Ed Thigpen's *The Sound of Brushes*, Gary Chester's *The New Breed* and John Riley's *The Art of Bop Drumming* have become important pedagogical components to a drummer's study. However, because we are talking about a relatively new instrument, there is still room for evolution, maybe even revolution.

In Ari Hoenig's *Systems, Book 1*, there's a little bit of both. Perhaps the aforementioned *The New Breed* inspired Hoenig as the subtitle of Chester's book is "systems for the development of your own creativity". There are other similarities, but where the books drastically diverge is in style of music: Chester's book is geared to drummers playing rock and R&B (duple subdivision music) while Hoenig's book is addressed to jazz drummers, digging deep into the concept of "four-way coordination". Since its invention, in the USA in the early 20th century, the drumset is one of the few instruments that utilize all four limbs. Hoenig methodically lays out how a drummer can build control of the four limbs through the triplet subdivision of the beat (in 4/4 swing time).

In the introduction to the book, Hoenig states that he is aware that "many students are overwhelmed with the realization of what they cannot do.". However practicing the exercises in this book will have a musical benefit: "...an enhanced ability to improvise fluidly around a theme, which will add much greater melodic depth to your playing." Though this is a technical book for practicing drummers, the rhythmic concepts may be interesting to any instrumentalist or composer wanting a deeper understanding of polyrhythms and drumset possibilities. This is destined to be one of the essential drum instructional books.

For more information, visit arihoenig.com. Hoenig is at Cornelia Street Café Mar. 3rd and 25th with Petros Klampanis and Smalls Mar. 5th, 19th and 26th. See Calendar.

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