

The Poetry of Drums

Pierre Favre – drums, percussion

Lucas Niggli - drums, percussion

The duo Favre-Niggli combines two delicate percussion poets who have been playing together for more than four years now. In Pierre Favre's quintet "Singing Drums" (with Michel Godard (tuba), Roberto Ottaviano (sax), and Philipp Schaufelberger (guit)), the two of them form the epicentre. Almost like two magicians they sit in the midst of their drums and create from their instruments multi-layered sounds and rhythms, seemingly without effort. They make their instruments sing like others sing with language. Their music is as rich as poetry is full of meanings. It settles on the listener's ears like morning dew, it breathes slowly and calm, and in the next instant it hyperventilates! It is filled with inspiration and verve. Favre and Niggli test forms of interplay and modes of effect of percussion. They condense complex rhythms to form an orchestral whole. Through their work in "Singing Drums" Favre and Niggli have become a duo which works well when playing composed pieces as well as when improvising freely.

About Pierre Favre

Pierre Favre is renowned as one of the world's best drummers and praised as a "sound colour poet": a musician equipped with great sensibility and a sense for variation – in short, a percussion-lyricist. He was born in Lelocle in the Swiss Jura and taught himself the drums when he was fifteen years old. He has worked for longer and shorter periods of time with Chet Baker, Booker Ervin, Bud Powell, Ted Curson, Carmell Jones, Fritz Pauer and Dexter Gordon. Free Jazz gave him the opportunity to experience the European conception of playing. Henceforth, Pierre Favre founded his own groups with Irene Schweizer, Peter Kowald and Evan Parker. He played with John Tchicai, Barre Phillips, Don Cherry, Peter Brotzmann, Charlie Mariano, Peter Warren and Albert Mangelsdorff. His interest in a melodic conception of the drums began to grow in the context of these projects. In 1969 he started to play solo-concerts and recorded his first solo-record ("Drum Conversation", Calig). Together with Chick Corea, Ornette Coleman, Gary Burton and Eubie Black he appeared at the "Solo Now Night" at the Berlin Jazz Tagen. His musical interest then shifted to ethnic music, especially African, Indian, Brazilian, as well as European classical music. In 1971 he began to study the piano. Since then he has also worked as a composer. He has interpreted the drum part in works by composers such as Ernst Krenek, John Cage, Hans Ulrich Lehmann. Most recently, he did so in "Miserere" by Arvo Pärt. Since 1972 Favre has also worked regularly with dancers, actors, sculptors, painters and architects. Step by step his instrument changed: around the conventional drum set he now uses metals, furs and woods. In this way, Favre developed his own instrument into an independent and self-sufficient sound-body, from which he can create orchestral dimensions in solo concerts.

The essence of his lyrical percussion playing opened up an interesting dialogue with the singer Tamia. Numerous tours led Favre through Europe, North and South America, Asia and Japan. He has recorded a great number of CDs and LPs, a dozen of which for ECM.