

## Cone of Confusion

DDK Trio, Br7

A thoughtful, enjoyable set of improvisations from Demierre (piano), Dörner (trumpet) and Kocher (accordion). My limited prior exposure to Demierre's work led me to expect something different, not sure in what way, maybe somewhat more frenetic. Not the case, happily. To an extent, the music here fits in comfortably with the improvisational lineage established by Dörner and many others, especially in Europe, over the last 20+ years: pensive, tending toward quiet, interested in superficially conflicting, overlapping and interacting textures and, here especially, some allusions to AMM, not so much in the actual sound-world portrayed, but in terms of general approach. Each musician spends about as much time in extended technique territory--Demierre inside the piano, Dörner sputtering, gurgling and gasping, Kocher drawing any number of non-accordion-like sounds from his squeezebox--as they do generating standard sounds. The tone of the music ranges from the dark, brooding and vaguely uncomfortable 'There are small observable differences', in which brief, sharp points splinter out of the (excellent) murk to the gravelly scatterings, skitterings and deep accordionic breaths of 'Position of the head'. Also, as in a piece like 'The errors introduced by such an exchange are within the errors', there's a really solid and gripping balance of smooth flow and fragmentation, as well as a bracing dynamic range. The trio returns to a contemplative darkness on the final track, Dörner evoking, to these ears, a smidgen of Leo Smith. A strong outing overall, worth investigating.

*Brian Olewnick, Just Outside, July 2019*

A fantastic record, filled with curves and swerves. The trio has a driving frictional nature that is fairly indelible. *TJ Norris, Toneshift (USA), February 2019*

Cone of Confusion has been named among the France Musique's top CDs of 2018.  
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Aux côtés de l'accordéoniste Jonas Kocher et du trompettiste Axel Dörner, Jacques Demierre sort Cone of Confusion, dont le titre désigne un effet acoustique dû à notre perception. Entre mélodies et harmonies, rythmes et matières, l'album est le fruit d'un travail sur «le fortuit, l'accidentel, l'inopiné, qui veut faire entendre que le monde continue de sonner dans le silence de l'environnement de chaque auditeur. L'écoute est construction de la pièce». De silences prédéterminés à des feulements cuivrés incroyablement modulés, l'oreille se déboutonne à ces paysages pianistiques tour à tour ensauvagés et perlés, impressionnistes et pointillistes.

*Bertrand Tappolet, "Le Courrier", May 2018*

Le trio de Jacques Demierre, Axel Dörner et Jonas Kocher est très loin d'une idée de 'power' [...], il serait même plutôt dans une finesse voire une délicatesse d'écoute – mais le trio n'en est pas moins puissant, dans une puissance silencieuse, du moins mesurée, et il explore ou vit des territoires musicaux passionnants, dans le son, dans le timbre, dans la matière.

*Kasper T. Toeplitz, "Revue & Corrigée", June 2018*

Après "Floating piece of Space" paru en 2016 sur le label de la Cave12, "Cone of confusion" enregistré en 2017, continue l'exploration improvisée d'une matière éruptive dans une tension soutenue par trois instruments qui ne forment qu'un seul corps sonore. On est parfois proche du silence dans une austérité qui aiguise l'écoute au-delà des genres. Et certaines des pièces sonnent telles des études concrètes tellement elles sont concentrées. La classe. *"Metamkine", July 2018*

L'interazione improvvisativa radicale è l'ambiente sonoro scelto dal trio svizzero formato da Jacques Demierre (pianoforte), Axel Dörner (tromba) e Jonas Kocher (accordeon). Senza affidarsi a pulsazioni ritmiche capaci di agganciare tra loro le tre voci strumentali, la musica scorre da momenti di silenzio o quasi-silenzio a passaggi di articolata conversazione, talvolta inquieti e irruenti. Ricavando dai loro strumenti possibilità sonore non scontate, i componenti del gruppo sono attenti ad ascoltarsi, a rispettare democraticamente gli spazi di libertà di ciascuno e a cogliere le reciproche affordances in base a un principle of reciprocity (come dichiara il titolo dell'ultima delle sei tracce). L'idea suggerita dal titolo dell'album (così come dal quarto brano: Position of the head) pare essere proprio questa: la sorgente sonora non è individuabile nello spazio acustico del cono di confusione, i cui punti sono equidistanti dall'orecchio. Così, lo stile del gruppo è riconoscibile grazie al sound generato, piuttosto che da un idioma legato a un genere particolare.

Radical improvisational interaction is the sound environment of choice for the Swiss trio of Jacques Demierre (piano), Axel Dörner (trumpet) and Jonas Kocher (accordeon). Without relying on rhythmic pulsations capable of hooking the three instrumental voices together, the music flows from moments of silence or near-silence to passages of articulate conversation, sometimes restless and impetuous. Drawing from their instruments unexpected sonic possibilities, the group's members are careful to listen to each other, to democratically respect each other's spaces of freedom, and to seize reciprocal affordances according to a principle of reciprocity (as the title of the last of the six tracks declares). The idea suggested by the album's title (as well as by the fourth track: Position of the head) seems to be precisely this: the sound source cannot be identified in the acoustic space of the cone of confusion, whose points are equidistant from the ear. Thus, the group's style is recognisable by the sound generated, rather than by an idiom linked to a particular genre.

*A. G. Bertinetta, "Kathodik", September 2018*

Toto trio se věhlasní hráči experimentální hudby, Švýcaři Jacques Demierre (klavír) a Jonas Kocher (akordeon) a Němec Axel Dörner (trubka), rozhodli pojmout jako platformu pro čisté hudební akustickou improvizaci. Od roku 2014 spolu takto koncertovali na řadě festivalů po Evropě, Rusku a v Japonsku. Nyní na švýcarské značce Bruit vydávají své druhé album, CD Cone of Confusion.

Oproti vinylové prvotině Floating Piece of Space (cave12, 2016) se tentokrát rozhodli pro sérii kratších skladeb, stopáž šesti kusů se pohybuje cca od dvou do jedenácti minut při celkovém rozsahu 36:50. Jejich názvy odkazují k detailnímu vnímání hudby při jejím provozování i při poslechu (Variation in the Subject, Position of the Head, The errors introduced by such an exchange are within the errors...). Tomuto typu pozorování také hudebníci uzpůsobili svůj výraz a formální vývoj svých improvizací. Propírají rozličné postupy neidiomatické improvizace s rozšířenými technikami hry na nástroje ve škále, která je pozoruhodně široká barevně i dynamicky, přestože lze říci, že žádný z hudebníků tady nevykročí ze svého "standardního slovníku" známého již dlouho z jejich přepestrých a objevných diskografií. Zde zkrátka berou své styly tak, jaké přirozeně jsou, vlastně podobně, jako to dělávali třeba Motörhead a dodnes dělávají další světové rock'n'rollové jistoty.

Ostatně ihned z prvních tónů a barev úvodního Increasing the efficiency process skoro zavánějí ta zkušebně předváděcí první prohrábnutí strun při příchodu na pódium, a nejvyšší rejstříky akordeonu v rovných tónech záhy dosimulují i tu zpětnou vazbu a dostaví se nakonec i klavírní glissanda. Při následujícím kousku se ale zhmotní i harmonický vesmír akordeonu od romantického jazzu po úžasně abstraktní souzvuky, od narážek na rock'n'roll bychom tu museli přejít k nějakým jízlivostem na popový záměr avantgardní kapely. Avšak v následujících částech nás čekají tak neskutečně sešrané a po všech stránkách perfektně

vystavěné volné hudební formy, že nás humor přejde a čelist poklesne. A může se dostavit i dojem, že si umějí jen tak mimoděk nadhazovat i poučené asociace k mnohem "produkovanějším" kapelám, třeba typu Kammerflimmer Kollektief či Radian a pak tedy asi úplně k čemukoli dalšímu.

Toto improvizační album dokáže v mnoha nečekaných ohledech překvapit i upokojit posluchače zkušeného s žánrem, avšak domnívám se, že může být klidně vhodné i pro začátečníky. Je to krásný shrnující příklad toho, kam se poměrně rychle v současnosti posunuly výrazové schopnosti tak klasických nástrojů, jako je klavír, trubka a akordeon a lze si při něm dle libosti testovat různé způsoby posluchačského radikalismu.

This trio of renowned players of experimental music, the Swiss Jacques Demierre (piano) and Jonas Kocher (accordion) and the German Axel Dörner (trumpet), decided to conceive this trio as a platform for purely musical acoustic improvisation. Since 2014, they have performed together in this way at numerous festivals in Europe, Russia and Japan. They are now releasing their second album, the CD Cone of Confusion, on the Swiss label Bruit.

Compared to their vinyl debut *Floating Piece of Space* (cave12, 2016), this time they opted for a series of shorter tracks, with the six tracks ranging in length from about two to eleven minutes at a total length of 36:50. Their titles refer to the detailed perception of the music when performing and listening to it (*Variation in the Subject, Position of the Head, The errors introduced by such an exchange are within the errors...*). Musicians have also adapted their expression and the formal development of their improvisations to this type of observation. They intersperse various practices of non-idiomatic improvisation with extended techniques of instrument playing in a range that is remarkably broad in colour and dynamics, although it is fair to say that none of the musicians here step out of their "standard vocabulary" long known from their varied and revelatory discographies. Here, they simply take their styles as they naturally are, in fact, much like Motörhead used to do, and other world rock'n'roll certainties still do today.

Indeed, immediately the first notes and timbres of the opening *Increasing the efficiency* process almost smack of those rehearsal-style first plucked strings on arrival on stage, and the accordion's highest registers in even tones soon simulate that feedback, and the piano glissandos eventually arrive. But the harmonic universe of the accordion materializes during the following piece, from romantic jazz to wonderfully abstract harmonies; we'd have to move from allusions to rock'n'roll here to some jibes at the avant-garde band's pop intentions. However, in the following sections we are treated to such incredibly interplayed and perfectly constructed free musical forms in all aspects that our humour passes and our jaw drops. And you may even get the impression that they can casually make educated associations to much more "produced" bands, like Kammerflimmer Kollektief or Radian, and then probably to anything else.

This improvisational album can surprise and reassure the listener experienced in the genre in many unexpected ways, but I think it can also be suitable for beginners. It's a beautiful summative example of where the expressive abilities of such classical instruments as piano, trumpet and accordion have moved quite rapidly these days, and one can test different modes of listening radicalism at will.

*Jan Faix, "His Voice" July 2018*