Natural Artefacts at Nissanscenen Halmstad

In this concert the improvisation group Natural Artefacts performed music from their album The Crux, which was released at LJ Records at the beginning of 2019.

The first edition of the Swedish improv group Natural Artefacts played regularly for 15 years. After a break, when saxophone player Ove Johansson passed away in 2015, the original members Susanna Lindeborg and Per Anders Nilsson created a second edition in 2018 together with the two young musicians Merje Kägu and Anton Jonsson on guitar and percussion respectively. The point of departure was, and still is, a mix of acoustic and electronic instruments, with an aim to blend elements from diverse musical genres and traditions such as free improvisation, serial music, minimalism, ambient, electronica, and electroacoustic music. What unifies the players however, is their jazz background. With the new repertoire, comprising of new compositions and improv concepts exclusively created for the present line up, Natural Artefacts continue to explore new and yet unknown musical territories anchored in the tradition. These influences are also clearly audible, not just a hidden influence, which is obvious in one review of the album The Crux by Michael Tucker in Jazz Journal July 2019:

I wonder how Joe Zawinul would have got on with fellow-Austrian Arnold Schönberg? Imagine a world where improvisational flair, funky jazz figures and a world-ranging poetic sensibility sit well with the strictures of serialism or a literate awareness of the European classical tradition. Add to that the possibilities inherent in a post-musique concrète, post-Cage, post-minimalism sensibility and you have some idea of the sui generis poetics of this quite extraordinary quartet.

A basic tenet in the group’s music is to give participating musicians maximal freedom, however within some constrains. These constrains consists of, one may say, an ideological collective commitment about being in the jazz tradition, which is about an approach about how to perform, rather than playing a standard jazz repertoire. Furthermore, the music can definitely swing, as critic Thomas Millroth expressed in the Swedish principal jazz magazine, OJ, July issue 2019: “Fritt överraskande och samtidigt riktigt tung förankring i 60- och 70-talets jazz. Även i de lugnaste tempi kan gruppen svänga så att en tappar andan för en sekund.” (Freely surprising and at the same time really heavy anchoring in the 60’s and 70’s jazz. Even at the calmest tempos, the group can swing so that one loses breath for a second). Me, Per Anders Nilsson, is co-leader of the group together with Susanna Lindeborg. I do the main part of back grounds and act as a virtual bass player, or rather composing and controlling the bass player, that is a machine. My role as performer is to be as much as an arranger / conductor / coordinator as being a performer. If comparing to role models in jazz: it’s more playing the role of Duke Ellington than John Coltrane.