

Beam Stone at Brötz 24/11 2021

Summary

Beam Stone is a free improvisation trio. The participants collectively explore sound improvisation, meaning interacting with sounds in a musical sense. No sound is innocent and each sound has its own narrative.

Description

Beam Stone 2021 consists of Per Anders Nilsson, electronics and saxophone, Sten Sandell, piano and voice, and Raymond Strid percussion. At the outset in 2006 the group was formed as a regular free improv group with an aim to explore new musical territories, however it also became an experimental research lab, which eventually led to the doctoral thesis *A Field of Possibilities* by Nilsson, defended in 2011. At the core of the group is sound improvisation; one may say that Beam Stone's sound of music is a music of sounds. In order to understand, a quote by British percussionist and author Eddie Prévost may shed light: "No Sound is Innocent". In our interpretation it means that any sound may play a role, having a meaning, and can be used in a musical setting. Noteworthy is that each of the players do use a limited sound palette when performing that are more or less consistent over time, which means that that Beam Stone do have a clear sonic identity. During the thesis work period, the invention of digital musical instrument was at the forefront, particularly so-called live-sampling of piano, and percussion, where improvisation sessions with the group played a crucial role regarding evaluation and development. Finally, in public concerts the instruments were further tested and evaluated. Since 2011, Beam Stone has performed sparsely. For the most recent concert, at Brötz in Gothenburg, the group did continue to explore and develop their music. One change is that Nilsson has abandoned live-sampling, in favor to more direct controllable electronic instruments, e.g., the *expressurePad* described in Nilsson's thesis. A huge difference however, is that Nilsson also brought in the saxophone, his main instrument, which changed the sound of the group radically. A main question was whether the music, with the saxophone, become jazzier; a possible consequence of the mix of instruments. The personal electronic instruments employed previously, particularly sample-based, relied on recordings in real-time, and cause of that by necessity relatively slow in response. When listening to the recording from this particular concert, the impression is that the mix of instruments, and particularly the saxophone do change the sound of the group, quite natural, but the music is quite free from clichés that often emerge in so-called free improvisation and free jazz.