

Tom Timmler Quartet

Dedication

The unshakeable

The name Tom Timmler sounds like something out of a novel. But the man really does exist, he was just well hidden away for years, somewhere deep in the Black Forest. There he wrote film and theater music, taught saxophone playing, improvisation and harmony, played in big bands and symphony orchestras, jammed with this and that. Now, at the age of 52, the Freiburg local hero is releasing his debut album, naturally on a Black Forest label. The record company HGBS is named after Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer, the legendary head of the legendary MPS brand. The album was recorded in the historic MPS studio in Villingen-Schwenningen.

If the sound result of the fine recording gear is not completely deceptive, Timmler has a tenor sound that is tougher than Andrea Merkel on the euro issue and louder than an Airbus taking off. Even Booker Ervin, Bob Berg or Gary Thomas don't achieve such granite imperturbability every day. Timmler's steely tenor sax could probably easily compete with a complete Zurna orchestra from North Africa. But his conception of modern jazz seems to be just as determined as his sound: no-nonsense, offensive, technique-oriented, almost humorlessly orthodox - just as we know it from many a SteepleChase record from the eighties. His themes and improvisations speak the language of modern neo-bop as if it were the everyday local dialect of Freiburg.

But Timmler and his quartet never become boring. For all their no-nonsense directness, there is always room for original hooks, personal eyelets and rousing vamps. In fact, each of the dedication pieces on Dedication (HGBS 200029 CD) has its very own, surprising, instructive note - whether the beboppy blues for Gary Barone, the earthy ballad for Joe Bülow, the modal "Afro" for Elvin Jones or the "Giant Steps" variations for John Coltrane, Timmler's great idol. Perhaps an experienced saxophone teacher from the Black Forest simply wanted to set a didactic example here. In any case, the virtues of modern jazz - swing, groove, bop, originality, virtuosity, temperament - which are in danger of being forgotten, can hardly be remembered more emphatically than with this album. So may his students make the teacher happy by emulating his efforts!

Hans-Jürgen Schaal

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