

Matthias Müller/Christian Marien

Superimpose

Creative Sources CS 092 CD

Zoepf & Schliemann

Zweieiige Zwillinge

Nurnichtnur 105 09 08

Put aside any conventional concept of sonic beauty when listening to these two

provocative horn-plus-percussion CDs. As a matter of fact, tolerance for sonic brutality might be a quality to bring to the discs – along with an appreciation for the unexpected.

Noisy, clamorous and blaring are the adjectives that are best attributed to these dual German duets, although just like no two snowflakes are the same, no two harsh noises are indistinguishable either. On *Superimpose* for example, the players are trombonist Matthias Müller and drummer Christian Marien on a diabolical busman's holiday from their regular gigs. Both are members of the jokey and jolly Olaf Ton band; the drummer also collaborates with dancers, hip-hoppers and performance artists; the trombonist is also involved with avant-garde theatre and dance groups and teaches trombone in Dresden.

On the other CD, Köln-based soprano saxophonist and bass clarinetist Joachim Zoepf is an improvised music crusader, having over the years been involved in the creation of several symposiums, concert and festivals. His collaborators have ranged from trombonist Paul Hubweber to endangered guitarist Hans Tammen. A percussionist with a similar bent, Wolfgang Schliemann works with other sound explorers like saxophonist Dirk Marveled and bassist Ulrich Phillip.

Divided into 18 tracks in two different series, *Zweieiige Zwillinge* is a fantasia of sharp, squealed and shrill oscillations. Furthermore on most tracks each man unearths not only the initial textures, but also wrenches ancillary echoes from the flanging and fluttering his extended techniques produce. At points, in fact, it's nearly impossible to attribute certain shrills to either altissimo reed-tongue manipulation or a drumstick sharply scraped along a ride cymbal.

Other pitches are more easily identified. On bass clarinet, Zoepf honks, slurs and squawks, with disconnected burps and retches following an interlude of tongue-slapping. Elsewhere he solidifies his timbres into reverberating Bronx cheers. Circular breathing, moistly propelled through the horn's body tube allows the soprano saxophone to expose additional overtones and partials; while other times key percussion and split-tones lead him to distant slurs and watery irregular vibrations.

While all these strategies occupy the reedist, Schliemann busies himself with rattles, rebounds and pops. Much of his output is the result of drum top friction, ratcheting on metallic, unyielding surfaces, loosening and tightening the heads' connective lugs and bolts, squeaking rubber toys and using band-saw-like pressure to produce strident, ear-wrenching shrieks. Meandering through what sounds like a junkyard of percussion instruments, the drummer works up to contrapuntal and polyphonic exchanges with Zoepf which blur foreground and background roles – plus in one dramatic exchange, he announces the finale with a piercing police whistle shrill.

Only slightly less clangorous, *Superimpose's* six tracks may sound the way they do because Müller's subterranean plunger work, braying tones and throat rumbles can't replicate the continuous piercing shrillness of a reed. But that's not for lack of trying. Still in mid-range

his wide bell space and tongue manipulation allows the absolute sound of air currents and chromatic note clusters to be heard.

For his part, Marien doesn't take a back seat to Schliemann when it comes to cacophony. Little ruffling or nerve beats are on display when the percussionist can repeatedly rattle what seems to be an aluminum pie plate; trigger the equivalent of single revolver blasts with a pointed drumstick; or produce seamless, reverberations to break up the beat from floor toms and snare; plus create sputtering and hissing decorations from the cymbals.

Tightrope walking on the divide between noise and non-noise, these duos create notable provocative sounds. The point where they can be admired as much as accepted depends on the listeners' adventurousness.

— Ken Waxman

Track Listing: Zweieiige: 1. Skorpion I 2. Skorpion II 3. Skorpion III 4. Skorpion IV 5. Krebs I 6. Krebs 2 7. Krebs III 8. Krebs IV 9. Skorpion V 10. Krebs V 11. Krebs VI 12. Krebs VII 13. Skorpion VI 14. Krebs VIII 15. Skorpion VII 16. Krebs IX 17. Skorpion VIII 18. Krebs X

Personnel: Zweieiige: Joachim Zoepf (soprano saxophone and bass clarinet) and Wolfgang Schliemann (percussion)