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Luca Sisera Roofer feat. Alexey Kruglov

Moscow Files

Leo Records CD LR 811

Although in the 21st Century a common Russian-Swiss interchange may involve an eastern-European oligarch caching illegally obtained profits in an un-numbered Swiss bank account, this disc demonstrates that a more benign Swiss-Russian relationship exists that is more mutually satisfying, but in a musical rather than a monetary fashion. The example is this CD where firebrand Moscow-based alto saxophonist Alexey Kruglov joined the integrated Swiss quintet Roofer led by bassist Luca Sisera, for a series of Russian concerts and these eight balanced improvisations.

More potent and piquant than mixing Russian borscht and Swiss cheese, Kruglov, who has played with the likes of Vladimir Tarasov in the past, is the necessary seasoning for the sextet's established recipe. Expansive tenor saxophonist Michael Jaeger, whose non-Swiss affiliations include Tom Rainey, matches Kruglov's spices with Swiss invention, as does blustery trombonist Maurus Twerenbold. Pianist Yves Theiler and drummer Michi Stulz complete the ready-for-anything rhythm section alongside Sisera, a much-in-demand double bass stalwart.

Theiler proves himself master of comping and lyrical extensions, subtly moving most pieces forward in a chromatic manner while horn asides provide the contrapuntal dissension. Barks, sucks and shrieks are common reed currency, while freak slide-extensions tones distinguish the trombone work. Should harmonies be called for, they provide Gregorian-chant-like solidity rather than expected swing riffs. Instances of this arrive on "Re: Foo? Roofer!" whereas a sequences such as "Wehre REW!" whose blended sonic coloration suggest a ballad, add additional liveliness with intermittent siren-like reed counterpoint.

Enough positioned percussion pops and fit-to-scale horn vibrations exist to confirm the serious intent of the meeting. But venturing into Energy Music territory, that take up most of the final tracks, moves emotion into the fissures and crevices of this operation. Gutbucket trombone slurs, the saxophonists' pecking the narrative into ever smaller phrases and the pianist's dynamic theme circulation as a Greek horn chorus are some of the stand outs. "Use Caps, Slee, Free Jazz. A Jeer Feels Space.su", the final track, is exactly as advertised, a kinetic Free Jazz miasma filled with reed honks, trombone slurs, irregular percussion motifs and jangling piano chords that sashay across the scenery until the parts lock, reach a crescendo and stops following a few concluding drum smacks.

Unlike Soviet presence in several European countries after World War Two, these Moscow Files are instances of synthesis not appropriation from either side. Another fine instance of Kruglov's playing and Roofer's, cobbled together onto a high-quality session.

—Ken Waxman

Track Listing: 1. Music is UM 2. Re: Foo? Roofer! 3. S... Use X, Ask Saxes, Us! 4. Wehre REW! 5. Ac ultra art – Luca 6. Maurus nur U. Am. 7. E t.c. A Ton Did Not Act E. 8. Use Caps, Slee, Free Jazz. A Jeer Feels Space.su

Personnel: Maurus Twerenbold (trombone); Alexey Kruglov (alto saxophone); Michael Jaeger (tenor saxophone and clarinet); Yves Theiler (piano); Luca Sisera (bass) and Michi Stulz (drums)