

Luca Sisera ROOFER – CLAZZ

Jazz and classical music combined

Swiss bassist and composer Luca Sisera has composed CLAZZ, an adventurous cross-genre work that he premiered and recorded in autumn 2022 with his jazz quintet ROOFER and a 41-piece symphony orchestra. The impressive result is now being released as a live album.

Luca Sisera is an artist who embraces interdisciplinary curiosity and openness with his quintet ROOFER. His long-running intensive experimentation on the fringes of musical genres, be it as a composer or as a bassist, defies pigeonholing. This applies exemplarily to his ambitious new project CLAZZ, the experimental openness of which invites listeners to embark on a challenging musical expedition without any stylistic reservations.

This work, comprising five movements and lasting over 70 minutes, took almost two years to compose. Although CLAZZ does include compositions played and released previously by the quintet, long stretches of it consist entirely of newly composed material. The rearranged older compositions incorporated into CLAZZ, some of which also lend their titles to the individual movements, have been enhanced so extensively and intensively by numerous new sections, that the original compositions ultimately make up just a small fraction of the work. Therefore, anyone thinking that these are merely orchestral versions of well-known ROOFER pieces would be quite mistaken. Instead, CLAZZ includes them as a common denominator in relation to the original ROOFER quintet music and as a musical point of contact that makes it possible to “recklessly design a powerful musical rocket despite all technical difficulties and set off for new sonic galaxies,” as composer and saxophonist Daniel Schnyder aptly describes it in the liner notes.

CLAZZ strives to be more than just an exchange of blows between orchestra and jazz band. And Sisera was never interested in simply having his quintet accompanied by an orchestra. CLAZZ wants more. The project aspires towards a synthesis that unites classical music and jazz. “I like to fluctuate between styles,” says Sisera, “between the familiar and the unfamiliar, unexplored and unheard, without juxtaposing the extremes. Instead, I try to thoroughly unite carefully composed music with collective and connected improvisation, or to dismantle its seemingly corset-like boundaries. It is within this sphere of risk that I feel at home as an artist.” One thing that stands out here is that Sisera uses sophisticated concepts to improvisationally incorporate the orchestral musicians as well, adding a unique strength to the music. This stylistically unclassifiable work fascinates with revitalising dogma-free authenticity, which should appeal to both jazz and classical music enthusiasts in a refreshingly new way.

Exclusively for this project, slight adjustments were made to the ROOFER line-up. In order to enable the 46 musicians to reliably navigate through the often rhythmically complex material, percussionist Dario Sisera was brought in. On the other hand, ROOFER’s originally two-member brass front line was downsized. For CLAZZ, German alto saxophonist Luise Volkmann takes over the front line and emphatically shapes the project with her musical and improvisational skills. However, the line-up change also meant that Luca Sisera briefly relinquished his position as the band’s bassist for the recording (Sisera will resume his role on the double bass for future performances) so that he could concentrate with maximum focus on his work as composer and musical director, as well as on the implementation. Andreas Waelti, a Viennese bassist and friend of Sisera’s, fits into the quintet amazingly well and has a significant influence on the recording with his distinctive and powerful double bass playing. As usual, the two regular members Yves Theiler (piano) and Michael Stulz (drums) round off the band with their outstanding instrumental and interactive strengths.

The orchestra Kammerphilharmonie Graubünden, responsible for the orchestral part of this live recording, masters the challenging, complex and polychrome score with bravura, which is no doubt partly due to its young, stylistically versatile and jazz-savvy conductor Gaudens Bieri, who is also the director of the orchestra Lüneburger Symphoniker among other things, and who audibly leads the orchestra through this unconventional bridge-building work with much enthusiasm and verve.

Luca Sisera works in an almost autobiographical manner. “My pieces are always very personal,” he says. “There are whole stories behind them.” He sees his music “as a reflection on our era and my own life and the immediate reaction to it.” The compositions thus echo “personal experiences and observations from everyday life.” These initial experiences that Sisera tells of are very different and absolutely personal; their meaning is hardly apparent to anyone else. This does not matter to Sisera. It seems that what inspired him when composing, much like stylistic classification, no longer plays a role. This is because CLAZZ strives to be one thing only: music without any reservations or blinkers.

www.clazz.ch

www.roofer-music.com

ROOFER

Luca Sisera, Bandleader und Komponist

Luise Volkmann, Altsaxophon

Yves Theiler, Piano

Andreas Waelti, Bass

Dario Sisera, Perkussion

Michael Stulz, Drums

CONDUCTOR:

Gaudens Bieri

ORCHESTRA:

Kammerphilharmonie Graubünden

ALBUM:

Luca Sisera ROOFER & Kammerphilharmonie Graubünden – „CLAZZ“ (2023, „nWog Records“ 052)

UPCOMING SHOWS:

10. Mai 2023 Schaffhauser Jazzfestival, Stadttheater Schaffhausen (CH) www.jazzfestival.ch

12. Mai 2023 Theater Chur (CH) www.theaterchur.ch/programm/clazz