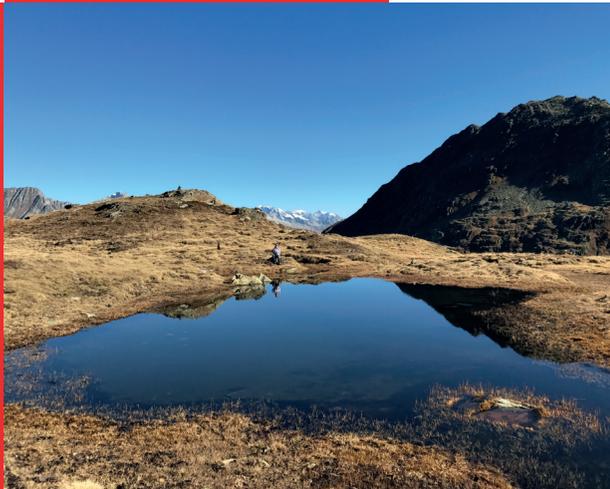


**Klaus
Koenig** Seven Things



Past and Presence



Seven Things
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Past and Presence

Every era has its art. This statement used to be a constant challenge for me. I didn't want to imitate the music of past decades (even though the majority of audiences preferred the older styles in Jazz), with the result that, from the fifties to the seventies, even amateur musicians had far more opportunities to perform than those who were exploring new developments.

However, it's always important to remember that everyone, whether they like it or not, carries the past within them. The new is never without preconditions; it stands on previous generations, even if we're not always aware of it. So, the new always contains a good deal of the old. The title PAST AND PRESENCE, which also served as the motto for the entire album, carries this significance.

The music created by pianist Cecil Taylor in 1960 nevertheless seems to me to be wholly without preconditions, devoid of connection to the past, thus contradicting my confident thesis of the past in the present. It captivated me at the time. For several years I worked to adopt Taylor's techniques, to test their value, and eventually even invited leading figures of Free Jazz to our radio concert series "Jazz Live". These recordings can be heard on the TCB series, which I produced for this label from our radio concerts. I thoroughly enjoyed these concerts! But ultimately, Free Jazz ran its course. Too much freedom is not good for people. They need boundaries, they need rules, in order to develop meaningfully. Taylor's undoubtedly admirable attempt to break free from the rules of music secured him a place in music history, but his experiment was not destined to last. One cannot sail on, unscathed, after throwing overboard virtually all the elements that make up music as old and superfluous. There would be too little of a starting point remaining for a lasting push in a new musical direction.

Taking part in the music of our generation was a goal we pursued with our group Magog in the 1970s, and one I believe we achieved to some extent. My press kit from those years reflects this quite clearly. Today, in my later years, the question of style isn't that important to me anymore. More than that, as much as possible I want to write and play my own music, as independently as I can from prevailing trends and styles. And if free and melodic elements exist side by side, that's fine with me. On the contrary, bringing together opposites is an appealing goal for me, nevertheless without becoming a guiding principle. In any case I wouldn't want to relinquish the freedom to combine the harmonically tangible and the intangible, as needed.

A few words about the pieces on this sixth offering by our group:

FROM MAJOR TO MINOR

A quote from the old evergreen “I’ll Remember April”. From major to minor. As long as you’re working with tonal music, you can’t get around this reality. My earliest Jazz purchase was an EP, a disk with just two tracks. The internationally successful pop singer Caterina Valente, like many, if not all popular musicians after World War II, had come from a Jazz background. Together with the young trumpet star Chet Baker, she recorded a ballad along with this track. I can still listen to the music today with the same joy as back then. I practically know the lyrics by heart now. Past and Presence: thankfully, the masterpieces of the past retain their value forever and will always be able to delight.

NIX FÜR BIX

The trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke was one of the first white Jazz musicians who could hold his own against his Black colleagues. I always had a certain connection to him, since his parents had emigrated from Germany. Having succumbed to alcoholism early on, his life was quite short. But he has forever held a prominent place in Jazz history. Our piece, written and performed 100 years after his time, doesn’t stylistically have much in common with his music. And yet, the fundamental principle of making Jazz music is still very much the same as it was back then. Past and Presence: here, too, the relationship between then and now is evident. Specifically, my aim in this piece is to be able to invent melodies within an atonal or near-atonal harmonic environment – each player can decide that for themselves.

NO SONG FOR BARBRA

For me, the singer Barbra Streisand is a once in a century phenomenon. In her field, I believe no one has ever equaled her. I enjoy listening to her records at least as much as those of the two or three greatest Jazz singers. This confession might rub some Jazz fans the wrong way, but I can't help it. It's the quality that captivates me. Whichever genre of music isn't important. The title simply indicates that this piece wouldn't be very suitable for her repertoire. We are, after all, at home in a different musical environment than she is, but that doesn't preclude our admiration for her.

C.P. ONE

This piece belongs to a series of fast blues compositions that I've numbered. "C.P." stands for the great Charlie Parker, to whom we express our homage with these pieces on our CDs, without, however, imitating his style. None of us were ever bebop musicians. Parker's short lifetime is simply too long ago for that.

SAOSEO

What a word! Six letters, four of them vowels and one consonant that appears twice. I don't know what philology has to say about it, which ancient Romance language left its mark here. I'm more fascinated by its musicality, its sound. Moreover, Lake Saoseo in Val da Camp, a side valley of Valposchiavo in the Grisons, is perhaps the most impressive alpine mountain lake I've ever seen.

PAST AND PRESENCE

As alluded to at the beginning, the title track aims to spotlight a problem we Jazz musicians face today: To what extent should the past be recognizable in contemporary music, or rather, how far should, how far can one distance oneself from its tradition without completely losing the connection to Jazz history? My attempt to translate this topic into music proved quite difficult. I was unhappy with several versions. Either the result was too conventional, or I found the product too unwieldy, too abstract, lacking any discernible melodic value. Finally, I arrived at this solution, which, while somewhat more committed to the “past” than the “presence”, doesn’t simply become an obstacle course for the improvisers with its fairly fast tempo.

AN HOMAGE TO VIOLA

Exceptionally, the title came first. It was meant to be a simple piece, because Viola, the heroine of Shakespeare’s masterpiece comedy “Twelfth Night, or What You Will”, must be imagined as very young, perhaps seventeen. But with this stipulation, one encounters a problem that is difficult to escape: the danger of banality. Consequently, the attempts to arrive at a satisfactory solution proved disappointing. Then one night I woke up with the beginning of a new version in my head. I went to my instrument, and after barely more than ten minutes, I had something on paper that finally seemed acceptable to me. The subsequent fine-tuning, however, took, as always with me, much longer. Viola finds herself at the beginning in a tragic and difficult situation, which since it is a comedy, ultimately ends happily. I finally had to abandon my original intention of conveying both states of mind in just a few bars. One shouldn’t overstep one’s bounds.

ADDIO

A few very personal thoughts from the person who has kept this band going for about 13 years, and who has on six occasions gone into the studio with these wonderful musicians – and equally wonderful individuals – to try and transform his compositional suggestions into music. The title pretty much sums up these sentiments. But let's go on with the tunes:

THREE FOUR FOR SEVEN THINGS

It's self-explanatory: a piece in three-quarter time. THREE FOUR FOR FIVE would undoubtedly sound even better, but we've already recorded a piece with that title on our CD "Kings and Illusions" (TCB 36702), so this title will have to do.

FINISSIMO

It wouldn't be entirely unrealistic to consider the possibility that this CD, our sixth, could also be the last release from our group Seven Things. Plans and sketches for another album by my Jazz Live Trio, once the house band of Swiss Radio SRF (a long, long time ago), are certainly on the table, but bringing the quintet into the studio a seventh time is something I can't imagine at the moment, from a purely biological point of view. That explains the title. The old adage, never say never, is currently keeping the author in a state of mental equilibrium. In addition, as they say, time is the best counsel.

Klaus Koenig

Klaus Koenig, p, composition, studied at the Acoustic Institute of the University of Music in Detmold, which he left in 1962 with a degree in sound engineering (with a distinction). He worked as a recording manager for the Swiss radio station SRF in Zurich until 1997. Alongside this he developed several hundred shows for the Jazz department. In 1964 the radio station made him responsible for accompanying guest soloists in the radio concert series «Jazz Live». His «Jazz Live Trio», the most important players in which included Isla Eckinger, Peter Frei as a bassist, Peter Schmidlin and Pierre Favre as drummers - could be heard in more than 100 live broadcasts with soloists from around the world until 1982. The performers included many top American and European musicians such as Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, Clark Terry, Benny Bailey, Phil Woods, Cliff Jordan, Kenny Wheeler and Albert Mangelsdorff. A 13-CD series by TCB documents this series of concerts. Longer-term links were established with Johnny Griffin, Lee Konitz, Sal Nistico, Franco Ambrosetti, Gianni Basso, Roman Schwaller and others. The group «Magog», made up of Hans Kennel, Andy Scherrer, Paul Haag and the Jazz Live Trio, was formed on his initiative in 1973 and enjoyed a great degree of international success. The collaboration with the actor and reciter Gert Westphal in a «jazz and lyrics» programme spanned several decades. A «classics and jazz» programme developed over several years with the classical pianist Annette Weisbrod. Participation in around 40 albums. Work on musical theory (on the tempering of keyboard instruments in old music) and musical education (piano voicing). In 1998 he had to stop his musical activity due to an illness in both of his hands. After many years of therapy, the 2012/2013 season with the old/new «Jazz Live Trio» and the 2013/2014 season with the «Seven Things» quintet with Dani Schenker, Christoph Merki and the trio meant a return to the music scene. In 2024 five albums are on the market, three of them having received five star reviews in the press.

www.klauskoenig.ch



Klaus Koenig
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Patrick Sommer, Andi Wettstein
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Patrick Sommer, b, born in 1976. Patrick studied contrabass and electric bass at the Swiss Jazz School in Bern and in Los Angeles. He lives in Zurich and works as a freelance musician. A solid feeling for timings, a broad stylistic and instrumental range, an unswerving taste and his ability to adapt make him one of the most in-demand bassists on the Swiss music scene. He holds regular concerts both in Switzerland and abroad and is involved in theatre and dance projects as a musician and composer. Selected discography: Tony Renold Quartet: Places (Unit Records 2011); Plus Baschnagel's Latin World: Son Song (Altrisuoni 2011); Martin Lechner: Gentlemen Are Hard To Find (BHM 2011); Bucher Sommer Friedli & Aeby: Expanding (Dryrecords 2011); Bucher 5: Here And There (Unit Records 2010); Limber Lumber - Rösli Sommer Sartorius: Diapassion (Unit Records 2010); Tim Kleinert Trio: Free Passage To Now (Covariance 2010); Peter Zihlmann & TOW Orchestra: Tales Of The Old World (Unit Records 2010); Roli Frei & The Soulful Desert: Strong (Sound Service 2010); Adrian Frey Trio: No Flags (Unit Records 2010); Julian Amacker Universe: A Tea And Me (FF Records 2009); Marianne Racine Quartet: Jazz (2009); Patrick Sommer: Speechless (Rock Archive 2009); Bucher Sommer Friedli: Farb (Dryrecords 2008); The Moondog Show: Marfa (Fazerecords 2007); Tony Renold Quartet: Timeless Flow (Universal Records 2005); Lisette Spinnler Quartet: in Between (TCB Records 2004). He has been playing for the Jazz Live Trio since 2012. www.patrickssommer.net

Andi Wettstein, dr, born in 1978. Studied the drums at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and at the Zurich University of the Arts. His active involvement in concerts has brought him together with, among many others, Franco Ambrosetti, Peter Madsen, Theo Kapiladis, Adrian Frey and Tobias Preisig. In addition to his artistic work, he also teaches at the Staufen School of Music. Future projects: The Murder Of Amus Ames, Mistura, Markus Bischof Trio, Ray Bourbon, Kabel, Jazz Live Trio.

Daniel Schenker, tp, received his first trumpet lessons at the age of ten. After studying computer sciences at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, he was awarded his concert diploma by the Swiss Jazz School in Berne. Since the 1980s, Daniel Schenker has been a sought-after sideman in many Swiss bands and has played on more than 60 CDs and LPs. He has played in concert and on tour with Kenny Werner, Joe Haider, Bill Holman and many others. He has paid several visits to New York. Schenker performs regularly since 2001 with his own quartet and released the albums «Iridium» (2002), «soundlines» (2004, with the New York tenor saxophonist Chris Cheek as a guest) and «Jardim Botânico» (2009). Schenker teaches trumpet and ear training at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and is co-leader of the Zurich Jazz Orchestra ZJO. www.danielschenker.ch

Christoph Merki, as, studied history at the University of Zurich (Dr.phil.) and alto saxophone at the Lucerne School of Music (passed with distinction). He completed his musical training in New York, specifically with Dave Liebman. He now works as a jazz saxophonist, composer and music publicist. He has been teaching at the Zurich University of the Arts since 2001 and has been Professor of Ensemble Performances and History of Music since 2007. His albums “Ambient Conception of Jazz” (Universal Music), “Circles” and “Psychedelic Mountain Vol.1/2” were very well received, along with his own formation “Christoph Merki Music.01”. As a music publicist, he made a name for himself with the standard band “Musikszene Schweiz” (“Swiss Music Scene”, Chronos-Verlag, 2009) and has been a cultural journalist for the “Tages-Anzeiger” (since 2001). Christoph Merki built up the CD label ZHdK-Records at the Zurich University of the Arts and managed it from 2006 to 2012 with more than 30 CDs produced. 2012: selected by the Expert Commission of the Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia for the field of music. www.christophmerki.ch



Daniel Schenker, Christoph Merki
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TCB 01232 Magog Live at the Montreux Jazz Festival 1973
(Originally released 1973 by Evasion Records, Lausanne)

TCB 01262 Gert Westphal und das Jazz Live Trio
Jazz & Lyrik – Heinrich Heine & Gottfried Benn

TCB 01302 Magog
(Originally released 1976 by JAPO Records, Munich)

TCB 02212 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 21
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Sal Nistico / Tony Scott

TCB 02222 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 22
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Albert Mangelsdorff / Francois Jeanneau

TCB 02242 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 24
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Gianni Basso / Guy Lafitte

TCB 02252 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 25
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Idrees Sulieman / Benny Bailey

TCB 02262 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 26
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Karin Krog / Enrico Rava / Miriam Klein

TCB 02272 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 27
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Phil Woods / Eddie Daniels / Stuff Smith / Leo Wright

TCB 02282 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 28
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Kenny Wheeler / Alan Skidmore

TCB 02322 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 32
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Sahib Shihab / Art Farmer / Clifford Jordan

TCB 02342 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 34
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Slide Hampton / Karl Berger / Glenn Ferris

TCB 02362 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 36
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Johnny Griffin / Hal Singer / Leszek Zadlo / Ferdinand Povel

TCB 02382 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 38
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Dexter Gordon / Magog

TCB 02392 Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol. 39
Jazz Live Trio Concert feat. Franco Ambrosetti / Andy Scherrer / Roman Schwaller /
Hans Kennel / Thomas Grunwald / Daniel Bourquin

TCB 32502 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
Nausikaa

TCB 33102 Klaus Koenig Seven Things
Piazza Rotonda

TCB 35202 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
Night Thoughts

TCB 35402 Klaus Koenig Seven Things
Seven Things I Always Wanted To Say

TCB 36202 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
Music for the Gentle Man

TCB 36602 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
It's a Foreign Language

TCB 36702 Klaus Koenig Seven Things
Kings and Illusions

TCB 37602 Klaus Koenig Seven Things
Dark With Excessive Bright

TCB 37702 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
Songs For Leila

TCB 38302 Klaus Koenig Seven Things
An Homage to Celia

TCB 38602 Klaus Koenig Jazz Live Trio
Autumn Girl

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