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FRANK KAUFMAN

Intakt Brings Top Talent to the Stone

Intakt Records at the Stone, which transpired during the first two weeks of March at John Zorn's Loisdia New York performance space, was as ambitious and logistically complex an event as any in the venue's seven-year history. Curated by label director Patrik Landolt, the project comprised 26 sets from a pool of some 40 musicians, 13 of them Swiss, whose musical production Intakt documents.

On the stormy second night, a packed house listened attentively to an inspired textural duo between University of Basel professor Fred Frith, playing prepared guitar, and Zurich-based saxophonist Co Streiff. Afterwards, Landolt remarked that he began the organizing process 18 months ago, not long after receiving Zorn's email offer of the space. "I replied that it would be an honor," Landolt said. "I knew I had to bring Swiss musicians who rarely if ever play in New York or the U.S. The hardest thing was to organize the funding."

In recruiting musicians, Landolt drew on an international, multi-generational cohort of both genders. The Swiss contingent at the festival included pianist Irène Schweizer, percussionist Pierre Favre, saxophonists Jürg Wickihalder and Streiff, drummer Lucas Niggli, and pianists Gabriela Friedli and Sylvie Courvoisier, the latter a New Yorker of long standing. U.S. leaders included alto saxophonist Oliver Lake, drummers Andrew Cyrille and Tom Rainey, guitarist Elliott Sharp and New York-based, German-born saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock.

"I want to show working bands, but also new experiments," Landolt said. In regard to the former, he offered Streiff's quartet with trumpeter Russ Johnson, Courvoisier's quartet with violinist Mark Feldman and Laubrock's orchestra; the latter included a Ray Anderson-Jan Schlegel-Dieter Ulrich trio, Niggli's duo encounters with Sharp and Frith, and Niggli in trio with Tim Berne and Angelica Sanchez.

Logistics were a gnarlier proposition. A veteran concert producer, Landolt formed a *verein* (voluntary, limited liability association) as an organizing umbrella. He drew on a network of contacts in non-profits and government agencies to fund airfare and lodging, while undertaking the laborious process of obtaining 13 work visas.

Schweizer and Niggli serve on Intakt's board of directors with Landolt and his partner, Rosemarie A. Meier, who co-founded the label in 1986 after finding no takers for a Schweizer performance at the 1984 Taktlos Festival.

"We decided that if we could organize a festival, we could also bring out a record," Landolt said. "It sold well." Over the next five years, Intakt released seven Schweizer concerts (her Intakt offerings now number two dozen, most recently *To Whom It May Concern: Piano Solo Tonhalle Zürich*) and the first of 19 documents of Barry Guy, a Swiss resident for six years, most recently the DVD *Harmos: Live At Schaffhausen*.

Each Intakt release has a well-designed booklet with liner notes in German and English, and the sound is uniformly excellent (Landolt frequently collaborates with Swiss Radio and Germany's Südwestfunk Radio and Radio Berlin, which offer excellent production facilities). The break-even sales marker is 2,500 units. The label releases 16 items per year, and only two are out of print.

"I'm always in discussion with the musicians, but I make the final decision," Landolt said, acknowledging that his personal aesthetics define the Intakt sound. "I like Coltrane and Monk. I like experiments that cross borders into rock or classical music. At one time, Europeans learned and copied a lot from American musicians. Over the last 20–30 years, they've developed many different sub-styles, personal styles. But it's important to have a relationship to American artists. That's the origin—and New York is still a center of innovation."

—Ted Panken