

Schlachtfest Session II Review

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This isn't so much a meeting of minds as it is a meeting of generations; each individual intent on serving the perpetually slippery thing that is The Music. John Tchicai is the individual with the greatest heritage here, and the idea of him coming together with Hans Joachim Irmler of the sonic explorers Faust will always be an intriguing one. Here it yields inscrutable results, the whole musical whole far greater than the sum total of its parts.

Their coming together, just one as it is of many on offer here, perhaps unsurprisingly resulted in fearsomely collective music. Musical personalities, not the least of them being that of vocalist Hanna Tuulikki, emerge from the musical forest only to be subsumed again within the endeavor that is "Den Daumen einklemmen und mit dem Zeigefinger wackeln" where an accommodation is reached between music which emerges from the moment and a kind of organic predetermination.

Strings are to the fore on the following "Ich kann's und zu kannst es auch," though not to the detriment of other contributions. The music never loses sight of its collective roots and indeed its power to move is to a large extent governed precisely by that working method.

By the time "Aah..." rolls around the music has undergone a series of coalescences and dissipations which lend the proceedings an almost predetermined air. To a degree this is reinforced by Tchicai, underplaying in a manner that's a hallmark of his work and thus ensuring that every note has telling effect. There's reflection in his work too, even when it's pitched against seemingly random bursts of atonality generated presumably by Irmler's keyboards.

"Buch angucken" continues in a similar vein, but here the reflection is permeated by a certain disquiet which gives the impression of a radically different take on the principle of tension and release. Jan Fride gives the music some rhythmic impetus at this stage and the underlying tension thus generated facilitates Irmler in some possibly mock-Gothic keyboard excursions. Again the music stays primarily loyal to its own internal logic for all the parallels there might be with some jam generated in a West German studio circa 1971.

Finally, the fragment of "Bollerwagen fahren" closes things out in a manner suggesting no end but rather a temporary closure on collective endeavor that could be taken up at any time. With any luck it will be in the future.