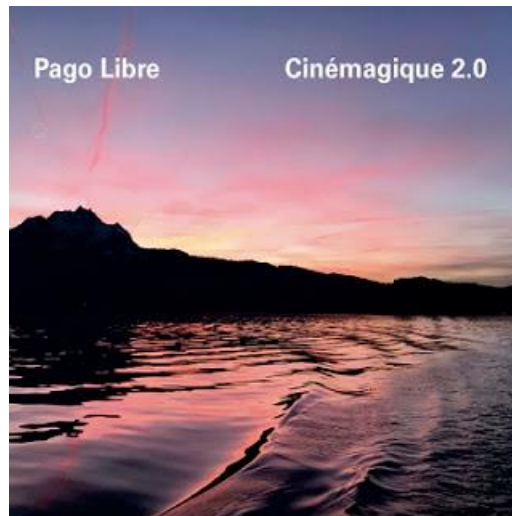


Mr. Stu's Record Room (San Francisco, USA), July 23, 2020

Pago Libre: Cinématique 2.0 & platzDADA!!



The intertwined history of music and the cinema is a vast, complex topic. Back in 2000, the international quartet known as **Pago Libre** recorded an album for the Swiss TCB label that they called *Cinématique*. Now reissued as ***Cinématique 2.0***, two short tracks from the original disc have been removed and three compatible bonus tracks from a 2004 concert recording have been added in a resequenced and remastered edition that also includes a booklet with brief notes for the tracks, an appreciation of the album that appeared in the All Music Guide, a band discography, and photos from the quartet's 30 years of activity.

Subtitled ***Sixteen Soundtracks for an Imaginary Cinema***, the set includes compositions from all members of the group, usually alone but sometimes in collaboration. The CD also features an arrangement by pianist John Wolf Brennan of music by Erik Satie (the evocative ***Entr'acte: Le Tango d'E.S.***) and a lovingly straight-forward adaptation of a Brahms lullaby by *Tscho Theissing*, the group's violinist. One high point among many is Arkady Shilkloper's ***Folk Song***, which features some vigorous solo work by violinist Theissing. It's characterized by Brennan as "a marriage of Ireland and Moldavia."

The pianist's ***Suonatina***, which he describes as "a little flirt with the classical sonata form," is another standout piece, with delicate and beautifully balance playing by the ensemble. Brennan's descriptive liner notes lead off with this quote from the great director Alfred Hitchcock: "We try to tell a good story and develop a hefty plot. Themes emerge as we go along." I can't think of a better way to conceptualize what these improvisers are up to. The quartet makes delicious music for headphone listening. You can concentrate on the deft interplay of the quartet while you conjure up cinematic images to go along with the music.

Pago Libre's basic instrumentation of Shilkloper's horn, Theissing's violin, Brennan's piano, and Daniele Patumi on bass (replaced by Georg Breinschmid on the live tracks) allows the music to go in any direction at all, and they frequently surprise the listener by taking the non-obvious path. Echoes of jazz, classical music, folk songs, bits of and much more coalesce in this long-running ensemble's unique vision and deep-seated commitment to free expression, while having plenty of fun along the way. Musical magic indeed!



These days, Switzerland is widely known for its political neutrality, breathtaking scenery, chocolate, and clocks. But let's not forget that the world-changing art movement known as Dada started at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1916. The members of the **Pago Libre Sextet** certainly haven't forgotten, and they also recall that Vladimir Ilych Lenin lived across the street. If you Google the word 'dada,' you'll get something like 248 million hits, but I think that all you'll need to gain an understanding of dada is to press play on **platzDADA!!** This set was originally issued in 2008 by Christoph Merian Verlag in Basel, now remastered and reissued on Leo Records, home for many of Pago Libre's projects.

Dada, at the start, was as much an verbal art as a visual one, thanks to contributions by memorable individuals like Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters, and Tristan Tzara. Arp and Schwitters are the main sources of the poems on **platzDADA!!**, along with original bits of nonsense by pianist John Wolf Brennan, bassist Georg Breinschmid, and Russian poet Danil Charms. To set the scene, the lengthy CD opens with **Breakfast at Vladimir Ilych**, a sort of dramatization of Lenin taking a phone call at home.

From there, the sextet plunges into **Dadábylon**, written by the band, followed closely by the title track, the first of the Hans Arp settings with music by Brennan. The enclosed booklet includes all the texts and their sources, plus notes on the poets and a few reviews from 2008. Because of all the nonsensical verbiage and widely varied musical settings, this is actually quite a funny disc, but in its relentless cacophony of voices and instruments, it also works as a way to clear the room. Anybody who stays for the whole thing will have one hell of a good time. Dada lives!!

Stuart Kremsky, San Francisco/USA

Cinématique 2.0: **Leo CD LR 863**; Arkady Shilkloper (horn, flgh, alphorn on 7,11; alperidoo on 6; voice on 5,12) Tscho Theissing (vln; voice on 1,4,5,12,16) John Wolf Brennan (p, arcopiano & melodica on 7; voice on 5,12) Daniele Patumi (b, voice on 5,12) George Breinschmid (b on 14-16); Winterthur, Switzerland, April 2000, exc. 14-16, Feldkirch, Austria, 2004; 1.Enticing/ 2. A bout de souffle/ 3.Synopsis/ 4.Kissing Joy (as it flies)/ 5.Tikkettitakkitakk/ 6.Alperiduo/ 7. Nostalgia/8.Entr-acte: Le Tango d'E.S./ 9.Folk Song/ 10.Suonatina/ 11.Little Big Horn/ 12.Dance of Kara Ben Nemsi/ 13.Aimez-vous Brahms?/ 14.Tupti-Kulai/ 15.RMX/ 16.Rasenade Gnome; 73:44.

platzDADA!!: **Leo CD LR 887**; Arkady Shilkloper (horn, flgh, alphorn, vcl, ratchet) Tscho Theissing (vln, vcl, ratchet) John Wolf Brennan (p, vcl, ratchet; pizzicatopiano on *) Georg Breinschmid (b, vcl, ratchet) Patrice Héral (d, vcl, ratchet) Agnes Heginger (vcl, ratchet); Winterthur, Switzerland, May 2006 & October 2007, except for #, Lucerne, Switzerland, May 15, 2005; Breakfast at Vladimir Ilych/ Dadábylon/ platzDADA!!/ SinnDong/ Sankt Ziegenzack St. Fassanbass/ Die gestiefelten Sterne/ te gri ro ro/ Uhrmusik: Sekundenzeiger/ Weltwunder/ Wolkenpumpentango/ Schnauze, Puppe!/ ETANOSRU EUTONARS (Largo/ Rakete/ Durchführung/ Tillll, Jüü-Kaa? What a beauty!/
Schwittersgruoft)/ Die Welt/ ¿Nana?*/ Ich bin ein Schwein/ trains.plains/ Das fröhliche Greislein/ Drone Dance/ A klanes Brabitschek/ Schnickschnack#; 73:44. www.leorecords.com

