

Krzysztof Zgraja & Czesław Gładkowski – Alter Ego (1974)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Moment startu*
02. *Ballada*
03. *Temacik z wariacjami na bass solo*
04. *Polimetric 2AB*
05. *Scherzo 4x1*
06. *Akcenty Afro Kubańskie*
07. *Alter Ego*
08. *Folk Music for J.K.*
09. *Czwarty Wymiar*

Krzysztof Zgraja – flet (flute)

Czesław Gładkowski – kontrabas (double bass)

It is very difficult to estimate jazz that we find on this record, applying limited stylistic categories. The music composed and performed by Czesław Gładkowski and Krzysztof Zgraja probably will not satisfy expectations of orthodoxically oriented fans of “pure” jazz. After all, successive appearances of the duo at festivals where they won quite a number of prizes — often arouse controversies, It commonly happens to all phenomena that do not fit into mental “files”. Still, the two musicians descend from the broadly interpreted jazz traditions, treated here as an object of relation. Suitable musical education (Czesław Gładkowski is the graduate of the Theory Department of the Katowice School of Music, and Krzysztof Zgraja completed studies at the Instrumental and Composition Departments of the same school) built the foundation for far-away musical journeys into unexploited or hardly exploited territories.

The present record testifies the stage of development in which the duo achieved the most important aim: own world of creative ideas connected with original sound and conception of

collective playing. The combination of flute and double bass, in spite of lack of tradition, turned out to be extremely convincing and fruitful. The way to this aim, though not easy and simple, took them five years.

In some measure, it was the modern electronics used by the musicians that helped them; nevertheless they do not forget about the huge music potential that is traditionally inherent in bass and flute.

The two instrumentalists utilize both mainstream and free jazz experiences; they absorb also classical and avant-garde music heritage. They use their instruments in the way that was determined by history ("Little thema with variations"), and support them occasionally with the possibilities of the modern recording studio ("Departure time"), "Afro-cuban Accents" or "The 4th Dimension". Thanks to these tricks one may hear often not only a duo also a quartet or a quintet.

One cannot possibly ignore a very significant source of inspiration for the artists — that is folklore. Polish jazz so far has issued very few records that so evidently have preserved the spirit of Polish folk music — in spite of modern musical language. This folk influence, however, is not merely literary; take for example "Polimetric" or "Folkmusic". The only quotation on the record is the folk tune from the region of Kurpie, "Get ready my girl" in "Folkmusic". It is folklore that is common value for the record and makes it an integral unity.

The record that you are now presented will probably find also a response far outside hermetic jazz circles, for it is a document of broadly comprehended music tradition, that stands outside the border of the jazz expression.

The stream in which "black" and "white" culture elements meet is an inestimable value in the sphere of contemporary music. The echoes of the Third Stream hybrid died away long time ago. The music calls for the values that could be estimated only by means of musical experience, apart from conventions and prejudices.

In pieces of Gladkowski and Zgraja (the word "composition" is fully justified, for these pieces are composed in their general shape and later filled with improvisations) one meets an emotion controlled by intellect, expression fitted into frames of cold deliberation. Owing to this, the final

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effect is as rich as our reality. The world of “Alter ega” is different from our old habits, but no matter what feelings it may evoke, it will surely not leave you insensible. ---Roman Kowal, analogburners.com

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