April's Flowering - by Peter Margasak - Nowhere Street, 21/04/2026

Kaja Draksler's Poetic Imagination

One of my Prst listens to Berkson's new album happened in my kitchen, while I was cooking, so in my distraction I didn't notice when *Thee They Thy* ended and the next thing on my digital player began, an album which also featured vocals. At that moment the transition didn't hit me, but I soon realized that *Bare, Unfolding* (Zavod Sploh/Clean Feed), the recently released third album by the Kaja Draksler Octet, while quite di[erent musically, Pt nicely alongside Berkson. Draksler is one of my favorite pianists no matter what context she plays in, but her octet—in which she sets poetry to her own rigorous, ambitious writing—has never hit me with same immediacy as, say, the excellent Punkt.Vrt.Plastik, her trio with bassist Petter Eldh and drummer Christian Lillinger (a new album from the group is due this summer from Intakt). My slower connection to the octet music is always a bit strange, because in every case I've ended up falling for the music in a big way, and *Bare, Unfolding* is no exception. It's subtle, richly layered stu[with lots of internal tension and contrasting elements, and while my innate resistance to operatic singing might be part of the issue here, even that reticence has always fallen away. Draksler loves poetry and brings a heightened sensitivity to how she consistently situates borrowed texts, inventively creating music that Pts with the worlds as if it was conceived together. As with its predecessors, Draksler leads a superb band; vocalists Björk Níelsdóttir and Laura Polence, reedists Ada Rave and Ab Baars (who also plays the shakuhachi, an instrument that Pts the new album well), violinist/violist George Dumitriu, double bassist Lennart Heyndels, and drummer Onno Govaert. The octet's 2017 debut album drew upon poetry by Pablo Neruda, Andriana Minou, and Gregor Strniša, while its 2020 follow-up looked to the writing of Robert Frost. The new album turns back the hands of time four centuries, with Matsuo Basho.

https://petermargasak.substack.com/p/aprils-flowering

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Pesniška domišljija Kaje Draksler

Eden mojih prvih poslušanj Berksonovega novega albuma se je zgodil v moji kuhinji, medtem ko sem kuhal, zato zaradi svoje raztresenosti nisem opazil, kdaj se je *Thee They Thy* končal in se je na mojem digitalnem predvajalniku začelo nekaj naslednjega—album, ki je prav tako vključeval vokale. V tistem trenutku me prehod ni posebej presenetil, a sem kmalu ugotovil, da se *Bare, Unfolding* (Zavod Sploh/Clean Feed), nedavno izdani tretji album okteta Kaje Draksler, čeprav glasbeno precej drugačen, lepo prilega ob bok Berksonu.
Draksler je ena mojih najljubših pianistk ne glede na kontekst, v katerem nastopa, vendar me njen oktet—v katerem uglasbi poezijo v lastnih rigoroznih in ambicioznih kompozicijah—nikoli ni nagovoril s takojšnjo neposrednostjo, kot na primer odlični Punkt.Vrt.Plastik, njen trio z basistom Petterjem Eldhom in bobnarjem Christianom Lillingerjem (nov album te zasedbe bo letos poleti izšel pri založbi Intakt). Moja počasnejša povezava z glasbo okteta je vedno nekoliko nenavadna, saj sem v vsakem primeru na koncu glasbo vzljubil v veliki meri—*Bare, Unfolding* pa ni nobena izjema.
Gre za subtilno, bogato plasteno glasbo z veliko notranje napetosti in kontrastnih elementov; in čeprav je moja prirojena zadržanost do opernega petja morda del razloga za začetno distanco, ta zadržanost vedno sčasoma izgine. Draksler obožuje poezijo in kaže izjemno občutljivost pri tem, kako dosledno umešča prevzeta besedila ter iznajdljivo ustvarja glasbo, ki se z njimi ujema, kot da bi nastala skupaj z njimi.
Tako kot pri prejšnjih projektih Draksler vodi izvrstno zasedbo: vokalistki Björk Níelsdóttir in Laura Polence, pihalca Ada Rave in Ab Baars (ki igra tudi šakuhači, instrument, ki se novemu albumu zelo poda), violinist/violist George Dumitriu, kontrabasist Lennart Heyndels ter bobnar Onno Govaert.
Debitantski album okteta iz leta 2017 je črpal iz poezije Pabla Nerude, Andriane Minou in Gregorja Strniše, medtem ko se je nadaljevanje iz leta 2020 naslonilo na pisanje Roberta Frosta. Novi album pa se vrača štiri stoletja nazaj, k Matsuu Bashōju.