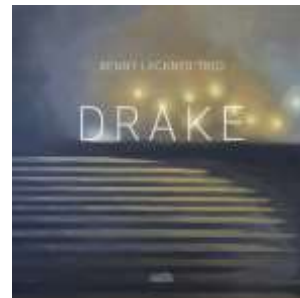




Benny Lackner Trio Drake



A Deeper Sense of Trust

Life on the road – Benny Lackner knows it all too well. Widely respected for his relentless touring, the pianist once performed 21 gigs on 21 subsequent days. At one point, however, he just yearned for a place to lay his hat. Drake, the 6th album of his trio, is about his search for a home and a place of refuge.

Published on a label he greatly appreciates, it is a record with a happy ending. When the band performed at the X-Jazz-Festival in 2016, there was suddenly an even deeper sense of trust between its members: "I hadn't seen Matthieu and Jerome in a while and everything felt completely relaxed," Benny remembers, "We weren't trying to prove ourselves or show off. All that mattered were the songs and awarding each melody enough space to fully resonate. That night, we solidified our sound as a unit." Soon enough, without any kind of pressure, the songs for the next studio album started to materialize.

Conceptually, parts of the new material deal with concrete events from Lackner's life, which he put to music in spontaneous bursts of creativity. "Rise to the Occasion", for example, was written in response to a variety of events, which forced him to excel beyond his personal limitations. Other songs were inspired by seemingly unspectacular triggers, such as "Good Stuff", which is based on a quote from comedy The Wedding Crashers.

With its unique blend of field recordings, drum loops and intricate improvisations, "Rise to the Occasion" has turned into something of a signature tune for Drake as a whole. It also perfectly summarizes the recognizable electro acoustic style of the band and its commitment to carving out the essence of their musical ideas: "When I'm on my own, I will occasionally come up with music that's overly complicated," Lackner admits, "Playing with the trio is an extremely grounding experience." One of the preferred techniques of his French colleagues and amateur chefs: Preparing a four course dinner on the evening leading up to a new recording session.

Drake also marks the end of a long journey for Lackner. At the age of 13, he moved from Germany to the USA with his parents, not to return to Berlin until he was 30. For many years, he lacked a clear center of gravity: "I felt at home in both places, I felt out of place in both places." For a while, he even had the members of his first trio flown in to Europe from the States for their gigs – which only served to deepen the inner divide.

Today, he wouldn't trade Berlin for any other place in the world. His firm roots are sure to be a great support. Now the album is released, it is only a matter of time before Lackner hits the road again.