

KATHARINA
ROSENBERGER

SHIFT

WASTELAND
WITH

RAGE THORBONES

An old composer once sat through an hour of new pieces by his pupils. At the end, he rose to his feet, spread his hands philosophically and said “Much to admire there . . .”, before quietly leaving the room. Admiration is a curious action and commodity. It implies surprise, or even wonder. The “note of admiration” is the ! that we drop into our writing to register those same feelings. Admiration is not the same as emotional involvement.

There is much to admire in Katharina Rosenberger’s music. She brings, always, a fresh or newly refreshed palette of instrumental sound. She creates structures that attract admiration for their improbable tensile strength – how does a piece like *modules* here – hold together? But this is not what makes the music special. Rosenberger does not invite us to sit and admire, and then, like the old composer (who is a real person, even though he remains anonymous) leave the room unmoved. Instead, she

invites us in. She involves the listener. This spreads chills to some hearts, fears that some kind of audience participation is to be called for. The miracle of Rosenberger’s approach is that the involvement comes entirely through the openness of the music itself, but also in the way her ensemble is conceived.

Exquisitely interpreted by the superb musicians of Los Angeles based waste-LAnd and maddeningly innovative and virtuosic RAGE THORBONES, every one of these pieces involves spatialization to some degree. The featured musicians on *SHIFT* are required to move through the sonic space. Rosenberger draws very strongly on the 16th century practice of *chori spazzati* in order to create musical environments in which the score is not simply a linear development but a kinetic form, surrounding the listener (literally in the case of *modules* and with a strong implication of coming

to us through long, almost geological time, on *Gesang an das noch namenlose Land*). On *SHIFT*, she makes the movements of the two trombonists reflect not just the three-dimensional activity of Rafael Soto's sculpturesque painting *Vibración casi inmaterial* but also the presence of the painter himself, whose speaking voice is represented and carried by the two extraordinary soloists, trombonists Matt Barbier and Weston Olencki, who are the protagonists of the piece. Their audible physical moments, reflected as well in the improvisatory interludes, are the embodiment of Soto in the work, affirming his real presence. Many musical works have been thirled to painting or sculpture, either in the form of installation, commentary or meta-text. Rosenberger's *Gesang . . .* is a collaboration that involves cartography and early travel writing, that of Amerigo Vespucci, still the least understood and celebrated of the great explorers. It was made in collaboration with artist Abdolreza

Aminlari, in the form of delicate embroidered panels based on the maps of Martin Waldseemüller, which were in turn inspired by the writings of Vespucci. The deep influence, though, is the poetry of Pablo Neruda, whose voice seems to take on a continental depth and breadth in *Canto general*, his tenth and perhaps greatest volume of poems, a decade in the making and published in 1950. In *modules* Rosenberger brings an openness of regard to the process of composition, distributing her players in such a way that every audience member has his/her own perspective on the ensemble (true of a conventional orchestral concert, too, but seldom remarked) and a very immediate and physical sense of the music as a process of change and variation. This is a jazz value, though not a fixed or inevitable one. The repetitions and variations one hears, or rather senses, in *SHIFT* are very like the geological upswellings of a semi-familiar theme in a long improvisation. They

remind us what is under the surface. Rosenberger describes walking back and forth in front of Soto's great painting-construction, moving at different speeds, pausing or retracing at different points. We are rarely given an opportunity to experience music in this way. The recording is immaculate and very detailed, but one doesn't have to find ways to split the signal and recreate the exact positioning of the players. The sense of movement is in the music itself.

The music *enacts* and realises mobility. Even without being consciously aware of its pre-texts and contexts, whether these are a specific kinetic painting, as an obscure pre-Columbian flute melody in *Gesang*... suggesting deep historical time, or a physical installation as in *modules*, these pieces draw in the listener. Each is a sonic environment, a utopic or virtual space in which the physical dimensions, temperatures, textures and vectors of travel are all dictated by sound. Much music written for an installation loses

half its rationale when separated from the context. Rosenberger's music, by contrast, creates its own environments. They are all the intellectually richer for revealing their inspirations in art and cartography, but they do not depend on those narratives for their success, which is why what you are holding in your hand is such an exciting recording. This really is, as the label has it, music with its ear to the future.

Brian Morton, November 2016

Thank you! Whether this is your first recording from Hat Hut Records, or your Xth, we want you to know how proud we are to have you as a member of our growing world-wide community of listeners. We hope that you enjoy this recording, it represents our constant aim to bring you the music of the future to discover. What you hear is what you hear.

Werner X. Uehlinger

There is much to admire in Katharina Rosenberger's music. She brings, always, a fresh or newly refreshed palette of instrumental sound. She creates structures that attract admiration for their improbable tensile strength – how does a piece like modules here – hold together? But this is not what makes the music special. Rosenberger does not invite us to sit and admire, and then, like the old composer (who is a real person, even though he remains anonymous) leave the room unmoved. Instead, she invites us in. She involves the listener. *Brian Morton*

KATHARINA ROSENBERGER (1971)

SHIFT

First recordings by
wasteLAND
with RAGE THORBONES

Michael Matsuno, *flutes*; Claire Chenette, *oboe*; Brian Walsh, *clarinets/tenor saxophone*;
Justin DeHart, *percussion*; Richard Valitutto, *piano*; Mark Menzies, *violin/viola*; Andrew Tholl, *violin*;
Linnea Powell, *viola*; Ashley Walters, *violin/cello*; Scott Worthington, *contrabass*;
Nicholas Deyoe, *e-guitar, conductor*

RAGE THORBONES: Matt Barbier, *trombone*, Weston Olencki, *trombone*

1. *speed sputter (improvisation) for two trombones* (2016) 1:35
2. *SHIFT for two trombones and ensemble* (2014) 18:43
3. *flutter gust (improvisation) for two trombones* (2016) 0:42
4. *Gesang an das noch namenlose Land for string trio* (2013) 19:48
5. *RESHIFT 011516-3 for two trombones* (2016) 2:10
6. *wafts & drifts (improvisation) for two trombones* (2016) 1:10
7. *modules for amplified quartet and effect pedals* (2015) 13:11
8. *postlude (improvisation) for e-guitar* (2016) 1:50

ISRC CH 130.1600750 to ISRC CH 130.1600757

Total Time DDD ²⁴Bit 59:15

Recorded: January 14 & 15 and March 6, 2016, Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, University of California San Diego, USA; Tom Erbe – recording supervision, Andrew Munsey – sound engineer and editor; Andreas Werner – mixdown and mastering; CD-master by Peter Pfister; Liner notes by Brian Morton; Produced by Katharina Rosenberger; Executive production by Christian C. Dalucas, Bernhard "Benne" Vischer & Werner X. Uehlinger.

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Mantra
hat(now)ART 190

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Ludwig van Beethoven
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Bass Works
hat(now)ART 197

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Patterns In A
Chromatic Field
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KATHARINA ROSENBERGER · SHIFT