

Roland Dahinden Hildegard Kleeb Stonès



Stones

The music of Roland Dahinden and Hildegard Kleeb has grown from a combination of individual virtuosity, a shared life, a special environment and the gradual mutation and transformation of things in time. *Stones* is the expression of all of those things as well as a very special musical conception that generates different patterns, cycling forwards and backwards, inwardly and outwardly.

Dahinden and Kleeb have worked together on a variety of projects for decades, including performances of music by Cage and Feldman and work with

Anthony Braxton; they've also created the remarkable collage composition *Anthony Braxton (+ Duke Ellington): Concept of Freedom* (hatOLOGY). The duo itself, however, only emerged on record with the revelatory 2012 release *Recall Pollock* (Leo Records), a merging of lines in homage to history's greatest line thrower. The duo music and its special quality are a direct consequence of Dahinden and Kleeb's relationship and environment. "Hildegard and I," says Dahinden, "have played together for about 30 years, living together and having a family together. There are all aspects of our life in the music. We have a level of communication which is quite particular, one that can only develop over a very long time playing together.

"As a musician couple, I hear Hildegard's daily practicing, searching for new musical structures, lines, series of chords, clusters—so I get an inside 'look' already into her research and solo practicing which influences the duo music. Having this inside knowledge or 'look' is extremely fruitful and differs from all other projects and bands that we work with. This works on both sides, of course—piano to trombone and trombone to piano. All morning we do nothing but practice our instruments, and since our studios are not fully soundproof we're living with the sound of each other."

That musical practice is intimately connected with the rocky themes of this CD. "We have an Alpine hide-out," Dahinden continues, "a wooden box on the Alp Gitschenen in the central part of Switzerland. It's a wooden house in the mountains with a workshop. The rocky landscape is very inspiring for us. We love being there, watching the stone walls, the mountains, the stone fields, the erratic blocks of stone, the rubblestone, the boulders—their size, structures, cracks; their smell, their power, their energy; the way the light is reflected on the rocks, how rain and snowfall change their look, and how the stones shimmer when the sun comes out after rain or snowfall. So it can be poetic but also archaic at the same time.

“So we have all the years of living in a stony, rocky region in us, all the inner images of observing the landscape, from our wooden box, eating outside, doing nothing but watching and listening to the stones, from many hikes in the rocky parts of the Alps. This all forms an understanding that is not so easy for us to describe, but in the music it’s easier for us. So the stones and rocks exist and we carry them in our inner images with us. This is our inspiration, from there comes the music.”

The music heard here is free improvisation but it’s rooted in conceptual and spatial structures in which Dahinden and Kleeb work through a cycle of patterns rooted in the perception of stones. Roland describes the “three different kinds of basic identities: territory, trajectory and stones. Each identity focuses on the same subject matter. The connection between all three identities is the immediate presence of stones.

“THE TERRITORIES are stone chippings or pile of rocks and the structures and density that come with them. *THE TRAJECTORIES* each consist of the textures of a single rock. Their lines can be worn or blurred, but they can also be clearer. *THE STONES* are inspired by Japanese art, their garden culture and the Zen Buddhist stone gardens. These pieces are somehow the result of our preparation for a trip to Japan.



“FLYING WHITE is like a flower painted with ink on Japanese paper. It takes its name from a special brush technique that leaves behind ribbon-like wide lines, giving an impression of jumping or leaping on the paper surface without losing contact with it. *Flying white* is like a butterfly in the middle of the recording, structuring all the tracks in a kind of mirrored way.”

At the core of the music, the duo of Dahinden and Kleeb conduct a kind of conversation, often a rapid exchange of musical material that bears the marks of their individual personalities and what they share, evident in the shaping of the “Territory” and “Trajectory” pieces. Each musician is precise, but precise in a unique way; each is witty, but it is Dahinden or Kleeb’s own wit. There is, for example, “Territory 2” in which the stacking of notes like stones goes on at such a rate that one awaits the collapse, but the ascendant figures insistently pile up. Along the way, Dahinden’s muted utterances embrace, encapsulate and extend the vocal tradition of jazz trombone from New Orleans and Duke Ellington’s trombonist Tricky Sam Nanton to the present and beyond, adding wild, twisting, upper-register squeals to the repertoire, while Kleeb shadows then leads, the dialogue a constant give and take, until the piano erupts into pin-wheel ascending clusters. The same shadowing process takes on an utterly different aspect in “Territory 3” in which the muffled trombone sound seems to haunt the piano’s lower register.

There is also a kind of absolute definition in the way each hits a note, a kind of certified weight and balance to each sound uttered or struck. It's immediately apparent, and it gives continuous form to the kinetic tumble of sound. There is a kind of molecular consciousness at work in this improvisation, the tiniest particles of sound and meaning resonating with one another. The initial sign of that transformative consciousness here is velocity, the rate at which musical ideas find form. There are responsorial patterns and extensions exchanged here between Dahinden and Kleeb that blur notions of an "original" phrase or idea and an appropriate response, instead suggesting a conceptual unison. At times the music reaches speeds that suggest a kind of automatic activity. In a dialogue like "Territory 1" or "Territory 4," the beginning and end of the suite, the instruments seem to be playing each other. It's a miracle of transference and one in which we are granted an equal part, witnesses to a series of transformations, of personality, of spirit, and of matter. The internal tempos are generated by the nanosecond fractures of time and take in silences as well as sounds. Like some other great improvisers, Dahinden and Kleeb have learned that silences can appear even faster, richer, denser, than sounds.

It is a principle of molecular velocity—the notion of accelerating particles—that links this music to all things, including that which would appear most distant, most inert, that is, *stones*. What emerges from these reflections is a sense of the profound relationship between specifics of time and space and the elemental landscape in which Roland and

Hildegard have developed their art. It's elemental here in the very sense that it's focused on the materiality of the earth, a relationship between human consciousness and the implicit consciousness of inert matter, the special and spectral being of rock, witness to the eons and a particularly dense medium that here leavens consciousness and is in turn leavened by consciousness. This rocky space, these literal stones, are subject to transformation, to an alchemy of mind and technique.

Velocity is the instrument that here transforms the physical to the metaphysical, which in turn marks the transformation of time—*The Territories* and *The Trajectories*—into the space of the pieces called *Stones*, in which Dahinden and Kleeb create designs in space, evoking Zen gardens and calligraphy. From "Stones 1" the sounds of piano and trombone mutate into each other, the piano muffled into a voice, their sounds together an incipient *word*, pronouncing *gravity* so that it becomes magical.

These are miracles of consciousness and matter, of transformation and levitation, the lightness of mind applied to the problem of moving mass, rock and piano and trombone, the stone from which comes the metal of the trombone and the piano harp and strings, and too the incidental cymbals a monastery bell in "Stones 1" and "4." In the process of reflection these things become other, one another and other still, the breath of air that first animates the trombone, the air in which the piano seems to vibrate, these things brought about by both velocity and gravity, the contradictory forces cycling through the work.

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Roland Dahinden Hildegard Kleeb Stones

Roland Dahinden *trombone*
Hildegard Kleeb *piano*

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Trajectory 2 | 4:03 |
| | ISRC 131.1601448 | |
| 2 | Stones 1 | 6:01 |
| | ISRC 131.1601449 | |
| 3 | Territory 2 | 4:17 |
| | ISRC 131.1601450 | |
| 4 | Flying White | 3:58 |
| | ISRC 131.1601451 | |
| 5 | Trajectory 3 | 3:46 |
| | ISRC 131.1601452 | |
| 6 | Territory 3 | 2:51 |
| | ISRC 131.1601453 | |
| 7 | Stones 3 | 5:24 |
| | ISRC 131.1601454 | |
| 8 | Trajectory 4 | 5:07 |
| | ISRC 131.1601455 | |
| 9 | Stones 4 | 5:06 |
| | ISRC 131.1601456 | |
| 10 | Territory 4 | 5:37 |
| | ISRC 131.1601457 | |

Total Time DDD ²⁴Bit

46:16

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Roland Dahinden plays a trombone made by Winfried Rapp.

Hildegard Kleeb plays a Steinway D piano tuned by Urs Bachmann.

Dahinden-Kleeb have lived and worked together for about 30 years. They focus on Improvised Music/Jazz and on the interpretation of New Music/Contemporary Music.

www.roland-dahinden.ch
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Unterstützt vom
Kanton Zug

hat
LOGY

Albert Ayler Quartet
European Radio Studio
Recordings 1964
hatOLOGY 678

Anthony Braxton
Quartet (Santa Cruz) 1993
2nd set
hatOLOGY 714

Cecil Taylor
Garden - 2nd set
hatOLOGY 720

Uwe Oberg
Work
hatOLOGY 740

Ellery Eskelin
Trio Willisau - Live
hatOLOGY 741



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