Marcin Wasilewski Trio with Joakim Milder - Spark of Life (2015)



1. Sudovian Dance 2. Message in a bottle 3. Largo 4. Night train to you 5. Spark of Life
Marcin Wasilewski - piano Slawomir Kurkiewicz - double bass Michal Miskiewicz - drums
Joakim Milder - tenor saxophone Recorded at Tollhaus, Karlsruhe, on January 15, 2015

Two decades on, Marcin Wasilewski's Polish piano trio shakes things up by inviting a guest into the fold, Swedish tenor saxophonist Joakim Milder, best known for his work with shared mentor Tomasz Stanko. But perhaps "shakes things up" is overstating the case, as Wasilewski and his compatriots habitually roll out one stately, even-tempered melody after the next, giving each plenty of simmer time before ultimately coming out the other side, regardless of what happens along the way, without having broken a sweat. (This is an ECM record, after all.)

What's odd but laudable is just how little Milder seems to affect the trio's overall process even while undeniably adding dimension. His own compositional contribution, "Still," is a case in point: The core trio is locked from the launch into a simple, repetitive acoustic groove when Milder begins to blow about a half-minute in. Almost as if they don't notice he's there, Wasilewski and the rhythm section—double bassist Slawomir Kurkiewicz and drummer Michal Miskiewicz—just keep doing what they've been doing. A full two minutes of gentle but hardy sax soloing passes before the pianist decides it's time to try another fork in the road. Milder lays back and the others ride a while, but in the end they all return to where they started.

If that suggests something a bit on the turgid side, it's really not; this quartet is so skilled at navigating its subtle transgressions that they rope you into their world effortlessly. Still, some real shaking it up would have been welcome: One of a few strange-bedfellow covers, the Police's "Message in a Bottle" (others come from Herbie Hancock and Polanski's Rosemary's Baby), kicks things up considerably when Kurkiewicz's momentum-seeking solo inspires Wasilewski and Miskiewicz to push the velocity too. As grand as those other unruffled tunes

are, a little more of the old razzle-dazzle would've given Spark of Life more spark. ---Jeff Tamarkin, jazztimes.com

Najnowszy album "Spark Of Life" polscy jazzmani zrealizowali z gościnnym udziałem szwedzkiego tenorzysty Joakima Mildera, z którym pojawili się na koncertach podczas jesiennej części polskiej trasy koncertowej. Zaledwie po sześciu tygodniach od premiery album uzyskał w Polsce status "Złotej Płyty". ---nck.pl

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