Tomasz Stanko - Polin (2014)



1 Gela 7:30 2 Yankiel's Lid 9:02 3 Margolit L. 7:32 4 Polin 5:55 5 The Street Of Crocodiles 7:28 Double Bass – Dezron Douglas Drums – Kush Abadey Piano – David Virelles Saxophone – Ravi Coltrane Trumpet, Composed By – Tomasz Stańko

I spent bigger part of my life in regions influenced by Slavic culture(all - Eastern,Western and Southern Slavs)and as result together with deep understanding what it is learned one thing - how much I hate that over-exalting "Slavic spirituality". That sweet-and-sour dreamy sadness with no reason,painful melancholy,anxiety,continuing awaiting of something what probably happens (combined with intuitive knowledge that nothing really happens ever)... Some strangers even see it attractive but it only means they never lived aside of that twilight zone of irrationality, fatalism and sensual mysticism.Just get me right - I mean exactly overdosed spiritual sensuality which is far different from Slavic culture in whole.

Trumpeter Tomasz Stanko is with no doubt leading Polish jazz musician and probably one of the best European jazz trumpeter. His international fame came mostly after ECM contracted him, soon he became label's trade mark and leading voice (personally I really like his early adventurous albums coming from early 70s; they are mostly released domestically in Poland and are almost unknown abroad). Success of his music comes from his great, quite free Miles Davis post-bop period influenced techniques combined with strong European chamber tradition and above mentioned "Slavic soul". On his best albums Tomasz finds only his own unique proportions between all three components making music close to masterpiece. On not so successful recordings he loses that balance and magic almost disappears.

Being a real fan of Stanko's early albums,I'm quite critical towards many his ECM releases - all of them are technically perfect, but far not every is real musical joy.Some Stanko most current releases were all quite disappointment (knowing how great music he can play), probably with

"Wislawa" being a real disaster. Stanko reclocated to New York from native Poland and formed his New York quartet with really great local artists (incl, pianist David Virelles and drummer Gerald Cleaver, plus ECM bassist Thomas Morgan). New collective debut work (released on ECM in 2013) is dedicated to late Polish poet and Nobel Laureate Wisława Szymborska. Working with lyrical,soulful and very Slavic material Tomasz recorded studio double-CD album with American band who simply didn't find right place in all that sensitive balladry.

Next on line Stanko album came on the last days of 2014 and was full of surprises. First of all, it was released by Museum Of The History Of Polish Jews (being their first ever musical release). It's not a first Stanko work of such kind - one of his albums ("Wolność w sierpniu")has been already released in co-operation with Warsaw Uprising Museum some years ago. Than,being recorded in New York,in Sear Sound Studio, it is free from ECM high but very predictable sound standard.And at the end - Stanko seriously reformed his American quartet for this recording: only Cuban pianist David Virelles stays from his classic New York Quartet, new rhythm section contains Dezron Douglas on bass and drummer Kush Abadey, plus all team is improved with sax man Ravi Coltrane (alternatively,all quintet could be seen as Tomasz Stanko plus new Ravi Coltrane quartet with different drummer - quartet's original drummer is Johnathan Blake)

So, I listen this new album again and again and the main bad thing here is how short it is!Less than 38-minutes long - that's quite a common size for old vinyl but in digital age we are often expecting at not less than twice more. And the music - it's excellent! For the first time ever Stanko plays real groovy jazz with all-American band! Sound is full,warm and tasteful(and here one can ensure how different some ECM artists sound when their music is recorded without that drug-store sterility in sound). Stanko demonstrates excellent collection of catchy tunes - rare event in modern jazz, and surprisingly enough he plays here one of his most straight music for years. If on European releases his freer digressions were all blood of his music, here he somehow founded a right decision - he plays tuneful,groovy post-bop without useless embellishment and it works perfectly.

Since all album is dedicated to holocaust theme ("Polin" means "Poland" in Hebrew) it contains some ballad-like elements and chamber moments,but in all it's a small magic how Tomasz(generally known by his sensitive tunes and melancholic compositions)avoids sentimental melancholy or even dramatic notes here. Muscular and lively,this music sounds more like a hymn to life.

The only sad news is it's announced that album will be distributed by Museum direct sales only so I afraid such a great work will stay unnoticed by many listeners. If by any chance you'll find "Polin" - don't have any doubts,it's Stanko at his very best. ---snobb, jazzmusicarchives.com

Pięcioczęściowa suita Tomasza Stańki odnosi się do wspólnej historii Polaków i Żydów. Zaprezentowana podczas otwarcia wystawy stałej Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich „Polin" kompozycja już na poziomie tytułów odnosi się do Jankiela czy Schulzowskiej ulicy Krokodyli. W warstwie muzycznej Stańko zaskakuje, zapraszając do składu saksofonistę. Dźwiękom jego trąbki towarzyszą więc partie grane przez syna Johna Coltrane'a – Raviego. Kwintet uzupełnia znany z płyty Wisława pianista David Virelles oraz sekcja rytmiczna w składzie Dezron Douglas (kontrabas) i Kush Abadey (perkusja).

28 października 2014 roku – w dniu uroczystego otwarcia ekspozycji stałej Muzeum, swoją premierę miała suita zatytułowana „Polin". Podczas koncertu w muzeum Stańko powiedział: „Od 1000 lat splatają się nasze losy. To jest nasza wspólna ziemia. Naszym obowiązkiem jest, by nasze relacje były piękne i tworzyły kreatywne wartości i idee." ---ninateka.pl

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