

ENJOY JAZZ: Trio of the pianist Nikolas Anadolis in Heidelberg

Joy of Playing and Horn of Plenty of Ideas

By Matthias Spindler

The young man from Greece, just barely past twenty, doesn't exactly appear worldly. As awkward as his body language are also his announcements, interspersed with shy smiles and formulated in seemingly clumsy English, even though he studied in the USA. But all that is forgotten, as soon as Nikolas Anadolis grips the keys of the grand piano.

He begins pensively contemplative as earlier Bill Evans, who surely must have been his great example in Jazz, together with Keith Jarrett, whose rapturously rising hymnody is sounding through at another moment. They remain episodes, familiar ideas lighting up, in a stunning flood of improvisational ideas, which the pianist in both concert halves after usually restrained beginnings allows to flow increasingly generously and therewith ever more intensely and compellingly.

Preference for High Registers

One knows such unleashed, continuously increasing joy of playing from predecessors like Oscar Peterson. But the stylistic perspective of Anadolis is far more comprehensive, includes techniques of free jazz as well as "classical" reminiscences – several of his less wildly shaped pieces reminds of romantic piano music of the 19th century.

With that fits a preference for the highest regions of the keyboard, in which the bells downright tingle: Proof of a soul searching for harmony, which however in the next moment makes the lowest basstones roar, with a strong left hand, which effortlessly can take over the melodic conduct from the right hand or stand up to it contrapuntally.

When a pianist empties his horn of plenty of ideas to such an extent, there is a danger that his companions will go down in it. Not so Jonas Burgwinkel: The German drum-ace disposes of a similar sprawling sound imagination on drums, cymbals and a whole lot of additional gear, and above all is tremendously quick in response. Almost sorry one felt for the Frenchman Simon Tailleu on double bass, who nevertheless could distinguish himself in two terrific walking-bass soli.

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