

“Two cuts, one studio, one live, recorded in 2008 and 2009 respectively, by this very interesting trio: Krebs (prepared guitar, objects, tapes, mixing desk), Caddy (cello) and Mayas (piano). While I'm far more familiar with the work of Krebs than that of the others (though I've seen both perform), it's safe to say that the music fall into an area in which fans of the former will feel at home. The 10-minute first track, "Sands" contains all but unpredictable variations in almost every conceivable musical aspect--volume, density, timbres, much else. Quite rich, very compact, Caddy's deep arco gluing together the more far flung escapades of the others.

The 26 minutes of track two, "Shore", is far more expansive, event-packed but airier and spacious. The trio functions as just that, seamless, each element fitting--Krebs' taped snatches of voice, Caddy's scrapes and plucks, Mayas' inside piano work. There's a tidal feel, a soft ebb and flow that is entirely satisfying. It's simply one very strong improv session, solid and gracefully awkward.”

Brian Olewnick, Just Outside

“Here we find three women from the improvised music scene: Annette Krebs (prepared guitar, objects, tapes, mixing desk), Anthea Caddy (cello) and Magda Mayas on piano. One ten minute piece from 2008 and a twenty-six minute piece from 2009. Improvised music of some refined nature. Piano and cello stay natural, scraping, scratching, plink and plonk, but it's Krebs's contributions that lift this up into a more abstract work, using sounds of spoken words from her tapes. The two pieces are vibrant, dwelling on improvised pieces on their acoustic instruments, as well as electro-acoustic sounds, bouncing from very soft to quiet loud, although it's never noise or full-on immersive sound. The trio piece seems a bit 'fuller' to me, but at the same time, at times, more empty, when it comes to silence. But there's never a dull moment; as a listener you always stay focused on what's happening next. Great CD!”

Frans de Waard, Vital Weekly

“Thread features two contrasting tracks by the Berlin-based threesome of guitarist Annette Krebs, cellist Anthea Caddy and pianist Magda Mayas. "Sands"—the shorter of the two at under ten minutes—was studio-recorded in Berlin in 2008, while the 26-minute "Shore" was recorded live in concert in Boston in 2009. Despite their differences, the two tracks are similar enough to fit together well, giving a clear and consistent picture of the trio's music. Before the three came together, Mayas and Caddy played together as a duo—as heard on the fine Schatten (Dromos, 2011)—and so, too, did Krebs and Caddy. Consequently, the three sound familiar and comfortable with each others' playing.

Throughout Thread, as on that Dromos duo, Mayas plays her usual combination of inside and outside piano, while Caddy similarly extracts the instrument's full range of sounds from her cello; both play acoustically with no use of electronics... although each can occasionally produce sounds that could be electronically generated. Of the three, Krebs is the joker in the pack, the one who makes greatest use of electronics and whose sounds most color the album. Typically, she makes extensive use of taped sound samples, most notably random snatches of recorded speech, which add a surreal edge to proceedings.

Krebs uses those voices sparingly on the studio-recorded track, which is a paradigm of trio improvisation. The music circulates around between the three, each in turn taking the lead, with dramatic variations in volume and attack. They are all adept at finding appropriate sounds to create tension and then to release it, giving the whole piece an episodic feel as well as a pleasing sense of ebb and flow.

The transition to the live recording is an easy one; the 2008 track could almost have been designed as a prelude to the 2009 one. The characteristics of the shorter track are replicated in the longer one, with the proviso that the recorded speech tends to be more dominant—no bad thing, as it gives the piece a recurring theme running through it. Throughout, interactions between Krebs' electronics and the two acoustic instruments are well-judged and dramatic, their contrasts highlighting all three to good effect. Although the album runs for just under thirty-six

minutes altogether, by the end it feels far longer—long enough to give a satisfying feeling of completeness and closure.”

John Eyles, *All About Jazz*

“Thread shares Atto's similarly rapid sense of movement, and is also a multi-movement piece ("Sand" acting as a prelude to the much longer "Shore"), conjuring now-lost worlds of musique concrète, an allusion further fostered by frequent insertions of recorded speech fragments. Further comparisons could be drawn to Cage's Imaginary Landscape series, where pointillistic radio transmissions were also a key element. Dynamic range is a crucial element here – an ensemble swell can give way, dizzily and without notice, to near silence – and the trio often sounds larger than it is, given the extraordinary array of timbres at each player's fingertips. Caddy's cello and Krebs' electronics form a particularly felicitous unity, one often picking up a phrase the other began, all against the seemingly limitless sounds emanating from Mayas' piano.”

Marc Medwin, *Paris Transatlantic*

“And so to the last of the four recent releases from Another Timbre. (If you only counted four reviews here, I wrote about the Osvaldo Collucino disc for the Wire) I say this every time I know, but this might again be my favourite batch of discs from AT yet, four beautiful discs each with a sense of real purpose. The label is firing on all cylinders right now. This last release then is a trio recording of three Berlin based musicians, the cellist Anthea Caddy, pianist Magda Mayas and prepared guitar/tapes/objects etcist Annette Krebs. The album, named Thread, contains two tracks, a studio recording from 2008 lasting a little under ten minutes and a live recording from a year later lasting almost three times as long.

The music that these three excellent musicians make together is quite hard to describe. It is often very quiet, disappearing into silence, but then it also conveys a persistent feeling of twisted, wrenching violence quite often. It isn't what I would call minimal, but then its also quite simple. As I say, its a tough one to describe. From the outset we get a strong indication of how the music will progress. The opening of Sands starts with blunted prepared piano notes, sinetones and crunchy, grinding cello strings that go from soft to a sudden loud crescendo in just a few seconds before cutting dead, presumably via some cute post-production, only to build again a few seconds later. This pattern follows through all of the opening track and certainly informs the live recording that follows. Mayas works in equal parts with the strings inside the piano and strikes to the keys, crafting much of the beauty in this album, as Caddy leans towards gritty abrasions and deep, insistent arcs and Krebs mixes amplified abstractions with her trademark little clips of spoken voices (including that now very familiar “jazz wars” sample).

The little sections of sound that the music is broken up into are each like like miniatures constructed apart from one another, individual tussles involving all three musicians, a bit like (and I swear this metaphor is not meant to be sexist) the way cats fight, growling in near silence as they tense up, before diving into sudden blasts of flying fur that last just seconds before they pull apart and start over again. This stop/start mechanic appears much more in the opening Sands than it does the following Shore, but clearly the live performance together is informed by the studio work, and while the splits between events are not quite so clean the sensation of the music existing in fits and starts rather than the more familiar flow of improvised music is there. As I say, this is hard music to describe, and if I hear torsion and tension in this trio's output maybe others will hear harmony, such is its elusiveness and very individual character. Fine music then, improvisation just how I like it.”

Richard Pinnell, *The Watchful Ear*

“Premier disque d'une nouvelle série de quatre œuvres publiées label anglais Another Timbre, Thread est une suite de deux improvisations interprétées par trois grandes créatrices des musiques nouvelles et improvisées: Annette Krebs à la guitare préparée, aux objets, cassettes, radio et table de mixage, Anthea Caddy au violoncelle, et Magda Mayas au piano.

Durant ces deux pièces enregistrées en studio et en live, les cordes de chacune dialoguent, s'emmêlent et s'opposent au gré de textures souvent surprenantes, très denses, fraîches et riches. Au premier plan se trouve certainement la créativité d'Annette Krebs qui multiplie les interventions radiophoniques, les larsens et sinusoïdes, les crépitements et grésillements de micro-contacts aussi bien que les frottements d'objets divers et dérivés. Au premier plan car elle est celle qui joue le plus et souvent le plus fort, ce qui fait de ses interventions une sorte de trame sur laquelle se greffe ses deux collaboratrices (même si elle est régulièrement et admirablement capable de répondre et d'interagir avec ces dernières à maintes reprises). A ses côtés, on peine parfois à entendre et encore plus à reconnaître le violoncelle d'Anthea Caddy qui se charge souvent de créer du relief à ces textures en torturant ses cordes en courts glissandos rauques et violents, en frottant le bois, ou encore en produisant de fines et filigranées harmoniques. Seule Magda Mayas parvient peut-être à rester identifiable malgré l'étendue des techniques utilisées et les quelques préparations du piano; un jeu magnifique aux teintes multiples: profondes, grasses, mélodiques, rythmiques, métalliques, éthérées, selon les textures dans lesquelles elle s'insère. Si AC forme le relief de ces textures, MM produit quant à elle une sorte d'ambiance aussi discrète que riche, comme un aplat en constante évolution, constamment en interaction avec la trame de Krebs (trame interchangeable entre les deux musiciennes).

Entre elles trois, l'interaction est intime, profonde, magique, et reste toujours axée sur la matière et la texture sonores. La connexion entre les trois musiciennes ainsi que la réactivité de chacune permettent de constamment faire évoluer et vivre ces textures sinueuses, mouvantes, organiques et jamais figées ou statiques. Tout évolue constamment, l'intensité, la densité, le grain, l'espace. Et sans que la musique soit minimaliste à proprement parler, les textures évoluent grâce à des interventions et des changements discrets, subtils, minimaux. Un disque grandement recommandé pour les surprenantes matières sonores produites qui évoluent à travers un parcours plein de grains et d'aspérités, mais surtout pour la profonde connexion entre les instrumentistes et leur constante créativité.”

Julien Heraud, Improv-Sphere

“Det finns alltid musiker som rör sig mitt i tiden men samtidigt formar den och avviker från alla de andra som rör sig i samma riktning. Hur mycket främmandegjorda instrument har jag inte hunnit höra de senaste tio-femton åren. Det är som ett särskilt ljudspår i min hjärna. Något jag genast känner igen. Men hur mycket jag än hört skulle de möjliga beskrivningar jag kunde göra av detta ljudlandskap aldrig täcka de konstnärskap som föreligger på denna skiva.

Hur beskriva Annette Krebs eller Magda Mayas? Omöjligt. Undantagen låter sig inte beskrivas, bara höras. Först när någon annan tar efter går det att sätta ord på det. Nu har jag gjort det svårt för mig. Men avsikten var inte att fega ur en recension. Tanken var att understryka hur udda och unikt albumet är.

Krebs joxar som vanligt med elektronik och sina gitarrer. Ur dem stiger ljud, många små ljud, korta plupp, fräsanden, sådant som låter som olycksfall i arbetet; men det är just detta, att hantera alla ljuden, fånga dem, styra dem, låta dem glida ur händerna. Hur slumpen ständigt gör vaksam, och så har hon alltid oväntade ljudspår från något radioprogram eller vad det nu är. De ligger där i hennes dator och hoppar fram som grodor ur musiken. Effekten kan bli enorm. Ingen av musikerna kan vila sig, hon ligger alltid på lur.

Krebs är bland mycket annat kollageteknikens mästare. Och få kan som hon ge flödet av elektronik en inneboende hetta och puls.

Dessutom, det vet jag efter att ha arrangerat en del konserter och ad hoc-spelningar med henne, är hon en av de allra mest lyhörda impromusiker jag mött. Krebs rotar i sitt enorma förråd av ljud.

Pianisten Mayas fungerar på annat sätt. Hennes musik bor både inne i pianot och på tangenterna. Ett slags ständig duo med sig själv. Varje sträng lockar hon oväntade ljud ur, men samtidigt har hon en enorm känsla för rytm och timing. Hennes musik är pockande, rör sig envist framåt. Mayas ihop med Krebs är både en rytmisk berättelse, även om rytmerna ibland omfattar mycket, och en upptäcktsresa i ljud andra förbisett eller inte visste fanns.

Så lägger vi då till den australiensiska cellisten Anthea Caddy. Stark, kärv teknik och en explosiv expressionist. Hennes klangvärld påminner både om Mayas och Krebs, men hon är otåligare, stöter gärna hårt mot gränser och väggar. Rör sig i musiken som vore hon en dansare. Det är hon som koreograferar trions rum.

När jag hör den här skivan förstår jag att omvärderingen av instrumenten, skörden efter Echtzeitmusik, engelsk impro och Morton Feldman är mycket rik. Vi har bara hört början ännu, och efter hand kommer mycket att sorteras undan. Men aldrig denna trio eller detta album. Här finns allt det oväntade och bästa i denna musik. Den gör det också nödvändigt att fortsätta tala mindre om stil än om den enskilda konstnärliga personligheten.”

Thomas Millroth, Sound of Music

O cd Thread apresenta um curioso encontro entre três improvisadoras com percursos e abordagens aos respectivos instrumentos bem diferentes entre si. A pianista Magda Mayas tem-se afirmado como uma mais interessantes e profícuas exploradoras das potencialidades do piano, desenvolvendo uma linguagem que se filia na tradição da música improvisada que privilegia o virtuosismo técnico aliado a uma exuberância de sons, provindos, quer da abordagem convencional do instrumento, quer pela manipulação das cordas que complementam os sons que mais tradicionalmente lhe estão associados.

Anthea Caddy é uma violoncelista que colaborou em apenas dois registos discográficos anteriores, sendo um deles um cdr de colaboração com Mayas, para além de também participar numa colectânea de músicos berlinenses compilada por Burkhard Beins. Pelo que se pode ouvir em Thread, Caddy não desenvolveu ainda uma linguagem pessoal bem definida. Na verdade, nas suas intervenções nota-se a influência de violoncelistas mais veteranos, como Mark Wastell ou Guilherme Rodrigues, embora num registo menos contido do que estes últimos.

Por fim, Annette Krebs foi uma das grandes impulsionadoras da nova estética reducionista na Alemanha, em finais do século passado, mas que, nos seus projectos mais recentes, tem demonstrando um claro empenho de a ela não se confinar, transportando a sua intervenção para novos patamares performativos. Assim, para além de ter aumentado o número de instrumentos e dispositivos sonoros que utiliza, juntando à sua habitual guitarra preparada, a manipulação de fitas pré-gravadas, objectos e a electrónica, nomeadamente através da mesa de mistura, Annette Krebs trabalha cuidadosamente a música proveniente das suas colaborações, sendo habitualmente a principal responsável pelo resultado final. Na verdade, é ela que habitualmente faz a mistura e a masterização dos discos em que participa.

Nos dois temas que constituem o disco, encontra-se presente as sempre magníficas intervenções de Magda Mayas no piano, a que se junta Anthea Caddy, que privilegia a utilização de técnicas extensivas que lembram as intervenções que, no passado, os dois violoncelistas que atrás mencionei desenvolveram. Depois, complementando a acção das duas improvisadoras, surge Annette Krebs com a sua panóplia de instrumentos, ouvindo-se os originais sons da sua guitarra preparada, da electrónica e as vozes provindas das gravações que manipula, transpondo para o âmbito da música electro-acústica a sonoridade resultante, o que a torna bem mais interessante e ousada.

Assim, Thread não é apenas um disco que regista um bem conseguido encontro entre três excelentes improvisadoras. O notável trabalho de pós-produção, da responsabilidade de Annette Krebs, faz com que o disco editado pela Another Timbre seja uma das mais interessantes propostas musicais deste ano. Mas tal também não seria possível sem o excelente trabalho efectuado por Anthea Caddy e, nomeadamente por Magda Mayas, uma das mais importantes pianistas da actualidade que se dedica à música improvisada. Mas, parece ser sobretudo a Annette Krebs que se deve a hábil gestão dos momentos de quase silêncio que se

seguem às sonoridades justapostas dos instrumentos tocados pelas três improvisadoras. É também a ela que se deve as sempre interessantes intervenções que obtém através da manipulação do gravador e da electrónica, para além da cuidada interacção que estabelece com as outras improvisadoras, quando utiliza a guitarra preparada. E depois, é claro, existe o trabalho de pós-produção do registo anteriormente captado, que faz de Thread um estimulante trabalho que merece ser atentamente escutado, dado o prazer de descoberta que continuamente produz no ouvinte.

Thread é, assim, um disco que recomendo vivamente. Nele, alia-se de forma inteligente e inovadora a música espontaneamente criada pelas improvisadoras com a realização sonora final, que resulta sobretudo do trabalho de Annette Krebs na mistura e masterização, para além de proporcionar mais uma oportunidade de ouvir tocar a sempre excelente e surpreendente Magda Mayas.”

Pedro Chambel