



Maarti Kyöharju

icians with truly original styles.

‘It was more difficult when I was younger, because there were so many alternatives, so many musicians to listen to and to find out what they had done or were doing. Later it has become easier. When you reach a certain level, it is better to forget what you have heard and not be influenced by others. It is more fun to develop your own language and your own approach, to work with simplifying the music. It becomes clearer to you what you are doing and what your own choices are.’

Pietilä’s most recent project is a completely improvised sax album recorded in a studio.

‘I’m working with the processing of tonal colour, rhythm and the structuring of musical texture through dialogue and counterpoint.’

Drawing music

Pietilä’s music is visually oriented. Visual arts yield textures that inspire music, and he also finds inspiration in poetry. He uses not only conventional lead sheets but also abstract drawings on paper as his sheet music. Music for him is fiction.

‘It’s because music is so abstract that it’s so much fun to try to depict reality and your inner fantasy world at the same time. You don’t have time to think about the details when you’re playing music. For me, it’s a state of being which is very quiet inside your head, a focus with no other impulses or outside distractions, an enjoyable

state of being. The music is built up of small dramatic arcs which add up to a larger one. It is fiction in its own words, or in words made by me. The real world blends with my inner fantasy.’

Pietilä considers the large elements more important than the details when he is performing. Of course, over time one comes to use certain methods automatically when making music. When on stage, the expression has to be exaggerated somewhat.

‘If you intend to blow a loud note or phrase, you need to add extra pressure to it – you may imagine that you are expressing yourself powerfully, but five or ten metres from the stage it does not necessarily sound like it,’ Pietilä says.

The saxophonist says it is important to be idle once in a while – though this state of relaxation is no relaxation at all, as his brain is continuously processing all the impulses it receives.

Pietilä likes to explore the natural environment. His disc *Fulica Atra* was inspired, among other things, by the song of the Eurasian Coot which he heard in Viitasaari in Finland’s lake district. Nowadays there is not that much of being idle for Pietilä, who performs abroad much more than in Finland.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi

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