

## Aerea: sound as light and air

Acclaimed bassist/cellist/composer Henning Sieverts once again unites Symmethree, a trio of elite international jazz musicians, in a beautifully balanced flight of musical exploration. *Stereo* extolled Symmethree's first Pirouet CD as "...a mosaic of refined beauty", *Step Tempest* marveled, "this music swings with a vengeance". Sieverts has years of work with top international players, over 130 CDs, and tours on six continents to his credit. His long list of awards includes "best jazz bassist", International Society of Bassists' competition, and Germany's prestigious Echo Jazz 2010 award as best bassist for his PIROUET CD Blackbird. With his masterful technique, exceptional sound and potpourri of original ideas, trombonist Nils Wogram stands in the forefront of contemporary players. Also and ECHO jazz winner, his group Root 70 won the prestigious BMW International Jazz Award. Jazz'n More Magazine called guitarist Ronny Graupe "one of the most promising talents in German jazz". An important player in the Berlin New Music scene, he has worked with the likes of Wanja Slavin and Rolf Kuhn and recorded two albums under his own name for PIROUET.

Symmethree's unusual trombone, guitar and bass/cello instrumentation allows for some compelling possibilities. The compositions and arrangements are Henning's, but there's a continual give-and-take between the three. Henning explains, "We take up each other's roles when it comes to musical functions. We've been together since 2011 and thus have had time to grow together. Every time we play it's an adventure, every time it's different. We not only surprise the listener, we surprise ourselves."

Here are the compositions with Henning's comments in quotes.

**Twenty One** presents an unusual country-like groove in 21/8 in which the bass plays three 7/8 figures. "The title can also stand for our current century."

**Chrome** is based on strange melodies built from symmetric three-note clusters that "shimmer mysteriously before being transformed into strong, bluesy 'chrome'", with the three in funky conversation.

**Full Moon, New Moon** is a "tender, delicate picture in black and white – first only with the piano's white keys, then with the black keys – light and dark – full moon and new moon – in eternal change."

On **Morsechoral** "Cello and trombone tap out a message together – slightly 'off-kilter', playing in various meters around the mirror-axis 'G' (played on the guitar)."

**Flou** (French for blurred) begins with "...a 'blurred' unison line on cello, trombone and guitar, before taking a little trip through disparate moods."

Something of a ballad for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, **In A Symmetrical Mood** has "a symmetrical melody that reminds me of Ellington's ballad *In a Sentimental Mood*".

The title **Ubergestern** "is a wonderful neologism spoken by my then-five-year-old son Paul Jan."

The piece hangs suspended, with darkly bowed cello and sensitive, open-ended solos.

**Beuron** "...is dedicated to the Benedictine monastery of the same name in the Upper Danube Valley. I composed the piece there. The melody is a 12-tone row and contains various mirror-axes following every three, six, and 12 tones."

On **Attya** "Johann Sebastian Bach meets *All the Things You Are*. The German music notes B-A-C-H (Bb-A-C-B) are played over the changes of this jazz standard. The three solo sections have three different tempos and keys (separated symmetrically in major thirds Ab-C-E)."

**Aerea** is "the CD's airy-tender title song with cello and trombone in duet culminating in the quiet guitar solo." It's a fitting way to close out a CD that contains all the elements: earthiness, fiery passion, airy flights of fancy, and a fluid luminescence all brought together in perfect Symmethree.