



Released in March 2008 on Zappel Music.

NEW CD: Georg Breinschmid – „Wien bleibt Krk“

Working in a recording studio is not always as fun as a lot of people would like to think. In this case, it was a lovely act of fate to be the private concert audience listening to top-notch musicians for hours on end, and getting paid for it.

We know him from the Vienna Philharmonic, from the Vienna Art Orchestra and in connection with many other roles. A musician characterised by virtuosity, enthusiasm and terrific wit: The double bass player Georg Breinschmid also demonstrates his talent as a producer with his new CD “Wien bleibt Krk”. His works presented here are convincing in a burlesque, charming, subtle yet coarse, nonchalant, smart, traditional (and) sly way, with mellow tonality and at the same time blatant self-mockery.

Whether vocal or instrumental, you never know if perhaps in the next moment Johann Strauss II will turn the corner with an alien attack dog.

This CD brings together a selected cast of exceptional artists, including Beni Schmid, Stian Carstensen and Thomas Gansch.

For Breinschmid and his fellow musicians, there’s not much separating romantic sounds from those of a berserk madhouse choir. Intelligent tricks and turns hide behind harmless gestures scattered here and there. But even in his more serious songs, the accomplished double bass player’s compositions are completely convincing. Those whose eyes remain dry during the duet “Lost Daughters” – interpreted bittersweetly by Tini Kainrath and Willi Resetarits – would be better off signing on with the French Foreign Legion.

It is an old bit of wisdom that the Balkans begin in Vienna. Georg Breinschmid provides an argument here that such a view is still valid. And that that’s the way it should be.

Wolfgang Schramml (recording engineer), Sonic Pages (A)

oooooooooooo

This is crazy, wild, beautiful, weird music that cannot be categorised. It is music from Austria. And it is played fantastically – by outstanding jazz and crossover musicians such as violinist Benjamin Schmid, accordionist Stian Carstensen and trumpeter Thomas Gansch. And of course the mastermind behind it all: the bassist Georg Breinschmid, born in 1973. He played for the Vienna Philharmonic, but also for the Vienna Art Orchestra. Since turning his back on a classical orchestra career in 1999, he has been working as a freelance jazz musician. It is also completely obvious that he is truly Viennese at heart. Jazz and his passion for Vienna shape his CD “Wien bleibt Krk”. Krk immediately calls to mind an island in Croatia, and the title is a realisation of the familiar old saying, “The Balkans begin in Vienna”. Intricate Balkan rhythms appear, but also a lot more: reminisces of gypsy and polka music, subtle waltzes, disintegrated and modified marches, thoughtful interludes - and last but not least, unorthodox songs.

Yes, there is also singing on the CD. And it is done in an especially astute way (Willi Resetarits, better known on the rock scene as “Ostbahn-Kurti”, is also a guest singer). A hit with reference to current events is the anti-football anthem “Fußball-Aversions-Winerlied”. A line from it: “Look at the idiot who can’t kick anything/How he stands there on the pitch/He’s even too dumb to spit” (“Schauts eich den Deppm an, der was ned kickn kann/Wiara am Rasn steht/Sogoa zum Schlatzn is er z’bled”). Georg Breinschmid sings these wonderfully droll lines himself – along with the languorous-ironic sounds of a female choral quartet. By the way, he also wrote the text himself. The range of songs on this CD also contains a “Komisches Wienerlied” celebrating the “little dissonances” (“Dissonanzerln”), meaning all inharmonic tones (“A small second immediately makes life perfect” [“A klane Sekund mocht’s Leben glei rund”]). There is also an homage with quotes to the pop singer Falco, who died in 1998, and – last but not least – a serious song about Jewish women who were forced to flee from Vienna in 1939 when Austria was annexed by Hitler’s Germany: “For the Lost Daughters and Sons of Vienna”, inspired by a film by Mirjam Unger. Humour and seriousness strike a subtle balance on this CD, leaving no danger of slipping into weightlessness (or facelessness). But the irrepressible musical abilities of the contributors mean that there is no real danger of this anyway. The music is always of a very high standard, and is sometimes also a lot more complex than it seems – it jokes around without totally abandoning itself to the jokes. A musical “Breinstorming” (the word can be found on Breinschmid’s web site) that is tremendously rich for listeners. Wien bleibt Krk!

Roland Spiegel, Bayern 4 Klassik (D)

oooooooooooo

Where There Is a Melody to the Madness Georg Breinschmid’s First Solo CD

Although he was not born in Vienna and did not even live in Austria the first five years of his life, the double bass player Georg Breinschmid – who has been an important figure in many well-known ensembles for quite some time – has expressed his powerful bond to the city of Vienna in a collection of compositions on the CD “Wien bleibt Krk”, which was presented at the end of March to an exuberant public.

“Of course my new CD is also about bass playing, there’s even a little bass solo number on it, but primarily I want to use it to present my compositions.” This is how Georg Breinschmid outlines the basic concept behind his recently released CD, the first, incidentally, that bears only his name – after having already released various high-quality recordings with the Vienna Art Orchestra, the trio Mauve, the Christian Muthspiel trio, together with Agnes Heginger and with the quartet Pago Libre. “While planning the CD, it became more and more apparent that most of the pieces and ideas are held together by the theme ‘Vienna’. There are some longer instrumental pieces that bear strong reference to the Balkans – one is called ‘Balkandrom’ and teems with odd metres, another is the title piece of the CD, ‘Wien bleibt Krk’. On one hand, there is a lot of improvisation throughout – that’s the jazz influence – but on the other, there are fully composed Wienerlieder (Viennese songs), Balkan pieces and a long concert waltz.”

Breinschmid, who also has two brothers who are musicians, was never actually exposed to Viennese music in his parents’ home. After studying classical double bass, he had just been taken on by the Vienna Philharmonic when he ended his orchestra career in favour of other sounds. “During the second year, after reflecting for a long time and talking a lot with friends, I realised that jazz and improvised music are closer to my heart. It was a musical decision, but of course also a personal one. Obviously I can put a lot more of myself into jazz than into an orchestra as one of eight double bass players.”

And then it was a sideman job with Michael Heltau that convinced the technically brilliant young musician, who was open to all directions, of the potential of the Wienerlied: “In the encore block we played ‘In einem kleinen Café in Hernals’ by Hermann Leopoldi. On the first concert evening, I thought, ‘Wow, that’s beautiful...’. On the second, I was brought to tears. It was the same with other pieces I

heard by Roland Neuwirth. But at 16, 17 years old I was also a permanent substitute in the ensemble in Hübner's Kursalon, where I of course played a lot of waltzes, polkas and marches over and over again. That's probably where I got hooked, but I only realised that it was an important part of me years later."

"Wien bleibt Krk"

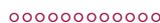
The CD title is of course also meant as a political statement; Breinschmid has no problem with the cliché that the Balkans begin in Vienna – just the opposite: "Vienna and the Balkans form a large cultural region that belongs together. Because of recent political developments, it is no longer as divided as it was during the time of the Iron Curtain. For me, the Balkans are like the soul of Europe. No matter what certain politicians may espouse."

The bass player has an affectionate-grumpy view of the Viennese tradition and brings it into the present in a respectful but unorthodox way: "I am not at all an expert in Viennese music, but I think I can say a thing or two about it. Viennese music doesn't have a lobby or a large forum and can be kitschified very easily – for example, by underlaying it with sweet strings." Now, strings occupy a prominent place in almost every piece on "Wien bleibt Krk", but Breinschmid proves to have had the right touch when it came to picking his fellow musicians because he got true experts. Most of the titles on the variegated CD were played by two trios. He was either accompanied by the two violinists Aleksey Igudesman and Sebastian Gürtler, or by the accordionist Stian Carstensten and the multitalented Beni Schmid on the violin. There's the almost 10-minute "Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze", the extremely atmospheric "Midnight in Heanois" and the virtuosic-cosmopolitan "Balkandrom" already mentioned – all a long way from honeyed "Heurigenseligkeit" (wine-garden culture) and whiny self-reflection.

A few more tidbits: for instance, "A klanes Brabitschek", where Breinschmid indulges in his affinity for lyrics à la Vienna Group with the pleasant Agnes Heginger, or the "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied", an anti-football anthem performed with the women's vocal quartet 4she. "We'll see, maybe it'll go with the European football championship – or maybe I'll get death threats from angry football fans because of it... or a Grammy... or both..." Finally, Georg Breinschmid presents two pieces featuring his duet with the "fantastic, but unfortunately completely humourless" trumpeter Thomas Gansch, which he had already tried out live. And at the very end are reflections by Tini Kainrath and Willi Resetarits on the fate of eight Jewish women who had to flee from Vienna to the U.S. to escape the Nazis in 1939, inspired by Mirjam Unger's film "Vienna's Lost Daughters".

This first CD by Georg Breinschmid has turned out to be a self-confident debut, and we can hope that he gets the attention he deserves as a composer. Closing remarks? Voilà: "I want to stay eclectic throughout my life. Over the last few years, I have done more and more of my own things and have written my own music. I can't collaborate on a project where I can't bring myself in as a person, my musical being, where I just have to play the notes provided. Otherwise I would do the same thing as before – sit in an orchestra as a public servant."

Martin Schuster, Concerto (A)



Want something a bit different? Look no further! Austrian bassist Georg Breinschmid has put together a band that includes vocalists, trumpet, piano, violins and accordion that has moments serious swing, cabaret pop, and beer hall avant garde. Breinschmid has brought various musical genres, that will make you wonder if you are at a Bohemian restaurant, a German beer hall, The Berlin Philharmonic, or a Spike Jones radio program. These guys (and gals) definitely have chops to burn, as they show on the beautiful title piece or the roller coaster "Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze". Meanwhile "Florentinermarsch" includes a tongue in cheek tribute to Mingus' "Tijuana Moods" release. The vocals, sung in German, English and sometimes jibberish throughout the disc, can go from pre War Germanic Weimar to Nietzsche nihilism. Fun, frenetic. Teutonic are definitely better than one!

George W. Harris, Jazzweekly.com

oooooooooooo

Vienna does not remain Vienna

How a double bassist is stirring up the sleepy Austrian song-writing tradition

Potsdam – “The Balkans start in Vienna,” the Austrians like to say. Georg Breinschmid has taken this saying to heart and is mixing the traditional Wienerlied with elements of polka, gypsy music, waltz and jazz. His new album is called “Wien bleibt Krk” (“Vienna Remains Krk”), a title that gives away the album’s musical leitmotif right from the start: the link between the Austrian capital and the Balkans, symbolised by the Croatian island of Krk. The first few bars of the title track quote the march “Wien bleibt Wien” (“Vienna Remains Vienna”) before the song transitions into an odd-metre Balkan rhythm.

The Austrian double bassist, composer and singer made a name for himself as the sideman in numerous jazz groups; Archie Shepp and Charlie Mariano are just a few of the musicians he has played with. Now the 35-year-old is presenting his first solo album with a coffeehouse trio comprising Breinschmid on double bass, Stian Carstensen on accordion and Beni Schmid on violin. The trio is also joined by a cast of guest musicians and singers who all possess that inimitable Viennese flair, which is evidenced in such diverse pieces as the serenade “Musette pour Elisabeth”, the Frank Zappa inspired waltz suite “Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze”, the gypsy polka entitled “Skubek’s Delight” and Breinschmid’s homage to a great composer “Mussorgsky, mei oida Freund”.

Breinschmid comes from the classical music scene. He studied double bass at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna and played in the Vienna Philharmonic. Nine years ago he decided to completely devote himself to his passion for jazz. “I’m fascinated by the freedom of improvisation,” he says.

Breinschmid only discovered the Wienerlied – the swaying, melody-infused house music of the traditional Austrian “Heurige” wine taverns → a few years ago. He had an experience that changed everything when he was playing as an accompanist with another band. “As an encore, we played the song ‘In einem kleinen Café in Hernals’ at sight,” he recalls. He was “completely moved” by the song, maybe because Breinschmid lives in Hernals, Vienna’s 17th district, which the Viennese call “Heanois”.

In his own pieces, Breinschmid takes on the catchy charm of the Wienerlied, only to break it down with fantastic irony. His “Komisches Wienerlied” is an ingenious twelve-tone waltz whose lyrics slander Austria’s greatest musical saint in Viennese dialect: “Wos an Mozart so toll sein soi, diafts mi ned frog” (“Don’t ask me what’s so great about Mozart”). However, the album also touches on a dark chapter in Vienna’s history with a touchingly simple song dedicated to the Jews who had to flee after Austria was annexed by Hitler’s Germany.

Breinschmid’s feel for Vienna’s musical tradition is astounding considering the fact that the musician was born in Lower Austria and spent his early years in Switzerland. This makes him all the more enthusiastic about his adopted hometown of Vienna, which has primarily lent him a certain cosmopolitan flair. “I still remember Vienna from the time of the iron curtain,” he says. “Back then, everything was grey and provincial. The city has become much more open in the last fifteen years.”

Over the years, Georg Breinschmid has developed his own imaginary language in the Viennese accent with words like “Utn-Schle” and “Brabitschek” that mean “everything and nothing” and sneak their way into the lyrics again and again. In any case, Breinschmid’s songs would not be nearly as good as they are without the brash and charming dialect.

Breinschmid proves his skills as a congenial translator by literally translating the rather astounding statement in dialect “I schiff an Igl mit Dauernwelln” into Oxford English to create the song title “I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves”. Creative mutations of Falco quotes provide a sense of contrast: “Falco lebt, aber wir leben richtig” (“Falco lives, but we’re actually alive”).

Antje Rößler, Märkische Allgemeine (D)

oooooooooooo

Wow, what great music! Thanks to Ernst Jandl, Georg Kreisler, Hansi Hinterseer and the Vienna Opera Ball, we know that in Austria subtle, self-deprecating humour and the deepest of sincerity are not opposites, but instead two sides of the same coin. As a bass player for the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Art Orchestra, Georg Breinschmid has had to let himself be swept away by this irony-filled love for Vienna and its music – although, being born in Switzerland, he was not genetically predisposed to it. Thus you could play the first five minutes of the “Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze” in a café or ballroom without arousing suspicion, until the piece slowly slides into dissonance and squeaky glissandi. Because: “A small second immediately makes life perfect, and only with a G does a G sharp really become beautiful” (“A klane Sekund mochts Leben glei rund, und erst mit an G wird a Gis richtig schee”), as Breinschmid reveals in his “Komisches Wienerlied”. Besides comical Wienerlieder (including one about Mussorgsky for accordion solo, one with Dada lyrics and a self-therapeutic “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”), there are heaps of musette waltzes, breakneck polkas, reminiscences of Zappa and musical quotations. The album culminates in a hara-kiri version of the Florentine march with an insanely soulful vocal part by trumpeter Thomas Gansch. Now isn't that something!

fva, Jazzthing (D)

Comment: Despite my birthplace being Amstetten - which is located in Lower Austria, not in Switzerland – I feel deeply connected to the Viennese culture. :-)) G.Br.

oooooooooooo

At the very end of the last song, “For the lost daughters and sons of Vienna”, Georg Breinschmid tells his fellow musicians in broad Austrian dialect, “No, you can't put that on the record”. This might be a motto, because the idea appears again and again throughout the bass player's entire album.

In “Wien bleibt Krk”, Breinschmid delivers a unique homage to his hometown, despite all the loving sarcasm – or perhaps as a result of it. For well over an hour, the classical and jazz musician immerses himself in the cultural melting pot of Vienna. He brings together a profusion of musical influences, ranging from the Balkans to the waltz, from the Viennese song (Wiener Lied) to Falco pop, from Johann Schrammel to the avant-garde, into a cultural cohesion. A fiery combination, we'd like to think. But Breinschmid manages this formidable balancing act with virtuosic composition skills and a powerful dose of humour. And of course with a crew of instrumentalists who seem to be willing to stand by their leader and his curious ideas through thick and thin. First and foremost the violinist Beni Schmid, closely followed by the Norwegian accordion sensation Stian Carstensen and of course Breinschmid's long-time friend and colleague Thomas Gansch on the trumpet. They all make “Wien bleibt Krk” into a motley, rousing feast of virtuosic, ironic musicality. Even if every now and then, as in the line “As a kid in school at P.E. / I just wasn't a kicker” (“Ois Kind in der Schule beim Turnunterricht / do bin ich ein Kicker gewesen hoit nicht”), the “good taste” threatens to get stuck in your throat.

Jörg Konrad, Jazzpodium (D)

oooooooooooo

“Wien bleibt Krk” – with the title alone, Georg Breinschmid gains attention. But the double bass player's CD is just as good on the inside as it is on the outside: It wallows in fiery Balkan rhythms, sings Wienerlieder (Viennese songs) about the charm of twelve-tone music and a football-playing loser who is even “too dumb to spit” (“zum Schlatzn z'bled”) and, besides all its virtuosic furore, also delivers captivatingly beautiful romances. In short: A splendid Wiener Melange (Viennese blend), brewed from golden sweet melodies and foreign rhythms, played by very capable musicians such as the violinist Beni Schmid, the accordionist Stian Carstensen and the trumpeter Thomas Gansch. Wow! A brilliant mix.

Christoph Irrgeher, Wiener Zeitung (A)

oooooooooooo

You could call Georg Breinschmid rather crazy (but in the best possible sense of the word). The double bass player and his friends have recorded a CD with the strange title “Wien bleibt Krk” (Zappel Music/Codaex). The record will amuse people who are not too fond of Austria (I’m one of them) not only because it contains a “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied” (a pleasure for everyone who hates this unaesthetic ado as much as I do) and because he is even able to extract a great deal of new nuances from this (Viennese) song, but also because he has a sense of humour and is a really good musician.

Karsten Zimalla, Westzeit.de (D)

oooooooooooo

Never judge a book by a cover, the old cliché goes, and this album is definitely fitting. The cover photo of Georg Breinschmid features him superimposed over what looks like a stand-up bass or cello, as he's holding, inquisitively, a flute. Looking at the stand-up bass, I assumed it was jazz, but upon hearing the music on Wien bleibt Krk (Zappel Music), one discovers that things are a bit more open and quirky than that.

This Austrian musician has played both jazz and classical, but for most of this album, Breinschmid takes to his ethnic roots and travels along the country side to present himself and his friends through music. It almost comes off as a folk album but there's a audio thread running through that shows it's much more than that, coming from melodies and arrangements that aren't in just 4/4 or 3/4. "Interlude: Klans Wiener Basssolo" is more on the jazzy side of things, but then it leads to a sweet melody in the name of "Stammersdorger Ausdruckstänze" that reminds me of the music my Omama adored. It is this exploration of his roots through jazz and folk that makes hearing this a voyage to a homeland you never visited, but would like to someday. Breinschmid and the musicians that join him know what they're doing, and it shows how much he is in love with his country and its inhabitants. What he does with the music is bridges the old and the new, to let listeners know that he and his people will never forget what came before, and to look towards the future for innovation and hope.

The Run-Off Groove (USA)

oooooooooooo

This wild and woolly Austrian effort reminded me of some of the odd mixes of music coming out of Holland and Belgium, but with some particularly German humor. The English notes are printed in red upside down at the bottom of each page of the German notes, so the English goes from right to left in sequence. There is no actual translation of the CD's title, but the title track (No. 1) refers to a popular Austrian saying that “The Balkans begin in Vienna.” The tune begins with a quote from a well-known march by Schrammel, “Vienna Remains Vienna,” then goes off on a 7/8-meter Balkans folk music binge. The music is a heady mix of European folk, polka, waltzes, tango, beer-garden songs, classical, just about everything except funk, blues or rap. Bassist Breinschmid's love of Vienna and his connections with it seem to be the main glue holding together the various tracks. The lyrics are partly in English but mostly German - often in the same tune. And there are some tracks with a fantasy language made up by Breinschmid himself. I've been seeing some very odd song titles lately, but one on this CD takes the cake: “I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves.” I think sitting around quite awhile and imbibing in a beer-garden is de rigueur for that one.

The final track, “For the Lost Daughters and Sons of Vienna,” is for two vocalists and piano and was composed by Breinschmid to tie in with a recent film, Vienna's Lost Daughters, about eight Jewish women who had to leave their native city in 1939 and have lived in New York City ever since, but still feel very connected to their lost home town of Vienna. This CD will probably be a bit more fun for those conversant in German, but it's a good mix of sounds and feelings for those who are not as well.

John Henry, Audiophile Audition (USA)

oooooooooooo

Rating: Essential

Breinschmid helps himself to the Wienerlied and the Schrammels, to Balkan folklore and jazz, to hits and salon music.

Does original music still exist, with ideas and humour? Yes, and it comes from – where, indeed? – Vienna. The double bass player Georg Breinschmid gathered his friends and gets the inspiration for his compositions wherever he happens to find it. He helps himself to the Wienerlied and the Schrammels, to Balkan folklore and jazz, to hits and salon music. It is musically exciting and intelligently playful; for example, the nonsensical lyrics from “A klanes Brabitschek”. An “interlude” is entitled “Mussorgsky, mei oida Friend”, but it has nothing to do with the Russian composer of this name. And what he means by “I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves” may remain a mystery while listening to the lively music. The booklet reveals that it is a literal translation of the Viennese expression, “I schiff an Igl mit Dauerwelln”. Got it?

Georg Breinschmid makes reference to Frank Zappa and also to Spike Jones, one of the greatest musical clowns and a “classic” of skewed humour in the USA, but unfortunately even more unknown than Peter Schickele and Gerard Hoffnung here in Austria. Breinschmid’s friends are Beni Schmid, Aleksey Igudesman and Sebastian Gürtler on the violin; Stian Carstensen on the accordion; Thomas Gansch on the trumpet; Roland Guggenbichler on the piano; as well as Agnes Heginger; four women who call themselves 4she; Tini Kainrath; and Willi Resetarits, who rose to international fame in Austria as Dr. Kurt Ostbahn (vocals).

Thomas Rothschild, TitelMagazin (D)

oooooooooooo

The Coffee House Is Grooving

The ultimate insiders tip for crossover-proof ears comes from Vienna. That is where the bass player Georg Breinschmid lives and works. He bowed and plucked his instrument in the posh Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Art Orchestra – together with Joe Zawinul, Austria’s most outstanding contribution to jazz. On his solo record, “Wien bleibt Krk” (Zappelmusik/CodaEX), Breinschmid locates his phenomenal virtuosity, a pertinent amount of humour and brilliant musicians at the melting point of Central Europe and the Balkans. Coffee house, polka, musette, classical, the improvisational energy of jazz, the odd metres of Balkan folk music and exciting avant-gardism come together to form an album that is hugely enjoyable. The strumming is torpedoed by anarchic aberrations, and no composition is spared from musical subversion and intricate bass lines. But there is plenty of Viennese humour in 3/4 - time, and the violin, accordion and trumpet play Alpine beats dizzily. There is also a fair share of Zappa and Dada, making this CD a complete work of art. Clear opinion: This record is amazing.

Michael Stürm, Böblinger Bote (D)

oooooooooooo

An acoustic breath of fresh air for the Balkan-rhythm-infused Wienerlied provided by double bass player Georg Breinschmid and friends, such as the violinist Beni Schmid, the accordionist Stian Carstensen and the trumpeter Thomas Gansch. Splendid!

Werner Rosenberger, Kurier (A)

oooooooooooo

It has become tedious to point out that the Balkans begin at Vienna's Rennweg, as Metternich once put it. In Austria's capital city, it is impossible to escape musical Balkanisation in the form of festivals, guest performances and collaborations. This makes it all the more amazing that, primarily through a combination of jazz, Schrammel aesthetics and humorous lyrics, Georg Breinschmid and his circle of friends manage to add a new facet to the topic on "Wien bleibt Krk". The bass player is successful in celebrating the Wienerlied and its Southeastern European roots without breaking out into typical Austrian quibbling or adulation. The side blows and barbs are unmistakable. There are quotes by H.C. Artmann and the only Austrian pop star (Falco, of course), just to add the risk of copyright problems to the songs. Even if, as Breinschmid claims, the lyrics to the "Fußballaversions-Wiener-Lied" are older and allude to mortifying experiences at school, the song is grist for the mill of sceptics of the 2008 European Football Championship. Breinschmid's arrangements musically fuse together what was once a common musical heritage in order to break it up again with wild explosions. On "Wien bleibt Krk", Georg Breinschmid and his "friends", who include Aleksey Igudesman, Thomas Gansch, 4she, Tini Kainrath and Willi Resetarits, succeed in creating a forward-thinking musical field study and genealogy without getting caught up in the current Balkan hype or Viennese rapture.

Sim's Kultur - Insert in „Die Presse“ and „Kurier“ (A)

oooooooooooo

Quietly and secretly, the Wienerlied is becoming the genre of choice among Austrian musicians. In particular, jazz musicians are rediscovering the well-known melodies. The bass player Georg Breinschmid, whose musical socialisation took place in the classical genre – he played for the Lower Austrian Tonkünstler Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic – takes great pleasure in a musical journey along the Danube, playing with colleagues Tini Kainrath, Thomas Gansch, Agnes Heginger and Beni Schmid, and also singing himself. From classical pieces to world music, from the humorous "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied" to a sentimental film song, everything is inventively packaged under the broad motto of the "new Wienerlied". And thanks to the contributors, the quality is also high.

Sound & Media (A)

oooooooooooo

A hit for everyone who is already getting annoyed by the European Football Championship
Jazz bass player Georg Breinschmid offers a welcome alternative for everyone who cannot stand to hear any more anthems for the 2008 European Football Championship. On his recently released CD, "Wien bleibt Krk", the ex-member of the Vienna Philharmonic has composed Wienerlied pieces himself, including the "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied". At the latest by the end of June, we will be happy to sing along to "I just could never stand kicking" ("Des Kickn des woa ma hoit imma scho z'bled"). Breinschmid and his guests, such as Willi Resetarits and Thomas Gansch, also offer an entertaining mix of Balkanesque-Viennese music.

Worth listening to, and not just in order to hear lyrics like "What's supposedly so great about Mozart? Don't ask me" ("Wos an Mozart so toll sein soll, diafts mi ned frogn")!

Neue Kärntner Tageszeitung (A)

oooooooooooo

Georg Breinschmid & Friends play exactly the kind of music that we associate with Austria's capital city on the CD "Wien bleibt Krk" (codaex/zappel music). Although here Vienna's restrained Danube tristesse is replaced by humour. And at the latest by track three you will feel certain that good old Hans Moser will come strolling around the corner at any moment to offer a quick "Servus" in his inimitable, incomprehensible voice and to toss in a few Mozartkugeln. The "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied" is also

excellent and Breinschmid shines as a singer. The classically trained double bass player was born in 1973 and has played in the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera and with the Vienna Philharmonic, which he abandoned in 1999 to become a jazz musician. Subsequently, he worked with the Vienna Art Orchestra, Charlie Mariano, Jasper van't Hof, Archie Shepp, Harry Sokal, Christian Muthspiel and many others. A great musician, and – although I never would have thought that I could listen to this kind of music for more than three minutes – a successful album.

Gitarre & Bass (D)

oooooooooooo

This time, the most relevant albums for Folker come, among other places, from the periphery of the German-speaking area. Georg Breinschmid & Friends' "Wien bleibt Krk" only contains three vocal songs. (Note: The reviewer is mistaken here. There are a total of five songs with lyrics – four Wienerlied pieces and the "Hedgehog" song. – G.B.) The lyrics are funny, but could only be understood by the reviewer with the help of the English translation. For many years, Breinschmid was a double bass player for the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Art Orchestra. With this album, he would like to introduce his "completely personal mix of Wienerlied pieces, waltzes, odd Balkan rhythms and a lot more". And what a mix it is! In combination with the violin and/or accordion, highly inspired music emerges that always remains exciting and full of feelings. As a lesson for bass players about how much you can do with the instrument without being superficially showy, the album could also earn the title "The Special One".

Martin Steiner, Folker (D)

oooooooooooo

With his CD, the native of Amstetten offers me, a native of Vienna, a great gift. Every single one of the fifteen tracks is divine. The former classical double bass player for the Vienna Philharmonic has now devoted himself to jazz. Thank goodness, I must say, because otherwise "Wien bleibt Krk" would never have been created.

Breinschmid presents pieces influenced by waltzes, polkas and gypsy music from the entire Danube region. Vienna was and is a melting pot of nations and that has now been captured musically. In my opinion, the compositions represent the new Wienerlied.

The lyrics are just as ingenious and embody freshness and originality.

For this reason alone you should snatch up the CD as soon as you can!

Doris Schleifer-Höderl, Mostviertel-Basar (A)

oooooooooooo

The Viennese bass player has long poured the humour of his homeland, characterised by its monarchic history, into roguish music that finds its place somewhere between Schrammln and Zappa. Now he is returning to the old Wienerlied and mixing it with Prater dances. Amazing!

Frank von Niederhäusern, Radiomagazin (CH)

oooooooooooo

Seldom does a young plant sprout from the worlds of the infinite music universe. And when such an acoustic-botanical event does occur, it is usually stirred up by Mr. Resetarits – the doctor – or Thomas Gansch. Both of them played a significant role in this delight. And in the face of the impending EURO 2008, the "Fußball-Aversions-Lied" simply exudes joy ...

***** = A must-have

Wilfried Scherzer, Schwarzataler Bezirksbote/NÖN (A)

oooooooooooo

The first listen revealed that this is definitely one of the most interesting and idiosyncratic CDs of 2008 (and that it will certainly remain so until the end of the year!). A must-have for fans of music outside the mainstream and music enthusiasts who definitely do not want to go without a touch of humour (that becomes clear right away when you read the title of the disc). The highlights, in any case, are “Ein kleines Brabitschek” with Agnes Heginger (major fun factor) and the touching “For the Lost Daughters and Sons of Vienna” with Tini Kainrath, Willi Resetarits and Roland Guggenbichler.

Espresso Rosi/Kurt Ostbahn Homepage (A)

oooooooooooo

To gather all his jazz friends together, Georg Breinschmid would have to record an entire box of CDs. The ex-Philharmonic musician is one of the most sought-after bass players on the Austrian jazz scene. For his first solo album, he asked partners such as Beni Schmid and Stian Carstensen to his studio. However, “Wien bleibt Krk” (Zappel) is not just about jazz encounters: The Balkans meet the Wienerlied, and virtuosity is taken with a pinch of salt, as in the “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, just in time for the EURO.

Clemens Panagl, Salzburger Nachrichten (A)

oooooooooooo

With a Viennese musician releasing a record containing a “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, it's no wonder the Austrians were eliminated from the European football championship! And the chorus goes like this: “Yes, he just can't stand football...” (“Jo er kann hoid den Fuaßboi ned leidn...”).

Georg Breinschmid, born in 1973, was a classical double bass player and played in the Vienna Philharmonic until he decided to pursue his love for jazz. The title of this album, which has been enthusiastically acclaimed in Austria, is a variation on “Wien bleibt Wien”. And the classical Wienerlied is one of the most important inspirations for the record. In small lineups, sometimes with accordion, sometimes with violin, more often with strange singing, little treasures of songs between folklore and jazz appear, whose mischievousness also quickly appeals to non-Viennese listeners. And at the latest when Breinschmid, along with trumpeter Thomas Gansch, converts the Austrian slang saying “I schiff an Igl mit Dauerwelln” into a swinging old-time jazz piece, he's hooked us.

Ralf Stiffel, Westfälischer Anzeiger (D)

oooooooooooo

Ex-Philharmonic musician Breinschmid has brought together a top-notch group of friends for this album. The Wienerlied with a Balkan extension, played with the unlimited scope of jazz in mind, and resulting in something that sounds as if the Schrammels had composed something with a gypsy choir which was then interpreted by humorous jazz virtuosos. Great!

Wohin in Wien (A)

oooooooooooo

“Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, “I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves”, “An uns zwaa kummt kana foabel”... – strange titles. “Mussorgsky, mei oida Freund” and “For the lost daughters and sons of

Vienna” – also really odd names for pieces of music. But not for Georg Breinschmid, whose name I was not even aware of until a short while ago.

A blog reader gave me his CD, which she found to be exceptional. This led her to believe that it would appeal to my ears as well. Which was, in fact, the case.

“Wien bleibt Krk” is the name of the fiery disc, and it is full of surprises. The artist who, with a few friends, recorded this unique Viennese hodgepodge of “classical, gypsy, polka, Viennese songs, waltzes and Schnörtzenbrekker”, whatever the latter is supposed to mean, is multitalented.

Georg Breinschmid studied classical double bass at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, and was a substitute in various Viennese orchestras (the Vienna Philharmonic, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, etc.) and also played chamber music during his studies. He was a member of the Lower Austrian Tonkünstler Orchestra from 1994 to 1996 and of the Vienna Philharmonic from 1996 to 1998. A man who knows how to handle his instrument and – as “Wien bleibt Krk” shows – a man with a lot of humour and talent for much more than classical music.

The CD contains mostly instrumental pieces, but they are also sly old dogs even without lyrics, if songs can be dogs, that is. What appears to be harmless café house music surprises listeners suddenly with wild notes or by switching to a completely different genre. No tradition is sacred here. Even Vienna’s beloved Mozart gets his just desserts. With the “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, Breinschmid also anticipated the success of the Austrian team at the 2008 European Football Championship:

Look at the idiot who can’t kick anything/How he stands there on the pitch/He’s even too dumb to spit (Schauts eich den Deppn an, der was ned kickn kann / Wiara am Rasn steht / Sogoa zum Schlatzn is er z’bled).

Here “schlatzn” means “spit”, as we can infer from what follows this line. I was especially taken with the “Komisches Wienerlied” because it finally explained why a G is only worth listening to when combined with a G sharp.

Somehow, a few Viennese musicians have already managed to “creep” their way into my musical heart over the years, from Wolfgang Ambros to Georg Danzer and DÖF (which stands for “Deutsch-Österreichisches-Feingefühl”). Georg Breinschmid has now joined this club.

Conclusion: Absolutely recommendable for people who like surprises and who enjoy being led up the musical garden path, beyond all genre borders. And, in any case, a must for all football-haters.

Günther J. Matthia, Gjmatthia.blogspot.com (D)

oooooooooooo

What jazz lovers call the canon has many sources. Primarily blues, gospel and Broadway, for example. The Austrian bass player Georg Breinschmid has fully lived the tradition of modern jazz. He played in the Vienna Art Orchestra and alongside Christian Muthspiel. However, he is also currently reviving the legacy of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grapelli for good reason.

Breinschmid will not be satisfied with anything less than a root canal treatment. He remains traditional on his new album Wien bleibt Krk, but he defines tradition in his own way. The CD is the best kind of jazz CD. There is improvisation, and sources from the past are checked to see if they are suitable for the future. However, Breinschmid is Viennese. So why does he revert to a tradition that is not his own? And if he wants to venture out from under the cover of the past, why does he feign an everyday life that he himself does not live? Breinschmid does not want to accept the smug monotony of the jazz business, which has not tainted his homeland as badly as it has Germany, nor does he want to create a stringent counterpoint out of the strength of his own tradition. “Change is an incitement for me,” is the demand he places on himself.

Well, Georg Breinschmid is not the first to establish a direct connection between traditional Austrian music and jazz. Max Nagl has performed pioneering work in this field for years, and, in a moment of overwhelming sentimentality, Joe Zawinul himself confessed that all of his pieces were marches and that Viennese dialect had always constituted an essential part of his musical consciousness. However, if

we finally want to deal honestly with European – especially German-language – tradition without any reservations and without banning everything characterised as popular from the horizon of intellectual perception, wouldn't we have to begin much earlier in Austria? For example, what's with the Schrammel Quartet, whose influence on jazz is still inexcusably underestimated, and who were already celebrating tremendously lively, socially relevant music in the 19th century? They also played the contraguitar, an instrument that would be well suited to jazz today as well. Isn't that old-time Viennese jazz? Those who do not want to venture back so far would at the latest have to begin pondering at the mention of the name Anton Karas, whose zither playing provided an excellent backdrop to Carol Reed's 1948 film *The Third Man*. If that isn't high-quality music that is compatible with jazz, then where does European jazz hope to find its identity?

Admittedly, all these thoughts scarcely played a role when Georg Breinschmid set to work on his album. He did not want to simply exchange one traditional reference for another. Instead, with musicians like the trumpeter Thomas Gansch, the accordionist Stian Carstensen and the native to the scene "Ostbahn-Kurt", he emphasises two aspects. One of these is the cosmopolitan character of the Austrian capital city, which still carries the flair of its days as a k. u. k. metropolis. Gypsy music, Balkan reminiscences, polka – all of these are only indirectly related to the Wienerlied. The second aspect is typical Viennese brooding: Why am I even here? What is my existence made up of? For at least 150 years, this inclination towards self-doubt has pervaded every authentic Austrian work of art. Breinschmid is not one of those who tears himself apart in his music, because he is capable of fine irony and is willing to use ribald sarcasm.

"There are a lot better experts on Austrian culture than me," he interjects modestly, and he may be right. However, he is a subtle observer and a magnanimous mediator who creates a completely new platform for the liaison between jazz and the Wienerlied. His music is so uproariously funny because he does not ridicule jazz but instead fills a completely serious jazz album with new content. A conceptual, playful and cultural-historical masterpiece that will hopefully spawn many imitators.

Wolf Kampmann, Jazztethik (D)

oooooooooooo

We can imagine musical genres as countries. Current trends develop in the densely populated mainstream capital cities, regional dialects and curious customs are maintained in the provincial areas and small border traffic with neighbouring countries and genres flourishes on the borders of such a country. It could be difficult to locate Georg Breinschmid in such a musical atlas. In fact, the bass player gives an impression of the reality in the actual cultural metropolis of Vienna. This is where his double bass formed part of the foundation of the world-renowned Philharmonic Orchestra; where he was appointed to the no less prominent Vienna Art Orchestra by Mathias Rüegg; and where he paid an authentic tribute to his predecessor, Charles Mingus, with his own sextet. And now he presents himself as a composer and singer of Wienerlied pieces on his new CD.

This universally talented master of low notes discovered his first bass rather by chance. Breinschmid had actually long refused to learn an instrument; after all, his older brothers were already successful professional musicians. However, one day there were two double basses standing in the lounge of his parents' music-filled house. It was only temporary, but it was reason enough for him to give it a try once more: "From the very beginning on, I have pursued jazz and classical music parallel to one another," explains Georg Breinschmid, only mentioning as a side note his years at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, and his time spent in various Viennese orchestras and as a chamber musician for, among others, the ensemble *Die Reihe*. "I've always been an autodidact when it comes to jazz." Georg Breinschmid first caused a sensation in 1997, when he appeared at sessions at Vienna's *Porgy & Bess* during his classical studies, and then playing alongside Mathias Rüegg and Christian Muthspiel. To make a long story short: in the heart of Vienna's jazz scene.

And because he was soon a highly sought-after accompanist, he eventually discovered the Wienerlied genre on stage with the chansonnier Michael Heltau. “There is a sort of special language, and also an intonation and a very special harmony – this actually only exists in Vienna, and it sounds completely different from everything else for 100 kilometres in every direction. It is very unique. And there is no other type of song in the world that is named after a city, like the Wienerlied.” Georg Breinschmid embraced the tradition of the street singers of the k. u. k. era and began to write his own songs. For example, the “Fussball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, a composition commissioned for the Bregenzer Festspiele in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Cup in Cordoba. “It is virtually sacred in Austria,” explains Breinschmid, “because Austria beat Germany there, the famous goal by Hans Krankl, although Austria was eliminated anyways.” Breinschmid contrasted the historical football delirium at the Festspiele with his own ironic way of coming to terms with his past. He was not a very athletic child.

The “Komisches Wienerlied”, in which Breinschmid sings about his enthusiasm for dissonance and how he would prefer “a verse by Webern” (“aan Gstanzl vom Webern”) to any by Mozart, is also characterised by his ironic outlook. And he quotes Falco, the pop star venerated like Amadeus, in his rockabilly hit “I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves”, which stems from Thomas Gansch’s line, proclaimed in complete amazement and proper Viennese dialect: “I schiff an Igl mit Dauerwelln”. Breinschmid also performs rockabilly in his duet with the trumpeter Gansch. After all, we are promised “Georg Breinschmid & Friends”. Among these friends are also ever-changing combinations of the violinist Benjamin Schmid with his Stradivari and the Norwegian accordionist Stian Carstensen. Breinschmid plays the furious gypsy/polka trio “Skubek’s Delight” virtually at sight with these two. Breinschmid already produced the duet CD “Tanzen” in 2006 with the singer Agnes Heginger, and here he presents “A klanes Brabitschek” with her, an ode to a completely unique imaginary language whose words can mean “nothing – and everything!” Georg Breinschmid’s inspiration for his neologisms stems, on one hand, from the dialect poetry of H.C. Artmann and Gerhard Rühm (“Hosn Rosn Baa”, 1959) and, on the other hand, from Vienna and its culture – which is still a melting pot of Balkan, Slavic and Hungarian influences. “Balkandrom” – a trio with the two violinists Sebastian Gürtler (from the Hugo Wolf Quartett) and Aleksey Igudesman (who plays a Santo Serafin 1717 violin alongside Gürtler in the comedy duet Tandem) – reflects this: Breinschmid wrote the melodies – partially in breakneck odd metres – on a train ride to Carinthia. He has deeply absorbed the vibrations of his homeland, which resonates with everything from Mozart to metal and from waltzes to the Black Sea.

Breinschmid does not want his homage “Wien bleibt Krk” to be seen as a wistful look back at the glorious past, when Vienna was also the political centre of Southeastern Europe, “because: Nostalgia is not good.” The composer was also never on holiday on the Croatian island of Krk. Nevertheless, the title of his album gives a pretty good picture of what kind of “Wienerlied” is meant here. As soon as a certain “Heurigen-Seligkeit” (wine-garden culture) threatens to set in, 7/8 time brings your attention back, and exquisite Stradivari sounds escalate into split sounds, just as some electrical guitarists standing in front of towering speakers would enjoy.

It’s just a shame that Georg Breinschmid cannot present his friends, the many guest musicians, all together on a “Wien bleibt Krk” tour. Instead, he only intersperses his appearances at concert halls and jazz clubs with his individual Wienerlied pieces. Thus the CD remains an insight for us into his completely personal Vienna, where “Mussorgsky, my old friend” (“Mussorgsky, mei oida Friend”) lives right next to Falco, where jokes are cracked about the musical quality of Mozart and Schönberg and where black humour is accompanied by splendid virtuosity. But this CD, with its intelligently designed booklet in German and English, is a work of art that will endure. Just as Vienna remains Krk (“Wien bleibt Krk”).

Tobias Richtsteig, Jazzpodium (D)

oooooooooooo

The Austrian bass player Georg Breinschmid has recorded an album where references to Vienna and Viennese dialect represent not only the main idea but also an intensely planned undertaking. His own compositions transform everything from dialect poetry to bass instrumentals, Viennese dialect, Viennese humour and the Wiener Lied into contemporary art music. Art in the best sense of the word, of course. Various sets of musicians – Thomas Gansch, Agnes Heginger and Stian Carstensen are named as a representative sample of all the musicians on the album – play music, sing, speak and smirk on “Wien bleibt Krk”. The “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied” definitely does not capture everyone’s innermost thoughts, but it is a piece that expresses Breinschmid’s attitude. As a matter of course, the border to folk music and traditional sounds is transcended over and over again. In particular, song five, “A klanes Brabitschek”, presents Breinschmid’s unusual fantasy language, which he was inspired to create by dialect poems by H.C. Artmann and Gerhard Rühm. And the lyric, “Because no one understands me, because I talk so strange” (“Weu mi kana fasteht, weu so komisch ich red”) makes it clear that we do not need to be able to follow Breinschmid everywhere on his linguistic journey in order to appreciate this album: Simply enjoying the unfamiliar words and sounds is a great inspiration. And the music is high quality.

Carina Prange, Jazzzeitung (D)

oooooooooooo

British humour is black, French is flippant and German is crude. Viennese humour is krk. By the way, that has nothing to do with the unpronounceable ex-Yugoslavian island.

It should be clear that you either find Georg Breinschmid to be brilliant or totally demented. In order to appreciate Breinschmid, ethno-anthropologically trained experts who think that they are immune to the impertinence of Wien bleibt Krk because they know Danzer, the Erste Allgemeine Verunsicherung, Kreisler and Ambros’ Watzmann epic would need to have the mental strength to not go running and screaming from a mixture of Helge Schneider and Frank Zappa performed by John Cage.

It could be the oft-vilified EU eastern enlargement that makes Breinschmid’s hypostatized banal intellectualism digestible. “The Balkans begin in Vienna” is a saying quoted by Breinschmid in his booklet that he has been familiar with since his childhood. And it is not just the rhythms and rousing melodies from this ominous mountain region in Southeastern Europe that make Breinschmid’s pieces not only digestible but sometimes even danceable.

Accordion, contra bass, Viennese humour and dissonance blend together to create a bizarre mix that we at least have to reward for its extreme originality. Whether it be merry gypsy music, waltzes, sprechgesang, relaxing numbers somewhere between rock and pop, difficult accordion pieces or humorous musical squibs, Breinschmid always maintains a sense of humour.

The listeners’ tolerance levels are often tested to the max. The violin, for example, is not only capable of wildly fiddling “Skubek’s Delight” into one of the highlights of the album, but can also be irritating with its terrible scratching.

In the beginning at least, the “Fiorentiner Marsch” sounds as if Otto wanted to caricature a drunken Arab. A wild piece like the “Komisches Wienerlied”, which aligns John Cage and Stockhausen with the New Year’s Concert, requires strong nerves.

Norbert von Fransecky, Musik an sich (D)

oooooooooooo

These seventy-six minutes are an adventure, an exceedingly fun one!

A violently pulsating declaration of love to Vienna that brings the listener to tears at some points – less as a result of emotion than of delightful laughter. Georg Breinschmid and his friends pull off jokes, winks and snide humour with instrumental and vocal pieces that were composed or adapted by Breinschmid. The composer was a contrabass player for the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Art Orchestra. He is

shrewd stylistically and has a waggish sense of humour. It is amazing what kind of intensity, sound and (added) value Breinschmid is able to elicit from the chamber music ensembles in the fifteen pieces, for example in “A klanes Brabitschek”, performed by himself on vocals and bass, and the excellent singer Agnes Heginger, who oscillates in her phrasing and bends notes elastically. The mischievous strokes of genius just keep coming; an experience that is very much worth your while.

Büchergilde (D)

oooooooooooo

Knee injuries

Although they're funny, they're still a pleasure to listen to: Georg Breinschmid's Wienerlied pieces. The fact that behind the praised Viennese “Gemütlichkeit” (warmth and friendliness) lies a great deal of unpleasantness goes without saying. At the same time, all of the mumbo jumbo is actually appealing. So appealing, in fact, that the bass player Georg Breinschmid, who is not even from Vienna, lost his heart to the genre. It happened while he was accompanying Michael Heltau; that was eight years ago and since then Breinschmid has been composing diligently. The results can be heard on this CD, mostly in combination with the violinist Beni Schmid and the Norwegian Stian Carstensen on the accordion. The pieces glide along extremely smoothly – but before things get too cosy, Breinschmid tosses in a scratchy turn or a shrill dissonance. However, the possibility of the “Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze” becoming a fixed part of the programme at the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's concert is something that Breinschmid could only dream of. Breinschmid manages to pack his quirky preferences into both purely instrumental delicacies and successful lyrics. “Komisches Wienerlied” integrates the composer's inclination for divergence: “A small second immediately makes life perfect, and only with a G does a G sharp really become beautiful” (“A klane Sekund machts Leben glei rund, und erst mit an G wird a Gis richtig schee”). With the “Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied”, he will most likely manage to echo the sentiments of quite a few Austrians, whose country will be overrun by a wave of football enthusiasm during the upcoming European championships: “Yeah, he just can't stand football, he's simply too dumb for it. He doesn't want to waste his time on something so stupid, get his teeth knocked out or his knees broken” (“Jo er kann hoit den Fuaßboi ned leidn, er is hoit amoi z`bled dafia. Er wüü ned sei Zeit bled fargeidn, sich ausschlong die Zehnt oder brechn die Knia”). And because the humour does not dominate or become brutish, Breinschmid's music does not belong in the beer tent, but instead in a coffee house or a pub. The best record with Wienerlied pieces since Andre Heller's “A Musi! A Musi!”

Rolf Thomas, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (D)

oooooooooooo

The Blue Danube meets Frank Zappa in this adventurous outing from a European classical bassist-turned-jazzman. The title, referring to a Croatian island, Krk, turns the expression “Wien bleibt Wien” — “Vienna remains Vienna” — into a declaration that Vienna, at least musically, is the Balkans. You can watch that happen on YouTube in a couple of different performances, one as a string trio, one with muted trumpet, both with the composer on bass. The only explicitly Jewish track is the last one, inspired by a movie, Mirjam Unger's Vienna's Lost Daughters. But perhaps this reminder of how Vienna used to be what New York became — a Jewish urban sophisticate's idea of home turf — makes our still-Shoah-sensitive ears pick up more than just contemporary European jazz, not only on this track but on the whole exciting album.

Gigi Yellen-Kohn, JTNews - The Voice of Jewish Washington (USA)

oooooooooooo

Not too long ago, Georg Breinschmid was exclusively part of the world of classical music. But he must not have felt completely comfortable there, because he increasingly felt the urge to strike out on new musical paths. And the bassist's decision to step down from the Vienna Philharmonic and turn his back on classical music quickly proved to be the right one. After just a short period of time, the native of Amstetten, Austria, was able to make a name for himself on both the Austrian and the international jazz scene. It is primarily his combination of great versatility and virtuosity that has caused audiences and critics alike to sing his praises. On his current CD, "Wien bleibt Krk", the bassist devotes himself once again to the Wienerlied. As usual, Georg Breinschmid comes at it from a variety of angles and demonstrates his extraordinary understanding of different genres.

The title hints at the musical direction of some of the tracks. Vienna has always been a meeting point for different cultures, which have all had an impact on the city's identity. For this reason, the bassist brings together styles from the entire Danube region in his music. His compositions blend rhythms and humour from all over the Balkan region with the three-four time of the waltz and the energy of the polka to create a unique work of art. Georg Breinschmid brought a host of well-known artists along to the studio to record his album. This top combination of artists features names like Beni Schmid, Stian Carstensen, Aleksey Igudesman, Sebastian Gürtler, Thomas Gansch and Roland Guggenbichler. Agnes Heginger, the group 4she, Tini Kainrath and Willi Resetarits took over vocals.

Michael Ternai, Mica (A)

oooooooooooo

Georg Breinschmid presents himself as flexible and full of imagination on his new album, "Wien bleibt Krk", a Wienerlied album with Balkan grooves and catchy, characteristic pop appeal, nourished with classical elements and a solid jazz foundation.

There is an abundance of vocal and instrumental pieces that demand a lot of attention on this pleasantly striking album. This is apparent, for example, in the bow to Falco performed together with Thomas Gansch in the ludicrous "I pee a hedgehog with long-lasting waves", in proper German "I schiff an Igl mit Dauerwelln", and the eternal lyrics "Falco lives, but he's not the only one" ("Falco lebt, aber wir leben richtig"). Also a classic is the "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied", which the masterly double bass player performs together with the vocal quartet 4she and in which he reveals presumably autobiographical memories to us, or, as Breinschmid writes in the booklet: "One of my first compositions and a way of coming to terms with the past, which I wrote a few years ago for a football music project. Incidentally, this song will become the official theme music for the European Football Championship 2008 played in Austria and Switzerland (or something like that)." Well, the latter has unfortunately not come true because, as we know, someone else has "stormed" the official theme song by "feverish" means. However: The "Fußball-Aversions-Wienerlied" captivates listeners with technical excellence, amazing plays and stamina throughout the entire play time. And the melody is outstanding in combination with the lyrics.

As if that weren't enough, Breinschmid serves up other fine pieces, such as the duet with Agnes Heginger, "A klanes Brabitschek", in which he develops his own imaginary language, inspired by the dialect poems by a certain H.C. Artmann and Gerhard Rühm. Another highlight is his "Komisches Wienerlied" about off-key notes in contrast to classical harmonies, with the confession, "Everything that I like hurts others" ("ois was mia gfoit, tuat den andren glei weh"). Standing in opposition to all these wonderful vocal pieces are vital instrumental songs, performed with Beni Schmid, Aleksey Igudesman, Sebastian Gürtler (all violin) and with Stian Carstensen on the accordion. In the composition "Wien bleibt Krk", the Balkan seven-beat metre takes over after a brief visit to Johann Schrammel, because in the end we know that the Balkans begin in Vienna. The piece "Stammersdorfer Ausdruckstänze", however, appears to be a waltz á la Frank Zappa, and the outstanding "Skubek's Delight" is filled with loads of gypsy-polka feeling. In the last piece on the album, the composer Georg Breinschmid finally steps back as a musician and makes room for Roland Guggenbichler on the piano and the vocal duo

Tini Kainrath and Willi Resetarits. In “For the Lost Daughters and Sons of Vienna”, even the humour dies down. The song is inspired by Mirjam Unger’s film “Vienna’s Lost Daughters”, about the fate of eight Jewish women who had to flee from Vienna to escape the Nazis as teenagers in 1939. “With might and main you’ve torn me out/Out of my beautiful old flower pot/I would so much have liked to stay there” (“Mit oller Gwoit hobts ihr mi aussegrissn/Aus mein scheenen oidn Blumentopf/Dabei waar ich so gern noch bliebm”), writes Breinschmid, switching languages after these three verses in dialect: “I have been living in New York so long/In dignity I’m growing old/And yet my life has been so different/Sometimes the memory felt so cold”. Heard. Never forgotten. Bronner, look down!

Music: @@@@

Sound: @@@@

Manfred Horak, Kulturwoche (A)

oooooooo

Let it never be said that reviews in this 'zine are "only about jazz", or "only about "regular" music"... we are always pleased to hear & write about music that is on the edge, no matter what the genre. That's the first thing I'd have to say about Georg's CD.. it takes the listener to a zone they never would have imagined... think of some sort of cross between Django Reinhardt and a "classical gypsy band" from Vienna, Austria.. ha! ha! One other thing you will come away from this superb musical experience with is a clear respect for Brinschmid's bass playing abilities, as well as his high talent for crafting pieces that have strong jazz leanings, yet leave you wondering why it doesn't "sound like" any jazz you've ever heard before; I don't mean that in any negative way, either, because Georg "has it", in spades. If you're a "standard jazz" freak, you'll probably go elsewhere, but I give this a HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for listeners of all persuasions who have a little adventure in their blood. This was released on the 1st of August, 2008, so you should be able to find it in your favorite store now.

Dick Metcalf, Zzaj Productions – Blog (USA)