

salt peanuts*

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GINA SCHWARZ / CHRISTOPH HELM / MAX PLATTNER

«Elmo Nero»

GALILEO MUSIC COMMUNICATION, GMV 123

Elmo Nero brings together three prominent and strong voices from the Austrian jazz scene – bassist--composer--bandleader Gina Schwarz (who alternates between a double bass and electric bass), guitarist--composer Christoph Helm (a disciple of Wolfgang Muthspiel and Gilad Hekselman) who began his career as an autodidact rock and blues guitarist and later on discovered his love for jazz and improvised music, and drummer--composer Max Plattner. Schwarz, Helm and Plattner contributed compositions to the debut album of this new trio. Elmo Nero suggests a format of a classic jazz guitar trio, but this trio uses the rich legacy of this format as a playground for its own democratic dynamics and playful and highly melodic textures. The atmosphere is mostly leisured, except for the pieces when Schwarz picks the electric bass and propels the energy levels of the trio (check «Ping Pong» and «Dr. Jekyll & Mrs. Hyde») into complex fusion acrobatics that, in turn, highlight Helm's experience as a blues and rockguitarist.

The trio's slow--burning dynamics stress a tight rhythmic sensibility and leave enough space for individual improvisations and are open for joyful surprises. Schwarz's «Loophouse», for example, introduces a breezy reggae pulse and Helm's clever usage of effects while «Morpheus» suggests an intense drama. Helm's «Smurf & Turf» highlights the inventive sense of rhythmic playfulness of the trio. Elmo Nero delivers a promising statement of this fine trio.

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