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A touching album - SIGNUM saxophone quartet fascinates with colourful arrangements



SIGNUM saxophone quartet © Andrej Grilc

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They are revolutionaries, pioneers, and fellows: the four SIGNUM saxophone quartet members discover exciting new worlds in their interplay and pay homage to the chamber music saxophone sound in all its facets. Their new extraordinary digital album is now being released by Deutsche Grammophon, bringing together various arrangements and original works from the Renaissance to the present under the album title "**Echoes**".

Associative and emotional homage to the sound of the saxophone

"We are four men who had been dreaming of making chamber music with a saxophone quartet for years" said the SIGNUM saxophone quartet. This dream has come true for some time now, and thence the musicians Blaž Kemperle (soprano saxophone), Hayrapet Arakelyan (alto saxophone), Alan Lužar (tenor saxophone) and Guerino Bellarosa (baritone saxophone) explore the unique timbres and sounds of the wind instruments in their playing together.

"This instrument is our way of expressing emotions" says Lužar, and the range of sounds is exceptionally vast, from pure concentrated clarity to plaintive lamentation. This rich abundance of possibilities is also evident in the album *Echoes*.

Works of timeless beauty and depth

The title *Echoes* impressively describes the musical union of past and present. The musicians have consciously selected works of timeless expressiveness and intimate musicality, which - although coming from very different epochs - flow into one another and are similar in their warm essential aura and timbre. These include fascinating transcriptions of John Dowland's "Lachrimae antiquae" and Tommaso Albinoni's "Adagio", a moving interpretation of Gabriel Fauré's "Pie Jesu" and the chorale from Hindemith's funeral music, as well as impressive arrangements of works by Philip Glass, Pēteris Vasks and Peter Gregson, crowned by the hauntingly interpreted piece "Sarajevo" from *Ciudades* by Guillermo Lago. With "Ab Ovo" (arr. Knoth), from the album "Prehension" by Joep Beving and "On The Nature Of Daylight" from "The Blue Notebooks" by Max Richter, also works by two contemporary composers are represented on the album. "It wasn't important to us when the pieces were created, whether they are old or new. Rather, we wanted the music to correspond with the present, and that works just as well with a piece by Dowland as it does with a piece by Beving", says Alan Lužar, the quartet's tenor saxophonist.

Intimate, full of light and energy: the art of interpretation of the SIGNUM saxophone quartet

The album "Echoes" resembles a musical reflection of the present. It gives a multi-layered testimony of the intimate interplay that the four saxophonists are constantly trying to refine and intensify. The musicians say: "Our arrangements are not about getting as close as possible to the original sound. Rather, we try to grasp the work's main idea and then illuminate it in our very own colours. When we have found our version 'of the heart', the result is often simply beautiful." What is particularly impressive is the global sound of the quartet, always balanced and finely tuned, which casts its spell without any breaks and with great warmth. Recorded in 2020 and shaped by the corona pandemic, this album is like a light at the end of the tunnel for us, Kemperle says. "For me, *Echoes* is a reflective album with an incredible amount of energy and light at the same time - I hope that those who will listen to it will feel the same way".