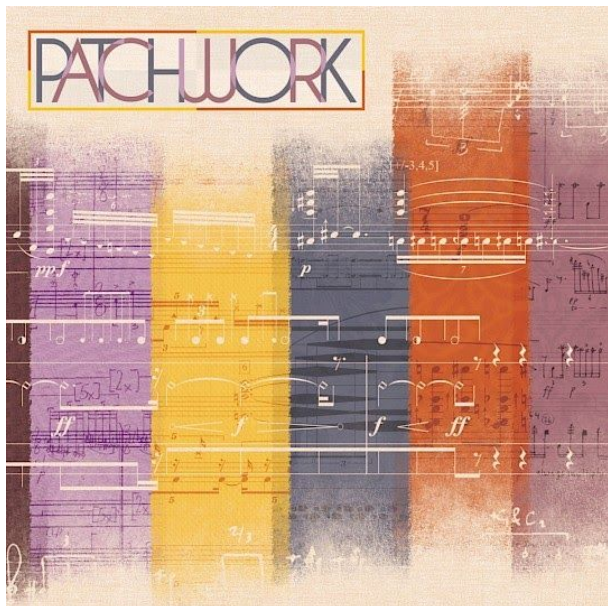


CD Review — *Patchwork*

by Mike Telin



On their recent, self-titled debut album, the Cleveland-based duo [Patchwork](#) — Noa Even and Stephen Klunk — present five commissioned works that draw on free jazz, metal, progressive rock, and the avant-garde. Released on New Focus Records, the album takes you to a sonic world never dreamed possible from a saxophone and drum set duo. As we have come to expect from Even and Klunk, the five works are an exploration of extended techniques. More importantly, their performances are bewitching — ensemble playing at its best.

The album opens with Osnat Netzer's *Zwang und Zweifel*, a work that vacillates between orderly and discombobulated musical lines. Klunk's opening tom-tom rolls immediately grab your attention. Even's introductory comments are tentative, almost unsure, but later they become manic as she and Klunk goad each other into a frenzied dance. Netzer paints a wide color palette for both instruments which holds you at the edge of your seat, waiting to hear where the next line will go.

Inspired by a quote from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Hong-Da Chin's *...time was not passing... it was turning in a circle...* is an engaging work of cyclical passages. Soft tongue slaps from the saxophone are underscored by the drum. Even's serpentine, microtonal sax lines dare Klunk to catch her if he can with outbursts from cowbell, bass drum, and wood blocks. The work ends as it began until a stinger from both players says a final goodbye.

Eric Wubbels' *Axamer Folio* consists of 25 short sections with no pre-set order, form, or duration. During the duo's excellent 19-minute performance, listeners are faced with a barrage of extended techniques from Even, including squeaks, multiphonics, key clicks,

and tongue slaps. Klunk proves himself to be a chameleon as he brilliantly shifts from one musical style to another.

Pop songs containing the word “love” in the title serve as a point of departure for Erin Rogers’ *Fast Love*. In her composer note, Rogers lists *What is Love*, *What’s Love Got to Do With It*, *I’d Do Anything for Love*, *I Want to Know What Love Is*, *The Power of Love*, and *All You Need Is Love*. But if you’re expecting to hear the iconic sounds of artists such as Tina Turner, Meat Loaf, Foreigner, Robert Palmer, and The Beatles, think again. As Dan Lippel writes in his performance notes: “The piece we hear on the recording is somewhat less radio ready, but no less captivating.” Rogers uses a variety of musical gestures, including vocalizations by Even, that she makes new time and time again throughout the nine-minute work. It’s whimsical and noisy, but most of all, Even and Klunk have fun with it.

In his composer note, Dan Tramte explains that the YouTube video “Showing off my wind up toy collection” from 2013 is the inspiration for *G@iND*. Tramte also asks listeners to imagine that you “wake up from a disturbing dream.” If all this sounds overly complicated, perhaps it is. Nonetheless, the piece is an interesting juxtaposition of the complex sound world of wind-up toys with the calm of white noise. Klunk outdoes himself as he makes music with a variety of wind-up gadgets, while Even’s soft breaths bring the piece and the album to a close.

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