

Jungstötter Bio / Text ENG

2019

Fabian Altstötter released his solo debut »Love Is« under the moniker ‚Jungstötter‘ : velvety, calm pieces, bound to the synergy of his band of versed musicians orbiting jazz, carried by a voice somewhere between Mark Hollis and Scott Walker. The sound: reduced, simple, elegiacal. Now, four years later, this vision continues and finds far more idiosyncratic forms, opening up new, bright horizons. »One Star«: ten pieces between a yearning love song and an uneasy contemplation of the world. We hear a mountain range of an album. Climb peaks in the tense relationship between Fabian Altstötter's inner life and the outside he experiences. Fall into gorges, get lost, are found. With the gaze constantly directed to the sky.

In

contrast to Jungstötter's debut, on »One Star« we find music that doesn't lead us to its references. It has found courage in itself and, in addition to the calm of the predecessor, which is still there providing grounding, also undertakes excursions into instrumental extremes.

The ten songs are at times intricate, condensed, testament to a new complexity. They move much closer to the songwriter Fabian Altstötter, focus on him as a composer, an architect, a trapper, pulling on strings, playing. Aware of the past and at the same time strikingly future-oriented, a unique music is revealed that leads the listener into worlds rich in contrast. The avant-garde elements of these intense compositions come not least from the influence of the small label ‚unguarded‘, which is run by Altstötter's closest friends and has become a hub for young, headstrong musicians, publishing their hyper-intricate music visions. They are mere excursions into these sonic spheres though, experimental dabs that always lead back to self-confident, mature songwriting. We hear romantic pop music: melancholy, tentative, sensitively developed, secure and fragile at the same time and, in that, full of radiance. A music that draws on tradition and at the same time moves on an equal footing with the innovations of a young, musical modernity. The combination of these sound worlds creates a new star on the firmament: »One Star«!

What

might be the reason for this change? Fabian Altstötter, born in 1991 in Palatinate, Germany, soon left his former home, Berlin after the release of his solo debut in 2019. He went to Vienna and stayed during the pandemic. A new city, where he still lives today with his partner Anja Plaschg (aka Soap&Skin), giving him new musical and artistic impulses. Altstötter found structure in everyday family life, isolated himself in his songwriting, let it grow patiently, used the break, opened up an echo chamber to create something new without brushing over his artist biography.

After a personal crisis in the summer of 2021, a meltdown, as he puts it, he picked himself up again and gathering the debris, that a severe depression had left of his music and self-esteem as an artist. In a wondrous way he pieces them together. Fabian Altstötter got up, and in the calm after the storm this album emerged, which had often loomed over him like a dark star threatening to swallow him. Suddenly it started to glow.

R i g h t

from the start »Know« announces brilliantly what awaits you on »One Star«: past and future knowledge are sung about, the transcending individual between heaven and body. The piece thus becomes – wandering untrodden paths linguistically as well – the perfect prelude. Gathering the motifs that (will) know how to touch each other over the ten-part song span. Altstötter's production is particularly striking here, hinting at an affinity for someone like Arve Henriksen. His distinct silence however merely being cited delicately. Then there is a bang, driving up to the sung sky, getting dense and denser and explodes. And again, the production: "Nothing Is Holy" for example, dark and opaque, full of metal loops and subbig cabin pressure, deforming the otherwise largely clear voice. Staging Jungstötter as a fallen angel. Strings come in, pushing black chunks aside, letting in light. But in the end, darkness wins.

A

movement between earth and heaven, described again and again, runs the entire mood of the album: lying on the ground, testing the surface with his hands, Jungstötter looks at the sky, which is constantly changing. Turning grey, dark, then shining, cloudless. Thunderstorms, sheet lightning, colors, rocks, cloudiness, enlightenment. blackout. width. »One Star« is an album between abstraction and precise description, which in its intensity makes the passing of time palpable, allowing an awareness from which one can observe the course of things. The music becomes a constant. A shining star that provides orientation in a dying world. So it goes on, dense, intricate, direct. It's hard to believe the distance covered within the songs, that makes »One Star« a complex fucking grower.

T h e

grand finale then picks up on the star making up the fixed point. "One Star", the title track of this grand album, shows how Jungstötter's lyrics have opened up a new horizon and give the poet one last chamber - on this album at least. Between longing for death and melancholic, bubbling infatuation, the sky passes by with gospel brilliance. Beneath it we wander through the inner landscape one last time, that this album has created. In the end it is the irrepressible longing for something to happen - beginning or end, only for something to happen: »Oh give me a star / Give me / Oh give me a star / Why don't you let a star fall down onto me / I'm standing here with my open arms ready to catch it / Ready for an embrace / Why don't you give me that star".

N o w, here it is: One Star!

- Hendrik Otremba