

DRANK

INGRID SCHMOLINER / ALEXANDER KRANABETTER

Breath in Definition – Trost Records TR254
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Ingrid Schmoliner and Alex Kranabetter are pillars of the improvised and experimental music scenes in Austria stretching back more than a decade. Although the former is known primarily as a pianist and vocalist and the latter as a trumpeter, they both possess seriously expansive sonic palettes. Schmoliner works rigorously with sound direction to generate vibrant psychoacoustic and spatialized effects, while Kranabetter routinely deploy electronics to radically transform and expand his sound worlds in solo and collaborative settings. Perhaps no single endeavor captures the full splendor of their aesthetic tendencies like their duo Drank, which will release its stellar debut recording *Breath in Definition* on Trost. The album includes guest appearances by drummer Lukas König and Soap&Skin (aka Anja Franziska Plaschg), but this music is all Drank.

In recent years Schmoliner has gained attention for a growing number of projects, whether improvising with the singular Chicago percussionist Hamid Drake, playing with GRIFF—a sound-sculpting trio Berlin-based percussionist Emilio Gordoa and bassist Adam Pultz Melbye, where her knack for translating furiously percussive, minimalist gestures hits with visceral intensity—or developing a potent duo called *Nabelóse* with French horn player Elena Kakaliagou. Additionally, she's got a solo organ practice and with Kranabetter she's scored music for film and theater. Kranabetter also possesses mad chops as a trumpeter, connecting the extended techniques of players like Axel Dörner and Arve Henriksen with an often lyrical, full-bodied attack rooted in post-bop tradition. On his 2021 solo album *textures* he deftly blurs all of those lines, stretching his virtuosity with electronics and polystylistic sensibility driven by sonic exploration more than any genre conventions.

"Iridescent" opens the album with meditative layers of long tones, as electronics extend and enhance sustained trumpet lines and e-bowed piano drones, forging a texture-rich harmonic investigation that balances stasis with relentless microtonal motion.

"Min" is built around the cycling prepared piano lines that have become a Schmoliner trademark, a swirling cascade of sound that morphs in such tiny increments, à la early Philip Glass, that we often don't notice the shifts until we're already in the next sequence. Kranabetter's electronically-treated brass skitters and swell atop these hypnotic patterns, injecting noise, abstraction, and irregularity to the relatively fixed foundation hammered out by his partner, flaming out in a collision of vaporous ambience and primal, key-clacking rhythm.

"Gitta" features the remarkably versatile drummer Lukas König (Mopcut, the Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters) contributing a seductively jagged, shape-shifting groove formed with Schmolinier's steeplechase piano riffs. It provides the perfect foundation for the trumpeter's most elusive playing, including a mewling stream of unpitched breaths and spasmodic noise, but the piece is an act of constant transformation.

The album concludes with the title piece "Breath in Definition" where the spoken word delivery of Anja Franziska Plaschg is accompanied by the least mediated sounds on the album, with Schmolinier's prepared piano patterns and Kranabetter's trumpet melodies awash in little more than reverb. In Drank the possibilities for sonic sculpting feels limitless.