

**DEK** ist ein neues Improvisationstrio mit **Ken Vandermark** an den Saxophonen, **Elisabeth Harnik** am Klavier und **Didi Kern** am Schlagzeug. Die Formation arbeitet seit September 2014 zusammen und spielte seither Konzerte in Europa und den USA. 2016 wurde das Trio im Rahmen von Ken Vandermark's Residenz im The Stone in New York City gefeatured und Ende des Jahres veröffentlichte DEK sein Debut-Album „Burning Below Zero“ (TROST Label). 2017 tourte das Trio wieder in Europa und veröffentlichte zudem drei weitere Aufnahmen „Construct 1-3“, allesamt Livedokumente, die auf Audiographic Records erschienen.

Die Musik von DEK hat sehr vielfältige Einflüsse, die durch die unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen der MusikerInnen eingebracht werden: Harnik's Klangkosmos, der ihre Schaffensfelder als Pianistin in der Improvisierten Musik und als Komponistin Neuer Musik auslotet, Kern's Profil als Schlagzeuger sowohl in der Underground-Rock-Szene als auch in der Improvisationsszene und Vandermark's zwei Jahrzehnte lange künstlerische Arbeit, die den Jazz in seiner zeitgenössischen Form entscheidend mitgeprägt hat in zahlreichen langjährigen Projekten und in so unterschiedlichen Kollaborationen wie etwa mit Gétatchèw Mèkurya oder John Tilbury.

Die Kombination dieser unterschiedlichen musikalischen Backgrounds und die offene Neugierde der drei Musikerpersönlichkeiten hat eine außergewöhnliche Gruppenästhetik entstehen lassen: inklusiv, expressiv, unmittelbar.

CD-Rezensionen:

„Burning Below Zero“ (TROST Label)

The Free Jazz Collective 2017: \*\*\*\* star review by Eyal Hareuveni

DEK stands for the first names of Austrian drummer Didi Kern and pianist Elisabeth Harnik and Chicagoan reeds player Ken Vandermark. Since Austria, and especially Vienna, have become one of Vandermark main stops during his busy touring schedule, establishing ongoing collaborations with local musicians was only natural. Vandermark performs there on a regular basis, records in the fine studios there, works with a local label, Trost, and collaborates with others local musicians such as Christof Kurzmann in the Made to Break quartet. DEK Trio began to work in September 2014 bringing together a wide range of backgrounds and influences. Harnik, known as a new music composer and free-improviser who collaborates with double bass master Joëlle Léandre, fellow Chicagoan reeds player Dave Rempis, is a member of the Plasmic and Barcode quartets and the interdisciplinary Rose is a Rose is a Rose project which is inspired by the work of Gertrude Stein. Kern has worked with alternative Austrian bands as the noise-rock trio BulBul and the genre-defying Broken.Heart.Collector and collaborated in recent years with Mats Gustafsson (check their *Eissalon (Live)*, Rock is Hell Records, 2013); Vandermark charges this trio free-improvised interplay with his diverse experiences, ranging from the intricate minimalism of AMM's pianist John Tilbury to Afro-beat of late Ethiopian sax player Gétatchèw Mèkurya.

The trio debut album was recorded live recorded shortly after its establishment on October 2, 2014 at the RAJ hall in the southern Austria town Klagenfurt. The three “RAJ” free-improvisations highlight the organic, instantaneous interplay of this trio, expressive and powerful one, open-ended and curious. On the opening, extended “RAJ One”, Kern keeps challenging Vandermark's rhythmic attacks and subtle sonic searches with fast-shifting rhythmic ideas and colors spiced with healthy doses of humor, detail and invention while Harnik frames their muscular, game-like interplay in a structured narrative, introducing into it delicate sounds extracted from the piano strings. The following, extended “RAJ Two” suggests a more “burning” interplay, way beyond zero, where each musicians feeds the other

with intense energy in an intensifying cycle. This piece stresses the versatile, rhythmic sensibility of the DEK trio, moving freely from driving-stormy eruptions to gentle, lyrical touches. The last, short "RAJ Three" is a cathartic outcome of the expressive energy of this great trio.

Coverage in *The New York City Jazz Record* 2017: Review by Tom Greenland

The close chemistry of the DEK Trio, named for drummer Didi Kern, pianist Elisabeth Harnik and Vandermark, is well represented on *Burning Below Zero*, a live recording at Raj in Klagenfurt, Austria. Although the mic'ing doesn't pick up all of the piano's delicate nuances, much detail remains in the two epic tracks and brief closer. "Raj One", almost a half-hour long, is a through-improvised musical movie of diverse acts and scenes. Vandermark's big-toned tenor and even biggertoned bass clarinet, which he switches to mid-track, form the tonal center while Harnik's extended techniques, including unusual implements to scratch, scrape, rub, swat, rake or pluck the exposed strings, fill out the set piece. "Raj Two" shows a wider dynamic range and features Vandermark on soprano, then bass clarinet and finally tenor; after the group ad-hocs a major/minor ballad in E-flat, his unadorned solo ushers in a gentle ruminative ending centered around C-Major. The rowdy finale, "Raj Three", is dense and percussive, quickly mounting to and maintaining an intense climax, a fulfilling conclusion to the irenic ambiance established during the previous track.

„Construct 1: Stone" (Audiographic Records)

*The Free Jazz Collective* 2017: \*\*\*\*½ star review by Gustav Lindqvist

(...) Construct 1: Stone is, as the title implies, recorded at The Stone in New York. We've seen and heard Vandermark at The Stone before at Vandermarks 6 day residence there last year. It was very celebrated here at FJB and rightly so. Now we finally get to listen to what happened on January 8 during that brilliant week of creativity and collaboration.

DEK Trio offers 2 great performances on this album (20 and 24 minutes) and right from the start of the first song '*Speed Table*' I'm nailed to my lounge chair. Vandermark is of course great but the manic and intense playing by Harnik is what really gets to me first. The first tune has a sense of urgency and forces me to not move a muscle until its done. Harnik keeps rolling out long carpets with an alarmin character. She's so closely connected to Kern that it's almost scary. Is this improvised or just practiced down to the very last note?! In any case it is insanely tight. When it's over I need to re-listen and another time to figure out what's going on. Harnik and Kern has such a strong connection and Vandermark travels in and out of the music with what I hear as the greatest respect for this spectacular performance, of course without holding back his own expression. Wow!

In the second song '*Stop The Clocks*', Vandermark presents himself with a slow murmuring sound almost vibrating from a distance. Then Kern joins in and they start to build & construct with bits and pieces sprinkled across the soundstage. Finally, Harnik starts adding chords and notes. They're searching, looking into different directions but with a constant delivery of dispersed sounds. Eventually it comes together with increased intensity and haste. There's suddenly a common picture being painted with Kern providing a steady beat to which Vandermark and Harnik works very elegant in sync with an even more increased intensity – especially from Harnik. Of course, it can't last forever. Vandermark and Harnik fades out leaving Kern to work alone. He's searching, looking in different directions to find a new way forward. He almost comes to a complete stop with Vandermark providing small screeches and sounds, turning into a mechanical ticking pulsating in strength and intensity, regular and

irregular. The trio comes together in this landscape of moving bits and pieces and delivers a final round, trying to find a way out. Kern leads the way with another steady beat as Vandermark and Harnik joins in. It all fades out and we're left with scattered notes...and it's all over.

This is so engaging, and adding this as a seventh album of Vandermark's "Momentum 1: Stone" makes that box set even better, but all in all it stands very well on its own!

Highly recommended.

„Construct 2: Artacts" (Audiographic Records) and „Construct 3: Divadlo" (Audiographic Records)

The Free Jazz Collective 2017: \*\*\*\*½ star reviews by Gustav Lindqvist unter:  
<http://www.freejazzblog.org/2017/11/dek-trio-construct-2-artacts.html?spref=fb>

<http://www.freejazzblog.org/2017/11/dek-trio-construct-3-divadlo.html?spref=fb>

BIOS:

**Ken Vandermark** lebt on the road und in Chicago. Bereits in den sechziger Jahren gelang es der Metropole mit AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), die Entwicklung der experimentellen Musik in Amerika mitzubestimmen. Chicago gilt heute als einer der Brennpunkte der internationalen Improvisationsszene und Ken Vandermark hat dazu maßgeblich beigetragen. Er prägt den Jazz in seiner zeitgenössischen Form seit einem Vierteljahrhundert entscheidend mit, sei es in seinen langjährigen Projekten wie *Vandermark 5*, das *DKV-Trio* oder in Großformaten wie etwa dem *Resonance Ensemble* und spielt mit sehr vielen und den besten MusikerInnen in Jazz und Improvisationsmusik. Im Trio DEK hat er sich mit zwei Freigeistern aus der österreichischen Szene zusammengetan.

**Elisabeth Harnik** bewegt sich im Entwerfen ihres Klangkosmos in den Spannungsfeldern von improvisierter und notierter Musik. Sie hat Klassisches Klavier und Komposition studiert, ihre Werke werden regelmäßig aufgeführt und sie ist Teil zahlreicher Ensembles für Improvisierte Musik. Darunter sind Formationen mit österreichischen Musikerinnen und Musikern sowie internationale Kooperationen. Seit 2008 arbeitet sie auch mit Musikern aus Chicago, etwa mit dem Saxophonisten Dave Rempis, dem Cellisten Fred Lonberg-Holm oder dem Schlagzeuger Michael Zerang.

**Didi Kern** lebt in Wien und ist der vielseitigste Schlagzeuger der Stadt. Sozialisiert mit Rock und Techno profitierte er enorm vom Spirit der von Marco Eneidi geleiteten Celeste-Sessions, wo er sich über die Jahre zu einem Meister im Improvisieren entwickelte. Sein Schlagzeugspiel ist geprägt von großer Flexibilität im Umgang und der Vereinbarung unterschiedlichster Rhythmen. Gespielt mit Paul Lovens, Ken Vandermark, Mats Gustafsson und vielen anderen. Als Rockmusiker spielt er (neben vielen anderen Gruppen) bei Bulbul, einer der besten Underground-Bands in Wien.