

JAZZMAGAZINE

Following her premiere last June at the Jazzdor Strasbourg-Berlin-Dresden festival, bassoonist, singer and composer Sophie Bernado literally "enchanted" the audience at the Fossé des Treize with a luminous new version of her "Célestine in the Clouds" project. In this dreamlike, marvelous journey to the heart of sound, breath and voice, Sophie Bernado projects her music into that sensitive zone of "commun(ica)tion" where body, soul and intelligence merge into a single universalist utopia.

From the outset, the quartet's instrumentation calls out and suggests that the sound territories about to be opened up and surveyed are out of the ordinary. By combining her bassoon (already an unusual instrument in the field of jazz and improvised music) with the double bass of Joachim Florent, the vibraphone of Japanese-born Berlin musician Taiko Saito and the multi-faceted voice of singer Marie-Pascale Dubé, Sophie Bernado clearly demonstrates her desire for the unheard-of, in an all-out commitment to interdisciplinarity. And indeed, from the very opening of what will turn out to be a long and fascinating journey, as imaginary as it is ultra-sensory, into the most intimate of sonic matter, the tone is set for this vast process of deterritorialization with the allure of a manifesto as poetic as it is political. Enchanted by the sonic enchantment of Taiko Saito's vibraphone, as precise in its nuances as it is powerfully expressive; driven by Joachim Florent's pulsating, colorful double bass, from sensualist grooves inspired by African music to intense minimalist, repetitive sequences à la Steve Reich ;animated by Marie-Pascale Dubé's extraordinary variety of vocal techniques, borrowing as much from the contemporary realm (from Aperghis to Meredith Monk) as from free improvisation (Lauren Newton, Annick Nozati) and extra-European traditions (Inuit shamanic chants) to enrich the rich, shifting collective sound paste with its complex polyrhythms and precious timbral flows - Sophie Bernado's music not only frees itself throughout from all notions of style and genre, but creates its own, powerfully syncretic idiom. Letting her electronically-worked bassoon take on the sounds of a shehnai in the course of improvised melodies, suddenly introducing it into the dreamlike meanderings of harmonic environments reminiscent of new music (Arvo Pärt) or contemporary music (Luciano Nerio), then drifting imperceptibly towards a kind of experimental pop resembling the song form - Sophie Bernado innovates, surprises, seduces and, in the end, lightly touches on rare metaphysical and poetic depths. A real favorite!

Stéphane Ollivier

Translated with DeepL.com (free version)