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## Orp • Orp 4

The shadow of the cat on the hot tin roof? At first, the cover of the new CD by the Viennese duo Orp is rather enigmatic. It is indeed a cat's shadow, the cat belonging to Michael O'Rourke, Orp's cellist, and it ended up on the cover because Orp have a thing for ambiguous, associative images. "And because cat pictures are a selling point," jokes guitarist Horst Prillinger. "Too bad none of the people that we asked were able to recognize it's a cat, but at least that way we're spared reviews that would accuse us of caterwauling."

It's not caterwauling, even though there is some meowing in the opening track "Our Delicate Wall of Sound". However, Orp is not building that delicate wall to attract cats, but rather to make a room resonate. Orp is making music for rooms and spaces. Usually this kind of music is referred to as Ambient, but while Brian Eno, who is regarded as the "inventor" of this genre, explains Ambient music as "an atmosphere, a surrounding influence: a tint" in the liner notes of his album *Music for Airports* (1978) and calls it "music for specific times and situations", Orp have a much more concrete concept: they don't see ambient as a surrounding, but more specifically as something that populates a space: not just a tint on the wall, but the furniture.

"Strictly speaking our music is not really Ambient," says Prillinger, "because it does not fulfil one of Eno's fundamental criteria: you cannot just ignore it. We make music for spaces, but not background music. Ideally, we'd like to play it in places where the music forms a symbiosis with the surroundings, where they mutually highlight each other." "

O'Rourke would like to play in locations characterised by their spaciousness and emptiness, like deserted buildings, warehouses or abandoned tunnels, and thus temporarily fill them with music and listeners. So far, such attempts were thwarted by inaccessible buildings, uncooperative landlords or simply lack of electricity.

Electricity is a central element in the music of Orp as it is electric in more than one sense of the word. It is no coincidence that inside their new CD *Orp 4* there is a picture of a warning sign on which a stick figure is struck by a bolt of lightning: "Orp unplugged would be a near impossible challenge," says Prillinger and points at the 16 effect pedals on the floor in front of him through which he sends the signal of his electric guitar and which generate one half of the Orpian soundscapes. The other half emanates from O'Rourke's electric cello, which has to be content with about half as many pedals and which sometimes sounds surprisingly

like a saxophone or a chainsaw. O'Rourke has one more ace up his sleeve, or rather on his lap: a muurni khuur, and electric version of a two-string Mongolian horse head fiddle, only with a cat's head rather than a horse's head, custom-built by Viennese luthiers MADA Guitars. Orp's recipe is a well-balanced application of these instruments and electronics: "All of this may look oversophisticated, but what we're doing with them is really very simple."

As multi-layered as Orp's soundscapes may be, both musicians believe in reductionism. While the first two albums mostly used electric piano, electric cello and a good deal of silence, the more recent recordings saw an increased use of electric guitars, but without becoming impenetrable or being drenched in reverb: "no clichés, show the rough edges but no weirdness for its own sake, and above all let the music breathe" is the musicians' credo. They like to call themselves an "experimental ambient jazz ensemble" and move in the spaces between Ambient, Minimalism, Electroacoustic Improvisation, chamber jazz and Drone Doom Metal. Having to choose a fixed genre when they are uploading music for publication on iTunes and Spotify feels like, according to Prillinger, "an exercise in futility."

*Orp 4*, the duo's aptly-titled fourth album, was recorded in a number of sessions between July and December 2018 and released in February 2019. It is a 72-minute tour de force across these genres in the slow tempos preferred by the band. As with the previous albums, it focuses on textures rather than melodies. Recorded almost exclusively with electric guitars and electric cello, it is another step forward from its *Because We Knew That This Is What Would Happen*. Occasional referential flashes to Fripp & Eno, Earth, Pink Floyd circa *A Saucerful of Secrets* or to the early works of Philip Glass aside, these soundscapes show a distinct identity and character, that is executed without much compromise in the nine tracks, which typically are seven to ten minutes in length.

So far, Orp have mostly played in very small circles, except for a performance at the 2018 Donaukanalreiben Festival. To present *Orp 4*, they will perform on Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at Rhiz Vienna, Lerchenfelder Gürtel, U-Bahnbogen 37-38, 1080 Wien.

#### Album information:

*Orp 4* can be downloaded or streamed through Amazon, Apple Music, Bandcamp, Google Play, iTunes, Spotify, Tidal and many other music services.

The CD was released through vienna2day, catalogue number VORP009CD, EAN 9007970013871, and can be ordered at <https://o-r-p.bandcamp.com/album/orp-4>

#### Line-Up:

Michael O'Rourke (USA): electric cello, muurni khuur, electric guitar, theremin  
Horst Prillinger (AUT): electric guitar, bass guitar, electric piano, percussion

#### Web Links:

Website	<a href="http://orp.aardvark.at">http://orp.aardvark.at</a>
Bandcamp	<a href="https://o-r-p.bandcamp.com">https://o-r-p.bandcamp.com</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://facebook.com/orp.ambientjazz">https://facebook.com/orp.ambientjazz</a>
iTunes	<a href="https://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/orp/1142684637">https://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/orp/1142684637</a>
Soundcloud	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/o-r-p">https://soundcloud.com/o-r-p</a>
Spotify	<a href="https://open.spotify.com/artist/7vVnstyvm1rbQIGSmfhRd5">https://open.spotify.com/artist/7vVnstyvm1rbQIGSmfhRd5</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqw_WJiVVVTT1NS6KmQf9HQ">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqw_WJiVVVTT1NS6KmQf9HQ</a>

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