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Kilter - Axiom

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Jazz – Metal. Most of us will automatically think of either Primus or, more recently, White Ward. Both might be quite good cornerstones to describe Kilter's debut album "Axiom" out on February 28th. However, these two comparisons do not hold enough substance to really be used for the music this trio is set to release upon us via Alter-Nativ, the label run by Kilter's own bass player, Laurent David; nevertheless that doesn't mean the label is just there to release Kilter's music, it's rather the other way round with David using his own well-off label to release his new music.

Kilter's lineup consists on David, Saxophone player Ed Rosenberg III and drummer Kenny Grohowski; each band member has a very impressive musical past so that we can mention quite a list of awesome artists they played with: David played with Guillaume Perret, Grohowski has worked with John Zorn, Trey Spruance, Felix Pastorius and is the drummer for Imperial Triumphant; Ed Rosenberg is a well-studied composer and performer who collaborated with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Bottleote Music Collective in Dublin and contributed the hammered dulcimer for some other bands.

To come back to the comparison with Primus and White Ward: Kilter doesn't use bass to dominate the sound like Primus and they don't leave the saxophone standout as much as White Ward do, their sound is much more flowing and all-encompassing. The saxophone can deliver the melody or the rhythm, sometimes the rhythm section works like a rhythm section, but often David's bass is used like a guitar and the drums are running amok while the saxophone tries to soothe the audience.

Very often we associate jazz and jazz-rock or jazz-metal with the annoying way of musicians showing off their skills but neglecting the song – this can definitely not be said of Kilter. Their jazzy post-metal is very organic and they work very much for the sake of the song; we can still hear a lot of "crooked" sounds and structures working against each other at first glance – well, we are dealing with three excellent musicians here, who know how to do both things at the same time: Play for the overall idea of a song and still show how good they are. If you are willing to listen to something pretty unusual, this will bring you lots of joy discovering new oddities with every spin.

Thorsten