

Perfect Sound Forever

online music magazine presents...

Robert Quine



interview with composer Corin Curschellas

Q: Did you know about Robert's work before you met him?

CC: I had heard the Name Robert Quine in one of the typical "musicians speak about musicians- night" and since I later found out, on what albums Robert had played, I realized, that I already heard him before, without connecting name and guitar playing together.

Q: How did you meet Quine? How did you get to work with him?

CC: It was 1996, in NYC. I asked Peter Scherrer to produce an album: *Valdun - Voices of Rumantsch* which was sung entirely in the Rumantsch language with contemporary poems and an ancient text of the 8th century. But the music I wanted to be urban, in different styles of today, so that this practically disappearing language(50,000 still speak it) would sound less marginal, since only a few understand Rumantsch, the songs would become very understandable through music. Peter Scherrer then proposed to me NYC Musicians and contacted them because he worked with all of them, and Robert Quine was the choice for guitarist, together with Marc Ribot.

Q: Could you describe the experience of working with him? What we he like to work with?

CC: The first day's recording session I felt pretty shy with all these musicians I didn't know personally. Robert had dark glasses and I couldn't see his eyes- at same time, I felt that he was very friendly but quite silent with words. He wouldn't make a lot of words, but he and all the people were really interested in doing this. So I had to understand that his personality was not talkative but in a covered way, very gentle and warm.

I had also the feeling that this was a musician with most interest was music. You know that musicians can be into cooking or collecting stamps and whatever but he seemed to be entirely into music. The second day, he made a surprising compliment for my voice lines improvisations in a fade out. He said that amazingly, I hadn't sung too many notes. It was just the perfect amount of notes. (I) left enough space... and that singers often tend to overdue (it).

On the second recording day, Bob and I went to the Brooklyn Deli. He asked me about the language Rumantsch, was very curious about those people of the Alps. Later, he told me that he gave a very very special guitar for his wife's birthday. I said 'oh, your wife is a guitar player too?' No, he answered, but it was just the finest greatest guitar (can't remember the specification) and he just had to get it for her. Besides, it seemed he owned many guitars already. I remember him telling me specifics, but I have forgotten what. During the sessions, he got more and more relaxed and felt comfortable, half lying on the couch while playing. Big ears. It sounded very inspirational. Bob was extremely friendly and an entirely special person. The contrary of superficial.

Q: How would you describe his guitar playing?

CC: He didn't seem to need to be a soloist. He liked playing along with Marc Ribot like the perfect sideman. Simple, rough severe sound, loud amplifiers, an earthy sound, gritty, but on the whole, feeling, floating. Not spectacularly technical. More gravity based flying...

Q: Do you have any stories about him that are typical of who he was?

CC: Returning to NYC, 2 years later I entered a music store in the East Village with two musicians. I didn't remark about the man in the corner who checked out a guitar, besides he wasn't plugged in. "I know this voice", said the person, "it is Corin Curschellas' voice." What a surprise to meet Bob so unexpectedly. He told me, that *Valdun* was his favorite record he played on, a masterpiece. And surely the best he and Marc did together... this music would take away his headache! And he said that even his mother liked *Valdun*! I was totally pleased (how do you call it, flabbergasted? flattered?). It was an absolute compliment. Of course, I tried to talk some more with Bob, but it seemed that he had said, what he wanted to say. I invited him to Switzerland. He said he'd love to, but it was impossible.

Also Peter Scherer told me that Robert Quine each time they met, spoke about this record and Mark Ribot told me so too. I am very happy that Robert played on my album and very sad, that he decided to leave. I hope, that he is in a better place now. His music remains.

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