

LUCIA CADOTSCH „SPEAK LOW“ (ECHO JAZZ 2017 "singer of the year")



artist name LUCIA CADOTSCH

album titel SPEAK LOW

label enja/yellowbird records

US distribution Naxos

homepage www.luciacadotsch.com

LUCIA CADOTSCH (CH) voice
OTIS SANDSJÖ (SE) tenor saxophone
PETTER ELDH (SE) double bass

Echo Prize-Winning Jazz Singer Lucia Cadotsch made her U.S. Debut at the NYC Winter Jazzfest in January 2018 with her Berlin-based “Speak Low” trio featuring saxophonist Otis Sandsjö and bassist Petter Eldh. They're performing music from their debut album, „Speak Low“, which earned five-star raves in both DownBeat and The Guardian along with glowing reviews for its companion remix album, „Speak Low Renditions“.

“When Cadotsch sings standards with her kindred-spirit trio mates, Sandsjö on tenor saxophone and Eldh on double-bass, songs from a half-century ago feel renewed, as timeless art is refracted through a modernist prism. With no harmony instrument and the uncanny blend of these three performers – the cool precision of the vocalist, the free-jazz edge of the instrumentalists – such songs as ‘Willow Weep for Me’ and ‘Moon River’ have fresh textural and emotional resonance.” – DownBeat

With a sharp-eared love of the past but a sensibility resolutely of the present, new-era jazz singer Lucia Cadotsch’s trio “Speak Low” – featuring tenor saxophonist Otis Sandsjö and double-bassist Petter Eldh – reanimates songs long seemingly set in amber. Hailing from their adopted home of Berlin, Germany – the 21st-century culture capital of Europe – these three musicians come at the Great American Songbook from a European angle, their “retro-futurist” sound as informed by remix culture and free jazz as by their appreciation for classic vocal records. Reviewing the group’s eponymous debut album of 2016, [Speak Low](#) (Yellow Bird/Enja), The Guardian declared:

“Remember the name Lucia Cadotsch – you’re going to be hearing a lot of it,” adding: “Cadotsch is a young, Zurich-born vocalist who possesses a classical clarity, a folk singer’s simplicity and an appetite for performing very famous songs (‘Moon River,’ ‘Don’t Explain,’ ‘Strange Fruit’) in the company of two edgy free-jazz instrumentalists, who flank her sedate progress with split-note sax sounds and spiky basslines with percussive strumming. In this compelling trio’s hands, the process is remarkably melodious and illuminating... It’s all eerily beautiful.”

Along with glowing reviews, Lucia won the 2017 Echo Jazz Prize – the German equivalent of a Grammy Award – for Best Vocalist of the Year for *Speak Low*. She and her Swedish friends Otis and Petter bring the bittersweet repertoire of Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Abbey Lincoln and Dinah Washington vividly alive for a new generation of listeners, as well as for veteran music lovers in search of fresh treatments of these timeless songs.

Profiled in *DownBeat* magazine, Lucia explained the individualistic approach she takes with the trio: “I want to be subtle and melodic in my phrasing, but I also need roughness and intensity in music. Otis and Petter say in the songs what I don’t say myself. While I’m the still center, they can storm around me.” Alluding to the act of stripping nostalgia from this repertoire, Otis added: “Our common unsentimental approach to these melodies takes away the glossiness that these beautiful songs can often get stuck in.”

Discussing their arrangements, Lucia said: “What we do is like sampling culture in hip-hop. We might quote a detail from an old recording, but change the register and tempo and then loop it into our arrangement organically.” The trio arranges its songs together, often inspired by obscure details from vintage records. As *DownBeat* noted, they turn a high-register clarinet part in “Deep Song” from a Billie Holiday LP into a bass line; they echo an intro improv seen in a live Nina Simone video of “Ain’t Got No” in their arrangement; they repurpose a marimba line in Johnny Hartman’s version of “Slow, Hot Wind” as an outro hymn melody. German magazine *Jazzpodium* described these reinventions as “like a musical night trip... urban, with an analog directness and a sheer boundless freedom in its approach to interpretation and sound.” And the *DownBeat* double review of *Speak Low* and its remix-album follow-up, *Speak Low Renditions*, hailed the trio’s creative approach overall: “Such is the spell that Cadotsch, Sandsjö and Eldh cast that it can make one feel that this is the only way age-old standards should be approached: not slavishly but fearlessly, with an unfettered imagination approaching that of the songs’ originators.”

The trio’s distinctive black-and-white videos for *Speak Low* have a European art-house feel, as with the official album trailer [here](#). There is also a gorgeous one-shot music video for “[Slow Hot Wind](#)” as well as live videos for “[Speak Low](#)” and “[Strange Fruit](#)” / “[Ain’t Got No](#)” among others. Touching upon their European roots, Lucia, Otis & Petter have lately added to their live repertoire an arrangement by the great Italian modernist Luciano Berio of the Anglo-American folk song “Black Is the Color of My True Love’s Hair,” as well as an English translation of the dark “Ballad of the Drowned Girl” by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. About the storytelling resonance of old songs, whether sung by Lotte Lenya or Billie Holiday, Lucia concludes: “Times change, but humans don’t seem to, for better and worse.”

Petter wrote a poem adorning the sleeve of *Speak Low* that also sets the scene for what New York concertgoers will experience upon the trio’s maiden voyage to America:

It was a different world back then.

**There was a time before you could amplify sound with electricity,
before you could accumulate sound in plastic
and bring it from one corner of Tellus to another.**

This is the remix. Keeping it simple and raw.

Three voices stubbornly creating the core of all music; Rhythm!

Candles still flicker, the frequencies of yesterday still resonate.

This is acoustic retro-futurism!

"Remember the name Lucia Cadotsch– you're going to be hearing a lot of it."

THE GUARDIAN - 5 stars - John Fordham

"Colossal." **JAZZTHING**

„I haven't heard anything this impressive in a while.“ **JAZZPODIUM**

"I like what you're doing. Congratulations." **T.C. Boyle**

"The group is one of the most in-demand in Europe at present. With good reason."

Oliver Weindling, The Vortex, London

„So ingenious is the way vocalist Lucia Cadotsch reimagines the canon of standards that the songs feel fully in the here and now. (...) Such is the spell that Cadotsch, Sandsjö and Eldh cast on these albums that it can make one feel that this is the only way age-old standards should be approached: not slavishly but fearlessly, with an unfettered imagination approaching that of the songs' originators.“

DOWNBEAT (US) 5 stars – Bradley Bamberger

"Many singers deliver standards songs as they are conventionally sung. A few, such the late Betty Carter take risks and reap a greater reward. Lucia Cadotsch is one of those, but it is impossible to imagine her interpretations of "Speak Low", "Don't Explain" or "Moon River" without the contributions of her two Swedish collaborators, the saxophonist Otis Sandsjö and the bassist Petter Eldh."

Richard Williams, Jazzfest Berlin

„The band led by the young Swiss vocalist Lucia Cadotsch, featuring double-bassist Petter Eldh and tenor saxophonist Otis Sandsjö, gives an object lesson in focus and forensic detail in its arrangements, playing on the delicious paradox that the art of improvisation, so generative of freedom, can actually be at its most liberating when it is placed under careful, constructive constraints.“

Jazzwise, Kevin Le Gendre

HOME PAGE

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ALBUM

[Lucia Cadotsch - SPEAK LOW](#) (enja/yellowbird records 2016)

[Lucia Cadotsch - Speak Low Renditions](#) (enja/yellow bird: album release 27.4.2017)

VIDEOS

[Slow Hot Wind live on Alpha Centauri](#)

[Strange Fruit / Ain't Got no live at Schaffhauser Jazzfestival](#)

PRESS

[DOWNBEAT](#) 5 star album review - June 17 (US)

[DOWNBEAT](#) portrait about Lucia Cadotsch - October 17 (US)

[THE GUARDIAN 5-star review](#) (UK)

[Jazzwise Magazine](#) (UK)

[London Jazz News Interview](#) (UK)

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