

In 1969, Claus wrote an album for Oscar Peterson titled *Motions and Emotions* on the MPS label. Some of it's good, some of it's commercial, and some of it is knockout, above all the chart and performance of the Jobim tune *Wave*. The chart is, as one might expect, exquisite, but particularly noteworthy is the extended ending, and the way Claus can build incredible tensions with rising ostinatos. It is stunning writing, and the extended closing passage an indication of an emerging method in his compositional techniques.

In the 1977 album *Amoroso* that Claus wrote for João Gilberto, one finds the Italian song *Estate*, which means "summer." The arrangement is almost unbearably poignant. That one recording launched the tune as an international jazz standard. Then in 1979, Claus wrote *Terra Brasilis* (Warner Brothers) for Jobim. The album (containing another of the tunes I wrote with Jobim, *Double Rainbow*), came out in 1980.

After that, Claus arranged and orchestrated only his own music, including *Cityscape*, featuring tenor saxophonist Michael Brecker, in 1982. In 1989 they collaborated again on *Claus Ogerman featuring Michael Brecker*.

But let us back up to 1976. That was the year of an album on Warner Bros entirely of Claus's compositions, a suite titled *Gate of Dreams*. It is marvelous, haunting, brooding, expressing that poignant Prussian melancholy that I think is the core of Claus's work. Bill Evans called the suite "a reminder of finer things." And so it is. But it presents problems to those who want to put things in labeled shoe-boxes as "classical" or "jazz" or "pops" because Claus draws on all these idioms. It's simply gorgeous, with the writing reflecting all his musical experience up to that time. And it is the shape of things to come in Claus's writing. The *Gramophone* critic who in 1988 couldn't find out who Claus was wrote of the *Tagore Lieder*: "I can only report that these seven songs are in a loose post-serial idiom." He got that right, and also the perception of their "sparse, tonal lyricism."

*Gate of Dreams* was produced by Tommy LiPuma, another of the most respected producers in the history of the business. He told me that when he started producing, Creed Taylor was his hero. Tommy is the producer of the Diana Krall albums, including the one Claus wrote for her and recorded in London.

This brings us to something Claus and I both believe. After nearly a century of serialism (or atonalism, if you prefer) and an unrelenting attempt to convert the concert public to its acceptance, it is gradually dawning on a good many people that it just doesn't work. For even our speech is tonal, and so is the music of all nature, including the songs of birds. In postwar Germany, as the late Henry Pleasants (who lived

there), pointed out, it became the fashion, indeed the imperative, to embrace Arnold Schoenberg because the latter was Jewish, and his music was anathema to the Nazis. And so to emulate it and follow its precepts was a way of declaring "I was never a Nazi!" The grip of serialism on European and American classical music became, in the postwar years, unbreakable, and accessibly tonal new music was considered second-class, if it was considered at all. It was a kind of musical McCarthyism. Claus never bought it. And that is one reason critics generally have not known where to put him — and particularly given the influence of jazz, and even pop idioms, in his work. (*Gate of Dreams* uses electric bass, wah-wah guitar, Latin percussion and guitar solo by George Benson.)

The conformity was particularly rigid in the 1950s. In one of our many conversations on this subject, Claus said: "It's amazing that I didn't know the world was so crazy in the early '50s, already — conspiracies between the press and modern composers. It's unbelievable what was going on."

"The term 'post-modern' was born in the States. And the Europeans don't like it. They don't want the avant-garde to be finished. But now they have to live with it. And it means, actually, that this crazy avant-garde, the serialism, is at an ending line. It is another period now. We are in the period of post-modernism, no longer the avant-garde. And the guys like Pierre Boulez hate it: they hate the label *post-modern*. They think they're still so goddamned *in*. But the chaos is over. New people are coming now, trying language that is at least accessible."

I said, "Well, jazz, if anything, proves that the system is anything but depleted. You need only consider some of the pianists: Teddy Wilson, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner. You can hear them play the same tune and they all sound different using the same tonal system."

"It has never left," Claus said. "You know, the greatest musical mind in America is a gentleman named Alan Forte. A music scientist. He was the first one to nail it down, as far back as 1957, where he proved that the twelve-tone system, the serial system, is nothing but what has been said before. He has been able to define clusters or chord structures by number. It is very interesting."

"It could be that Schoenberg, with *Transfigured Night*, knew that he could not step into Wagner's shoes. He tried in that direction. But to me, it was a break into a jewelry store. The ones who would take over the scene. And they had enough music politicians behind them to get this number across for a while."

"But I think with the term 'post-modernism,' this book is closed."

"Yeah," I said, "and they're rediscovering people like