

## **Natural Artefacts – The Crux: Explorations in Jazz**

The first edition of the Swedish improv group Natural Artefacts played regularly for more than 15 years. After a break, when saxophone player Ove Johansson passed away in 2015, the original members Susanna Lindeborg and Per Anders Nilsson created a second edition in 2018 together with the two young musicians Merje Kägu and Anton Jonsson on guitar and percussion respectively. What unifies the players involved however, is their jazz back ground. With this new repertoire, comprising of new compositions and improv concepts exclusively created for the present line up, Natural Artefacts continue to explore new and yet unknown musical territories.

A point of departure for the author Per Anders Nilsson in this project is to investigate man–machine interactions. The improvisation group Natural Artefacts includes a mix of acoustic and electronic instruments. Is it possible to program electronic instruments, such as sequencers, samplers, and synthesizers in such a way that an organic “groove and feel” of jazz occurs? No one should however mistake the machines employed for human musicians. The author has composed a number of compositions that in different ways explore this avenue, with an aim to blend elements from diverse musical genres and traditions such as free improvisation, serial music, minimalism, ambient, electronica, and electroacoustic music. At the core of the investigations is a particular machine, the Octatrack sampler/sequencer from the Gothenburg based company Elektron. In order to create creative constraints, Nilsson decided to build the new repertoire almost entirely on this machine. At the outset, the Octatrack is designed for musical genres such as techno, house and other types of beat-based dance music, which means that all sounds are triggered from a pre-defined position in a rhythmical grid. By playing around with function generators, such as random low frequency oscillators, sample and hold, and probability based trig conditions however, it is possible to circumvent the rigidity of the perception of a pre-defined grid. As it turned out, with deliberate programming, the Octatrack can be a flexible musical partner, and mostly acts as a virtual bass player, comprising a jazz sounding rhythm section together with human drummer Anton Jonsson.