

Ezz-thetics

a column by
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Trio Kimmig-Studer-Zimmerlin is a group of virtuosic German-Swiss string players – violinist Harald Kimmig, bassist Daniel Studer and cellist Alfred Zimmerlin – who employ free improvisation to create music in a direct line of European art music, their works suggesting the high seriousness and rigorous precision of Schoenberg or Bartok conjoined to a vastly expanded rhythmic and sonic palette, whether making their strings into percussion instruments or weaving a tapestry of harmonics. At times they play at dynamic levels to challenge hearing, suggesting a distant garden's light irrigation, articulating, perhaps, the anxious promise of silence. At times *Raw* (Leo CD LR 766), recorded in Munich in January 2015, has the emotional weight of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, the musicians' focus so intense that Butcher's long tones have passed to Zimmerlin's cello, the thought arising of an alchemy of sound in which everything is wind, everything bowed and scraped string, as if the sounds have been aerated in a kind of organic ring-modulation. *Raw* may be the least "raw" music among Butcher's recent recordings, possessing the structural clarity of Boulez's Webern set for Columbia.