

Karl Seglem
Norskjazz.no

Light-flooded darkness

With his 25th album, Karl Seglem presents us with an amazing jazz record in a class all its own. Serenely, yet bursting with energy, the Norwegian composer/saxophonist's quartet gets down to work here. In January, Karl Seglem made a brilliant recording of a medieval ballad with singer Berit Opheim Versto. The mystical atmosphere he created there on a bukkehorn (ram's horn) is now celebrated on the tenor sax, and folk gives way to jazz. The Norwegian origins remain present, experiencing a musical renaissance in this acoustic jazz quartet's interpretations. The album's titel, norsk jazz no (Norwegian jazz now), already hints at the tongue-in-cheek humor that can easily be heard in these compositions. Karl Seglem is a musician who simply cannot be pigeonholed - and with the titel alone making such a statement, it is inevitable that the somewhat bewildered question should arise: Is this contemporary Norwegian jazz? The answer is irrelevant, and even amuses Seglem: "As long as people keep wondering about it, the music lives, and maybe it can expand our 'inner space'." With the Eple Trio, the saxophonist born in 1961 got significantly younger musicians into the studio for norsk jazz no. Andreas Ulvo (1983) on the piano, Sigurd Hole (1981) on the bass and Jonas Howden Sjøvaag (1978) on drums are all not only excellent instrumentalists, but exactly the right people for this project. Starting with the „Portugal Song“ the four musicians develop a level of suspense that is relentlessly maintained til the last strains of „Sein Song“.

When the last notes have faded away and you more or less get back to „the real world“, the sound of this CD still has a grip on you. All seven songs on the album are carried by an overwhelming mood of dreaminess, and the phantasmagoric music they create here is performed by the four Scandinavians with an ease that simply fascinates its listeners. The way the quartet builds up the suspense on Stengde Dører, for example, is captivating and liberating at the same time.

Karl Seglem, together with the Eple Trio, has managed to put together a homogeneous selection of music that has its roots in classical jazz, represents contemporary jazz in the very best of spirits, and points to the future in a big way - this music will not have lost an iota of its fascination in many years to come.

Summary

With norsk jazz no, his 25th longplayer, Karl Seglem, together with the Eple Trio, presents us with an extraordinary jazz album in a class all its own. The serene, yet suspenseful music in the tradition of the great Scandinavian jazz musicians emanates dreamy warmth on this production. The soundscapes painted by the acoustic quartet on the CD resemble a Rembrandt that glows in light-flooded hues of brown.

Live

09.05.09 Balestrand, Balejazz Festival (Norway)
27.05.09 Oslo, Cafeteatret (Norway)
25.06.09 Volda, w.Henriksen/Isungset/Bang (Norway)
26.06.09 Volda, Festival (Norway)
03.07.09 Førde, Førdefestivalen (Norway)
15.+16. 08.09. Fjærland, w. Jon Fosse (Norway)
29.10.09 Oslo, Cafe Mir (Norway)
07.11.09 Jameln, Platenlaase (Germany)
09.11.09 Leverkusener Jazztage, (Germany)