



Gunnar Halle Halle's Planet



Grunge Jazz from Planet Halle

Gunnar Halle's productivity can sometimes seem superhuman. Hardly a month goes by without him adding his crystal clear trumpet sound to a new production from the realms of jazz, world music and beyond; hardly a week passes without him travelling the world in search of inspiration. For his second solo album, however, the Norwegian has taken all the time he needed. It has made him sound more recognisable, take-charge and sensitive than ever. This album is a trip – towards his personal sound, his individual style, his own planet.

Halle's Planet is not a break with tradition, however. In fact, it starts almost exactly where its predecessor *Istanbul Sky* ended: Positively roaring opener "Black Matter" sounds like a direct follow-up to "Trophjelm", which concluded *Istanbul Sky* on a high four years ago. Surfing on a powerful guitar riff, Halle ascends to the highest heights here, exorcising the ghosts of "Bitches Brew". Right after the track has ended, however, the band put the brakes on and start sailing gentler waters for the remainder of the record.

On first listen, *Halle's Planet* sounds simultaneously more introspective and coherent than purposefully eclectic *Istanbul Sky*. And yet, this is not an album of ballads. Instead, all tracks are firmly rooted in an organic rock sound. It seems apt, then, that the most dominant instrument of the album, next to Halle's trumpet, are the drums: Taking turns, Wetle Holte and Knut Finsrud propel the pieces forward with a relentless, grindingly slow groove, which becomes the defining hallmark of the entire record.

Jazz rock marks one end of the stylistic spectrum, intelligent electronica delineates the other. This is not a novelty for Halle. Rather, it constitutes a return to his roots, and the sweetly humming robotics he composed for bands like Jogujo Circuit. Discretely soaring synthesizers lend a sweetly cosmic touch to the arrangements, while some of the beats sound hyper-detailed, as though they'd been meticulously programmed.

Within this stark, otherworldly galaxy, Gunnar Halle's trumpet is the voice of humanity. Experimentation and beauty are not opposites here. They're just different continents of a planet that's both inside of us - and a million light years away.