

**ACT****15 MAGIC YEARS****ACT 9470-2**

LC 07644

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Fifteen years after music producer and publisher Siegfried "Siggie" Loch founded ACT, the Munich-based label can look back on more than 200 releases that embrace a wide range of jazz styles and have been presented with numerous awards for commercial achievement and artistic merit. Siggie Loch has personally selected some highlights, which illuminate the history of the label from the years 1992 up to 2007, for this anniversary-compilation "15 Magic Years".

**Prologue "Della Mae" JOHN LEE HOOKER from "Lost Blues Tapes" ACT 6000-2**

As a teenager, Siggie Loch became a jazz fan after seeing Sidney Bechet live in concert. At the age of 19, he got his first job in the record industry with the ambition of becoming a record producer and starting his own label. His first discovery and recording artist was *Klaus Doldinger* in 1962 - still one of the most prominent jazz artists in Europe today. From 1963 to 1965 Loch produced among others the legendary recordings of "The American Folk Blues Festival", which had also an incredible impact on a generation of young British rock musicians such as the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds etc. When Siggie Loch launched ACT in 1992, the first releases on this label were reminiscent of the beginning of this career as a record producer

**1992 "Tangos" VINCE MENDOZA / AL DI MEOLA / MICHAEL BRECKER / JUAN MANUEL CAÑIZARES / WDR BIG BAND from "Jazzpaña" ACT 9212-2**

30 years after Siggie Loch's debut as the producer of Klaus Doldinger, "Jazzpaña" was his first new recording for his own ACT label. It remains one of the most challenging albums in the catalogue. Recorded in July of 1992, this flamenco-jazz-extravaganza earned praise from all around the world. Composer / arranger / conductor *Vince Mendoza* (virtually unknown at the time) and co-arranger *Arif Mardin* both received American Grammy nominations for this album. This first "eye to eye" meeting between the best of "Jovenes Flamencos" from Spain with some of the giants of American jazz together with the fabulous WDR BIG BAND under the direction of Vince Mendoza remains a timeless cultural highlight.

**1993 "Black Is The Colour Of My True Love's Hair" JOACHIM KÜHN / DJANGO BATES / DOUGLAS BOYD / MICHAEL GIBBS from "Europeana" ACT 9804-2**

Inspired by *Bengt-Arne Wallin's* "Old Folklore in Swedish Modern", Siegfried Loch developed the concept for "Europeana" in 1993: "I strongly believe, that we should not only respect and care for our rich heritage of European folklore, but that we should keep it alive by letting our best contemporary musicians interpret this wonderful music, a music that has been reaching the hearts of people for centuries. This is what we wish to achieve with 'Europeana'." Thus the world-famous British composer and arranger *Michael Gibbs* made these exceptional pieces of the European folk tradition into a whole work for symphony orchestra and jazz soloists that was recorded in 1995 by the NDR radio philharmonic and *Joachim Kühn* as the main protagonist. The album, which received the German Record Critics' Award, was reissued as a SACD in 2006, and the work was finally premiered live in the Musikhalle Hamburg.

**1994 "Mangustao" NGUYỄN LÊ / HUONG THANH / PAOLO FRESU from "Tales From Việt-Nam" ACT 9225-2**

The French-Vietnamese guitar player *Nguyễn Lê* was introduced to ACT by *Peter Erskine* in 1993. This led to his debut trio recording "Million Waves" but a long time before he had dreamed of a band mixing jazz musicians with Vietnamese traditional musicians, playing a music inspired by the songs his mother used to sing to him. Only in September 1994 he felt confident and experienced enough to begin recording "Tales From Việt-Nam". It is a journey back into his childhood, a return to his lost roots. But it also meant the creation of an imaginary folklore that stems from a crossroads of contemporary influences.

**1995 "Walk Tall" NILS LANDGREN FUNK UNIT / ESBJÖRN SVENSSON from "Paint It Blue" ACT 9243-2**

It was at the JazzBaltica Festival 1994 that *Siggi Loch* heard *Mr. Red Horn Nils Landgren* for the first time and was fascinated by his skill as a trombone player, his energy, drive and determination. At first many people felt there was no need or space for a Swedish "Blue Eyed Funk Band" in the already overcrowded record market but *Siggi Loch* was absolutely sure to have made one of his most important discoveries in his long career in the music business. When sitting and talking about the concept for the first studio album for ACT both discovered their love for the late Cannonball Adderley and the idea of a tribute album was born. *Esbjörn Svensson* was on keyboards with special guests *Michael and Randy Brecker, Till Brönner, Airto Moreira and Bernard Purdie*. The rest is history. By 2007 *Nils Landgren* has recorded 15 and produced a further six albums for ACT. He received 16 golden record awards in Germany and Sweden and 3 platinum German Jazz Awards. Today *Siggi Loch* likes to call *Nils* the "backbone" of the ACT label.

**1996 "Wade In The Water" EDDIE HARRIS / NILS LANDGREN / BERNARD PURDIE / WDR BIG BAND from "Soul To Jazz" ACT 9242-2**

Chicago born multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer and bandleader *Eddie Harris* was one of the most original saxophone players in the history of jazz. Nonetheless his accomplishments as an innovative and creative jazz musician were consistently underrated. *Siggi Loch* invited *Eddie Harris* 1996 to become part of the ACT / WDR Big Band project "Soul to Jazz". On "Wade In The Water" *Harris* chases one of his greatest admirers, trombonist *Nils Landgren*. The studio recordings as well as the concert on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1996 will be unforgettable and sadly became his swan song. *Eddie Harris* was hospitalised after his return to L.A. and died four months later.

**1997 "Massanicissé" SORIBA KOUYATÉ / PAOLO FRESU / LINLEY MARTHE from "Kanakassi" ACT 9272-2**

*Soriba Kouyaté* is a griot, one of a group of West African musicians whose heritage can be traced back to the 13th century. Griots are historians, praise singers, and gave council to kings. *Soriba's* father *Mamadou Kouyaté* is a legendary kora player and opened the first kora school. The son toured around the world with him and investigated the possibilities of widening the scope of the kora by combining the richness and depth of the griots' tradition with contemporary music. His eclectic worldview has led to his work with *Peter Gabriel, Salif Keita, Youssou N'Dour* and *Dizzy Gillespie*.

**1998 "Down By The Old Well" TOMASZ STANKO / BENGT-ARNE WALLIN & JAZZ BALTICA ENSEMBLE from "The Birth and Re-Birth of Swedish Folk Jazz" ACT 9254-2**

*Quincy Jones* lived in Stockholm in the early 60's working as an arranger for the Swedish Radio and sharing a room with the young trumpet player *Bengt-Arne Wallin*. It was *Jones* then who advised him to dig into the deep Swedish tradition of folk music to create his own musical cosmos. The final result was the album "Old Folklore in Swedish Modern", released in 1962. These recordings were absolutely groundbreaking and paved the way of many Scandinavian musicians and future generations who became popular with Scandinavian folk-jazz. In 1997, *Siggi Loch* suggested to *Rainer Haarmann*, the musical director of the JazzBaltica Festival, to invite the Swedish composer to re-arrange and direct the original music for the Jazz Baltica Ensemble. The concert was a triumph. The radio recording with a *Tomasz Stanko* in his prime, together with the re-release of the original album from 1962, is another absolute highlight of the ACT catalogue.



## 15 Magic Years

**1999 "Dodge The Dodo" e.s.t. ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO from "From Gagarin's Point Of View" ACT 9005-2**  
*Esbjörn Svensson* was introduced to ACT as the keyboard player of the *Nils Landgren Funk Unit* in 1995. He was signed then to the Swedish pop label Diesel. Although already successful in their home country e.s.t. were unknown elsewhere. The piano-wunderkind was very impressed by the success of *Nils Landgren* on ACT and wanted to join the team. First *Siggi Loch* produced a duo album with *Nils Landgren & Esbjörn Svensson* in 1997. But when he was listening to the advance copy of "From Gagarin's Point of View" he left all considerations for label politics aside and made a licensing agreement with Diesel for e.s.t. outside of Sweden. The release of "From Gagarin's Point of View" on ACT was the beginning of the unparalleled international success story of this magic piano trio and "Dodge The Dodo" became their anthem in concerts for years to come.

**2000 "Calima" GERARDO NUÑEZ / MICHAEL BRECKER / CHANO DOMINGUEZ / COLIN TOWNS from "Jazzpaña II" ACT 9284-2**

"Jazzpaña II" is an album that wishes to finally place the importance of the current Spanish jazz scene in the right light. The first "Jazzpaña" recordings in 1992 were clearly dominated by American players. Eight years later *Siggi Loch* put together a clearly Spanish dominated session led by the flamenco guitar genius *Gerardo Nuñez*, *Chano Dominguez*, *Jorge Pardo*, *Perico Sambeat*, and *Carles Benavent*. This group was joined by *Renaud Garcia-Fons*, *Fareed Haque*, and the unforgettable *Michael Brecker*. The openness extended by all involved with "Jazzpaña II" has resulted in a music that sounds like if flamenco and jazz have somehow always belonged together.

**2001 "The Global Soul" DAVID BINNEY / CHRIS POTTER / URI CAINE / BRIAN BLADE from "South" ACT 9279-2**

On one of his trips to New York City in 2000 *Loch* was electrified by listening to *David Binney* at the 55 Bar. "I was totally amazed to learn that this outstanding player was hardly known in the US jazz scene and had to play in front of just a hand full of fans." *Binney's* ACT debut album "South" was very instrumental in making him popular in Europe where the album received superlative critical acclaim across the continent. "South" is a true milestone in the ACT catalogue and proof that *Siggi Loch* not just looks after European talent.

**2002 "Tennessee Waltz" JOEL HARRISON / NORAH JONES from "Free Country" ACT 9419-2**

"How do you find your artists" is a question *Siggi Loch* often hears and the answer is double faced: "First you must be out there to see and listen to as many live gigs of unknown artists as possible. Second you should always carefully listen to the artists you are already working with". When *David Binney* was invited to play on a *Joel Harrison* album in New York he told the guitar player that this would make a perfect ACT release. This is how the album got to *Siggi Loch* who had never before heard about *Joel Harrison* nor did he know about *Norah Jones* then, because this album was recorded prior to her sensational Blue Note debut. As "Free Country" was finally released, *Norah Jones* had received 8 Grammys, yet the German magazine "Stereoplay" saw this album as "a chance to experience *Norah Jones's* seductive voice in a more exciting musical context than on 'Come Away with Me'".

**2003 "Fragile" NILS LANDGREN / RIGMOR GUSTAFSSON from "Sentimental Journey" ACT 9409-2**

"*Nils Landgren* is a dream of an artist for a record label", says *Siggi Loch*. "Not only is he one of today's best trombone player in jazz but also a gifted composer, bandleader, producer and vocalist. And last but not least a fantastic human being winning any audience in a storm wherever you put him." After a series of very successful *Funk Unit* projects *Landgren* went into the studio to fulfil a long-held wish: to produce his debut vocal album for ACT which was soon to top all his previous successes: "His naturalness once again shows that our true soul is always touched best through the heart." (WELT)



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### **2004 "Shining On You" VIKTORIA TOLSTOY sings ESBJÖRN SVENSSON from "Shining On You" ACT 9701-2**

In 1997 *Esbjörn Svensson* wrote and produced the fantastic "White Russian" album with *Viktoria Tolstoy* for Swedish Blue Note that made very little impact outside of their own country. Consequently Tolstoy was dropped after just one more album. When she became free of contract Siggis Loch approached her but would only be interested to sign this fine singer if she would team up again with *Esbjörn Svensson*. It took two years before it was *Nils Landgren* who brought the two together again and produced her ACT debut "Shining On You". ACT went all out for *Viktoria Tolstoy* and scored with a German Jazz Award. Today the Swedish singer is one of the most prominent vocalists in Europe.

### **2005 "Asta" LARS DANIELSSON from "Libera Me" ACT 9800-2**

Sweden has been a focus of the ACT recording activities after Siggis Loch discovered *Nils Landgren* at the JazzBaltica Festival in 1994. He has been in close touch with that scene ever since and master double bass and cello virtuoso *Lars Danielsson* became a sideman on many ACT recordings. For his solo debut, *Danielsson* was able to realise one of the most complex projects on the label featuring *Nils-Petter Molvaer*, *Jon Christensen*, *Dave Liebman* and the *Danish Radio Concert Orchestra*. "Libera Me" was not only mixed but also originally recorded in Super Audio Surround Sound.

### **2006 "Funèbre" [em] WOLLNY / KRUSE / SCHAEFER from "[em] II" ACT 9655-2**

One of ACT's declared aims is to discover and support new talent. Michael Wollny - "who is on his way to become a major talent in European jazz" (Stuart Nicholson) – recorded for ACT with his trio [ em ] - "the future sound of jazz" (The Observer) - as well as in a duo setting with 74 year-old saxophone giant *Heinz Sauer*. Wollny's first solo album "Hexentanz" was released end of February 2007. "While listening to the young pianist Michael Wollny I decided to devote a whole new series of recording the *Young German Jazz* scene." The launch of the critically acclaimed *Young German Jazz* series in January 2005 has been one of Loch's most successful ventures these last years.

#### **The CD**

15 Magic Years – ACT 9470-2 – LC 07644

#### **Producer:**

Siegfried Loch

#### **Distributors:**

edel Contraire (DE), edel Musica (AT), Musikvertrieb (CH), Harmonia Mundi (FR), Harmonia Mundi (UK), Karonte (ES), Dargil (PT), Egea (I), Musikklosen (NO), Amigo (Scan), Sundance (DK), A&N Music (GR), Equinox Music (TR), Challenge Records International (Benelux), Distribution Fusion III (CAN), GIGI Distribution (PL), Jazzworld (HK), AS Jahipaun (EST), C&L Records (KR), Gramofon (BIH), Dukyan Meloman (BG), INTEK (SI+HR), Southbound Records (NZ), Divyd (SK), Jassics (ZA), JSC "Bomba" (LT), 2HP (CZ), CD Bar (HU), Planet MGM Distribution (AU), Disk Union (JP), Andante Music (RO), Apostrophe (RU), DC Comp (UA)

#### **THE ACT COMPANY**

Ehrengutstrasse 28, 80469 München, Germany  
Phone +49 (0) 89 72 94 92 0, Fax +49 (0) 89 72 94 92 11  
e-mail: [info@actmusic.com](mailto:info@actmusic.com)  
Visit our website at <http://www.actmusic.com>