

ACT**HELGE SUNDE
NORSKE STORE ORKESTER**

**Helge Sunde Norske Store Orkester
feat. Olga Konkova
Marilyn Mazur**

ACTSACD 9805-2

LC 07644



German Release Date: September 22, 2006

**A swan, a fish, and the art of concealment:
DENADA, Norwegian composer and big band leader Helge Sunde's ACT-debut**

Another astonishing big band leader from Norway: trombonist and composer Helge Sunde, born in 1965. Again a great master of the genre, just like his compatriot Geir Lysne, who astonished five years ago the international jazz world with big band sounds and arrangements of great strength and stylistic distinctiveness. Helge Sunde allows his big band to develop a unique sound of its own. Sunde is himself a member of Geir Lysne's Listening Ensemble, and some of his musicians belong to Lysne's band too. But Sunde - incidentally the same age as Lysne - is in no way an imitator of his colleague. Sunde leads the large jazz ensemble into a sonic territory entirely its own. His language is influenced by the fact that he is also active as a composer of avant-garde contemporary music. His jazz works are shrewdly crafted and contain a multitude of surprising details, and yet: the music on *DENADA* (ACTSACD 9805-2) always remains highly sensual, never academic.

Helge Sunde's versatility can justifiably be called sheer unbelievable. To this date his writing has been more visible than his playing; he has written commissions for the Norwegian Radio Symphony Orchestra, for the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and the Bergen Philharmonic, for the Norway's National Ballet and the Oslo Sinfonietta. He has worked as an arranger for Marilyn Mazur (who is also featured on *DENADA*), for Beady Belle and Caecilie Norby. Furthermore he works as a conductor and producer for pop and classical releases. He teaches jazz, trombone, composition and arranging at the Norway State Music Academy. He can look back to an early success in 1990: together with some fellow students, he was part of an ensemble under the name of he Oslo Groove Company that won the Spellemannspris, the Norwegian equivalent to a Grammy. On *DENADA* we can hear him demonstrate his mastery of a great assortment of roles, as an instrumentalist on trombone, trumpet, tuba and French horn.

From the very beginning on, this SACD displays a mesmerizing, highly differentiated tonal language of vibrant intensity. A driving rhythm supports the ingenious voice leading of the interlocking horn lines. The treatment of woodwind, muted brass and low wind voices is constantly surprising in its multifaceted colouring and an exceptionally subtle use of dynamics. It is hard to imagine a more refined treatment of soft and loud. It was worth releasing this recording on SACD - in highest fidelity - to bring out the full richness of these compositions and arrangements. Very rewarding for the listener!

In all his compositions Helge Sunde displays a considerable and unusual ability to unify opposites, not only in his subtle use of the widest dynamic palette, but also in the coexistence of lyrical beauty and a carefully organised release of energy. Despite the highly organised sense of structure, he leaves a lot of space for his soloists, pianist Olga Konkova (repeatedly), guitarist Jens Thoresen, a number of horn players and last but not least Marilyn Mazur, who has a decisive influence on "Small Landscape" among other tracks. The album combines compositional rigour with individual expressiveness in a most refined and organic way. The French baroque composer Jean-Philippe Rameau once declared it his aim "to hide art by art itself", a maxim that can be heard in a number of Sunde's compositions. They do not advertise their complexity; they make it seem natural. "Lesson III" for example is based on a twelve-tone row exercise that he was given as a student: He succeeded in writing a jazz piece in g-minor while strictly adhering to the rules of serial composition. Sunde recently rediscovered the tune on a faded piece of paper while clearing up his studio - and recorded it: music that never sounds constructed, but remains - at all times - highly sensual.

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Each of the compositions exudes the spirited joy of playing with sound. Not least "Den Grimme" (The Ugly Duckling). Prima ballerina Ingrid Lorentzen from the Norwegian National Ballet needed a new version of Saint-Saëns' "Swan", and Helge Sunde wrote after a long day of rehearsing, while his colleagues cooked a fish dinner for him. Next morning, they found the finished piece on their music stands. Thus the swan received his jazz-knighthood. In no way does he remain an ugly duckling, but he enfolds his beauty with an ironically broken pathos that still carries undertones of his humble origins. The fish evidently did not do him any harm.

Sunde is a virtuoso craftsman and a highly creative spirit. *DENADA* is full of impressively glamorous and unique big band playing, it is a listening-adventure and at the same time an iridescent delight.

The SACD:

Denada – Helge Sunde Norske Store Orkester – ACTSACD 9805-2 - LC 07644

Line Up:

Helge Sunde Norske Store Orkester:

Nils Jansen - soprano sax (solo:1), clarinet (9), flute and alto flute (3,10)

Petter Wettre - alto sax (solo:4), tenor (solo:6), soprano (3) and bass clarinet (9)

Atle Nymo - tenor sax (solo: 3) and bass clarinet (9)

Børge Are Halvorsen - baritone sax (Solo: 4), alto (7) and flute (7,9):

Frank Brodahl, Eckhard Baur (solo: 7,10), Anders Eriksson - trumpets and fluegelhorns

Even Andersen, Øyvind Brække, Geir Arne Haugrud - trombones

Helge Sunde - trombone solo (6,8) trumpet solo (6) tuba and french horn (9).

Guests:

Olga Konkova – piano, Marilyn Mazur - percussion

Jens Thoresen – guitar, Per Mathisen - bass

Rune Arnesen - drums

Tracks:

1 IO 6:17 2 R.I.P. (piano solo) 3:06 3 Requiescat In Pace (R.I.P.) 6:56 4 Denada 7:00

5 Nocturnal Nature 1:40 6 At Dawn (Om Kvelden) 5:10 7 Small Landscape 9:00

8 Idapida 6:26 9 Lesson III 6:21 10 The Ugly...(Den Grimme) 4:33

Music composed by Helge Sunde except #6 traditional, arranged by Helge Sunde, #7 by Marilyn Mazur & Helge Sunde and #10 by Camille Saint-Saëns arranged by Helge Sunde.

Recorded at Rainbow Studio February 10.-13 + March 4, 2005.

Engineered by Jan Erik Kongshaug, conducted, produced and edited by Helge Sunde

Mixed by Jan Erik Kongshaug and Helge Sunde

Distributor:

edel Contraire (D), edel Musica (A), Musikvertrieb (CH), Harmonia Mundi (F), Proper Music (UK), Karonte (E), Dargil (P), Egea (I), Musikklosen (N), Amigo (Scan), A&N Records (GR), Equinox Music (TR), Pink Records (Benelux), Distribution Fusion III (CAN), GIGI Distribution (PL), Jazzworld (HK), AS Jahipaun (EST), C&L Records (ROK), Gramofon (BIH), Dukyan Meloman (BG), INTEK (SLO+HR), Southbound Records (NZ), Divyd (SK), Jassics (ZA), JSC "Bomba" (LT), 2HP (CZ), CD Bar (H)

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