ACD 5045

1 Inner Song 3:22

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Recorded September 1st 2005

Concept of Sorrows and Dangers 12:39
2 I Introduction 1:53
3 II Slow Bossa 2:51
4 III Chronology 5:55
5 IV Cadenza 2:00

Lars Petter Hagen, 2001

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone · Hans Kristian Kjos Sørensen, percussion · Frode Berg, double bass
Vivian Ellefsen, bass flute · Odd Nilsen, trumpet · Thomas Kjekstad, el-guitar · Sidsel Walstad, harp
Kouame Gerard Sereba, vocal / dodo / chekere · Becaye Aldiouma Aw, guitar · Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje,
theremin / vocal · Kolbjørn Holthe, violin · Kenneth Karlsson, Casiotone CT6000 · Alfred Janson, melodicas
Christian Eggen, conductor / Casiotone CT6000
Track 5 features Rolf-Erik Nystrøm and Kari Nystrøm on vocals
Recorded August 31st 2005, and sometime in the late 1970s
Published by Norwegian Music Information Centre www.mic.no

6 Charisma 3:46

Iannis Xenakis, 1971

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Håkon Thelin, double bass
Recorded August 31st 2005
Published by Ed. Salabert

7 Shinjuku Time Out (to Kiri) 1:50

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Recorded September 1st 2005

8 ØX 9:56

Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje, electronics
(should be played at a high volume)
Recorded March 23rd 2005
Published by Norwegian Music Information Centre www.mic.no

9 Tracce 6:32

Luca Francesconi, 1987

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Recorded September 1st 2005
Published by Ricordi

10 Deep 1:46

Rolf Wallin, 2006

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Rolf Wallin, electronics
Recorded June 29th 2005

11 September Tea Break 3:36

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Recorded September 1st 2005

12 Slideshow 7:10

Øyvind Torvund, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto saxophone
Recorded September 1st 2005
Published by Norwegian Music Information Centre www.mic.no

13 Fanfare Lørenskog 1:22

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, sopranino and alto saxophone
Recorded June 29th 2005

14–67 Everyday 20:31

Trond Olav Reinholdtsen, 2005

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm, alto and baritone saxophone · Håkon Thelin, double bass
Marius Hesby, trombone · Birger Mistereggen, slåttetromme (Norwegian traditional drum)
and cymbals · Jørn Simenstad, Norwegian lur (wooden trumpet) and ram's horn
Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje, soprano crumhorn · Øyvind Torvund, alto crumhorn
Rolf Wallin, tenor crumhorn · Trond Reinholdtsen, bass crumhorn /
voiceover / documentary recordings / synthesizer
Recorded June 27th–29th 2005

WELCOME

This CD is a sort of "first testament" and represents the musical and aesthetic universe in which I live and work. Four of the Norwegian contributions fulfil their creators' ambition to use my daily life and saxophone playing as basic material. At the same time, these works represent first and foremost the respective composers' current aesthetic approach. This has proven to be a successful interaction, at least from my point of view as performer. The recording has a dramaturgic development, even though the pieces can be listened to in any order.

Concept of Sorrows & Dangers was the title I gave to a series of concerts I began arranging at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 1998. I put together music from all the different genres I was working in at any given time, since, in my opinion, the general approach was often the same no matter what the genre or form of musical expression. This could be anything from contemporary music to baroque, jazz and free jazz, impro, African, Chinese or Indian music, electronica etc.

People representing a host of different musical styles came together, and the concerts were long and well-attended. I became an observer – albeit an active one – of what happened when the various genres were juxtaposed. At the time of writing there have been ten such concerts, and Lars Petter Hagen has taken the title of the series as the title of his work on the CD. What I actually intended to convey by this title is somewhat unclear even for me, but it has something to do with the fact that most of the music I am involved in does, at some level, contain an element of sorrow – either my own or others'. "Dangers" refers to the chances you take as a performer relying on others – performers or composers – to express your music, and vice versa, the chances they take in allowing me to perform it. But you can take it to mean what you like.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

INNER SONG

Lars Petter Hagen

CONCEPT OF SORROWS AND DANGERS

ON IMPROVISED TRANSITIONS – a very personal programme note

One day a few years ago I was talking to Rolf-Erik in the cantina at the Music Academy. He had just been to audition for the diploma post-graduate course, and he told me about the repertoire he had chosen. He explained that between each piece he had tried to make a gradual change, improvising stylistic modulations so that the otherwise brutal transitions between Bach, Thommessen and Chailleux would sound as logical as possible to the otherwise blasé jury. My initial reaction was scepticism and nervous laughter at what sounded a rather strange idea, with many apparent problems and pitfalls. As the years passed and the idea sank in I found it increasingly fascinating, and it put Rolf-Erik's artistic agenda in a different, if not clearer, light.

Before I began to write this piece I asked to see all available documentation of his musical activity up to that time. This request resulted in over one hundred recordings of anything from Satanist techno to advert jingles, from ethno to neo-classicism, jazz-rock, mountain jazz, evergreens and blues. Much of this was documented thanks to the good old tape cassette, a fantastic innovation that found its way into practically every home and has preserved for posterity a large portion of my generation's auditive upbringing and ability to sing 'Baa Baa, Black Sheep'.

After having listened through these many hours of music which I had barely known existed, I was left with an impression of chaos. At the same time I was touched to realise that the common element in all this madness was not the usual (and often forced) social coupling of diverse cultures and historical eras typical of the crossover genre, but the fact that one and the same person had initiated or accepted every single project, relying solely on his musical intuition. As I see it, Rolf-Erik's pluralistic approach is not about breaking the cultural code of each genre at a technical level, but rather it is about crossing boundaries to find new areas of resonance for his own voice. This results in a not yet widespread style of music – "personal pluralism" – in which the main theme in this case is Rolf-Erik himself, modulating and improvising gradual transitions between the extremes of his own musicianship.

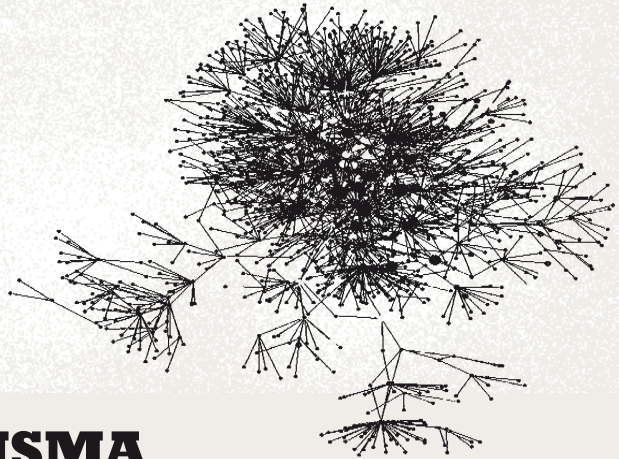
At the bottom of all this lies a fundamental and genuine disregard for convention, combined with a high degree of curiosity and respect for the inherent possibilities of the various music genres. One can sense a desire to approach unresolved and problematic areas of music; to concern oneself with that which is unclarified – in my opinion this is a prerequisite of any successful artistic venture.

Our identity is a result of the impressions we are subjected to in the course of our lives, and the way in which our memory filters them. In this work I hope to reproduce some of the impressions I have had while working with such a unique performer. Filtered through my own memory and preferences, these fragments together comprise a musical object which some may call pluralistic. To me they represent all the complex and indefinable elements that make a performer's voice unique and personal, and therefore universal.

Lars Petter Hagen

LARS PETTER HAGEN (1975) WORKS WITH INSTRUMENTAL AND ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC AS WELL AS SOUND INSTALLATIONS AND MUSIC FOR STAGE AND FILM.

HIS MUSIC HAS BEEN REPRESENTED AT SUCH EVENTS AS THE DONAUESCHINGER MUSIKTAGE, MAERZMUSIK, GAUDEAMUS MUSIC WEEK, HUDDERSFIELD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL, OSLO CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL AND THE ULTIMA FESTIVAL.
WWW.LPHAGEN.NO



Iannis Xenakis

CHARISMA

"then the soul like smoke moved into the earth, grinding" (FROM THE ILIAD)

In my mild frustration over the fact that so few of the composers who have changed the course of music (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Messiaen) bothered to write for the saxophone – either because the instrument wasn't patented until 1846, or for other reasons – I was particularly pleased when I came across Xenakis' *Charisma*. (He has actually written a saxophone quartet.)

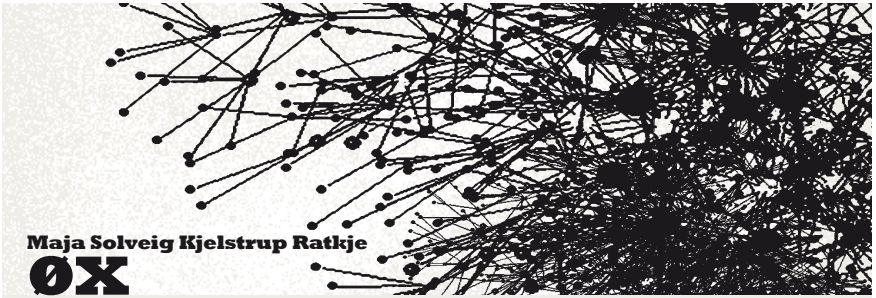
Charisma was originally written for clarinet and cello, but Håkon and I felt we came closer to Xenakis' original intention when playing it on our instruments. Unfortunately Xenakis died before we could confront him with the result. We have played the piece in many countries, including France, and in church at the wedding of Maja Ratkje and Frode Haltli.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

IANNIS XENAKIS' (1922 – 2001) FIRST MUSICAL WORK WAS BASED ON THE DESIGN FOR THE SURFACES OF THE PHILIPS PAVILION THAT WAS BUILT FOR THE BRUSSELS EXPOSITION IN 1958. HE LATER USED MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTERS AS A MEANS OF HANDLING LARGE NUMBERS OF EVENTS IN HIS MUSIC, EMPLOYING GAUSSIAN DISTRIBUTION, MARKOVIAN CHAINS, AND GAME THEORY. XENAKIS' WORKS HAVE EXERTED AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, NOT LEAST DUE TO HIS PARTICULAR INTEREST IN INSTRUMENTAL VIRTUOSITY. WWW.IANNIS-XENAKIS.ORG

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

SHINJUKU TIMEOUT (TO KIRI)



Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje

ØX

I have been avidly following the development of Rolf-Erik Nystrøm's eminent saxophone playing for the past twelve years, and it was his uncompromising approach to the instrument that inspired me to write this piece. In his world, nothing is in principle impossible to play, and he is continually striving to transcend the limitations of his instrument. At the same time, he is not afraid to explore a more romantic approach – a fact his vast network of musician colleagues bears witness to. He seems to appreciate calm and conventionally beautiful sounds just as surely as he loves to travel down more challenging musical avenues.

ØX is a piece in which I originally intended to cultivate simplicity – straight lines, hard edges, noise, silence. It was supposed to be a piece that moved between the extremities of silence (represented by Ø, the empty set) and an unknown factor X that alternates between elements of noise and sine wave-like saxophone notes in the extreme upper register of the instrument, creating amazing difference tones. In the course of the composing process, however, I could not free my mind of Rolf-Erik's more lyrical side (perhaps because my own aesthetic approach contains all these elements too). By retaining a lyrical element, the piece takes on a three-dimensional quality in which the saxophone (the human factor?) falls victim of ØX* – but in a world of art and fairy-tales anything is possible, so the piece has a happy ending.

Maja Solveig Kjelstrup Ratkje

*[Translator's note: ØX is phonologically identical to the Norwegian word "øks", in English "axe".]

MAJA SOLVEIG KJELSTRUP RATKJE (1973) WAS THE FIRST COMPOSER IN HISTORY TO RECEIVE THE ARNE NORDHEIM PRIZE IN 2001. HER MUSIC IS PERFORMED ALL OVER EUROPE AS WELL AS IN JAPAN, CHINA, CANADA, USA AND RUSSIA. SHE IS WELL ESTABLISHED AS A PERFORMER TOO, MAINLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE ANARCHISTIC IMPROV ENSEMBLE SPUNK. HER SOLO CD 'VOICE' GOT A DISTINCTION AWARD AT PRIX ARS ELECTRONICA IN 2003. HER HOMEPAGE MAY BE VISITED AT WWW.RATKJE.COM

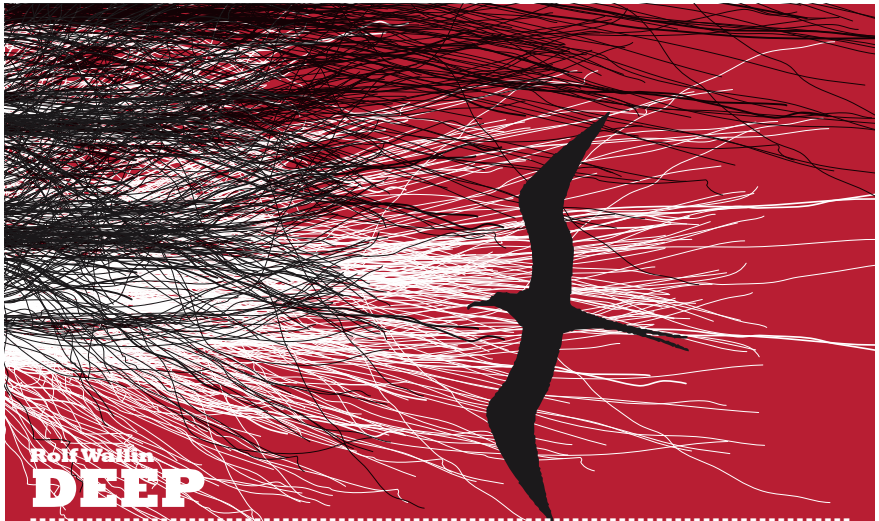
Luca Francesconi

TRACCE

I met Luca for the first time in Paris in June 2002 to discuss details in his saxophone concerto *Trama* which I was to play with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra at the Ultima Festival that autumn. After this he gave me his solo piece *Tracce*, which was originally written for the flautist Pierre-Yves Artaud, and I premiered the saxophone version at the Ultima Festival in 2003. In this piece Francesconi operates, as he usually does, with several layers; long ornaments, short trills and single notes which, even though juxtaposed, give the listener the chance to follow the development of each layer and not to be fooled into thinking, as a less attentive listener might, that it is simply chaos.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

LUCA FRANCESCONI (1956) FOUNDED A CENTRE OF MUSICAL PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY IN MILAN (1990) AFTER FINISHING STUDIES IN COMPOSITION WITH STOCKHAUSEN AND BERIO. HE HAS WRITTEN MORE THAN 50 WORKS, INCLUDING COMMISSIONS BY MAJOR EUROPEAN MUSICAL AND RADIO INSTITUTIONS. FRANCESCONI'S MUSIC IS PERFORMED BY THE WORLD'S LEADING MUSICIANS AND INTERNATIONAL ORCHESTRAS. HE TEACHES AT THE MUSIKHÖGSKOLAN OF MALMÖ IN SWEDEN.



Rolf Wallin
DEEP

I once heard a sarcastic comment on Shostakovich's often theatrical music: "Just because he writes low notes in the cello, it doesn't mean that he is profound."

This piece isn't profound, it's just deep. But on the other hand, it's a whole set of Chinese boxes of depth. I allowed a recording of the lowest note on Rolf-Erik Nystrøm's alto saxophone, with its abundant harmonic spectrum, to become the thirteenth harmonic of a much larger, virtual instrument. Isn't that deep?

Rolf Wallin

ROLF WALLIN (1957) BEGAN COMPOSING WHILE INVOLVED IN EXPERIMENTAL JAZZ AND ROCK GROUPS, SOMETHING THAT HAS PROVED A FRUITFUL COMPLEMENT TO HIS SUBSEQUENT CAREER IN CLASSICAL COMPOSITION. WALLIN USES THE COMPUTER AS AN AID TO MUSICAL INTUITION IN THE COMPOSITION PROCESS, A METHOD WHICH HAS OFTEN STEERED HIS IDEAS IN NEW AND UNEXPECTED DIRECTIONS. WALLIN IS THE RECIPIENT OF SEVERAL AWARDS INCLUDING THE NORDIC COUNCIL MUSIC PRIZE (1998) AND THE EBU ROSTRUM PRIZE (1999), AND HIS WORKS HAVE BEEN PERFORMED ALL OVER THE WORLD BY LEADING ENSEMBLES AND SOLOISTS. WWW.ROLFWALLIN.ORG

Øyvind Torvund:
SLIDESHOW

I was looking for sounds with a raw, ragged quality for this piece for solo saxophone. I had several electronic examples of this kind of sound – such as when feedback is fed through a series of distortion pedals. I searched through my mini-disc library of electronic improvisations, and made a selection of sound files on CD for Rolf-Erik. He listened to these sounds and tried as best he could to copy them on his saxophone. We made numerous recordings, eventually ending up with an entire catalogue of varying sounds. (For many of the sounds Rolf-Erik sang into the instrument using Flatterzunge and vibrato to create interference with the note being played on the saxophone.)

I cut and pasted the material, creating compact phrases, many of which consist of abrupt transitions between various techniques. And so I ended up with a piece of music, which as yet existed only in sound. In order for Rolf-Erik to learn the piece, we had to sit down and transcribe every tiniest detail. When we came to record, however, the piece developed in quite a different direction. The brutal, direct sound disappeared in the acoustic of the church, replaced by airiness and resonance.

About the title "Slideshow": One could perhaps listen to the piece in the same way that you would watch a slideshow; several images of the same sound, taken from different angles.

Øyvind Torvund

ØYVIND TORVUND WAS EDUCATED AS A COMPOSER AT THE NORWEGIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND AT THE UNIVERSITET DER KÜNSTE, BERLIN. HE HAS BEEN COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE WITH THE OSLO SINFONIETTA. TORVUND'S BACKGROUND IN FREE IMPROVISATION ON THE GUITAR IS FREQUENTLY A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION WHEN COMPOSING MUSIC FOR ENSEMBLES. HE IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN COMBINING CONCENTRATED, POWERFUL MUSICAL STATEMENTS IN AN OPEN FORM.

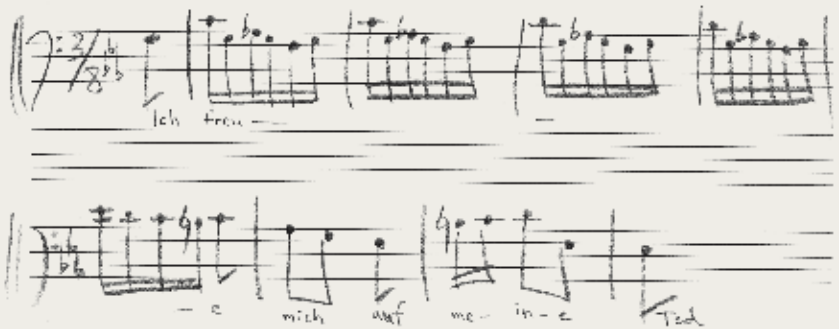
Rolf-Erik Nystrøm

FANFARE LØRENSKOG

Trond Reinholdtsen

EVERYDAY

The piece is in the form of variations on a theme by J S Bach (BWV 82):



Data from the daily lives of Rolf-Erik and the composer, collected over a period of one month, was used as a basis from which to compose the music.

Examples of conversion of *Everyday* data into sound: [ill.: table]

Complete information on the structure of the piece may be found at: http://folk.uio.no/trondo

TROND REINHOLDTSEN (1972) IS A COMPOSER WHOSE CURRENT PROJECTS INVOLVE "DOCUMENTARY MUSIC", DECONSTRUCTING KAGEL, THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF SUBURBAN SPRAWL, CONTEXTUALIZED MUSIC, AND THE THIRD MOVEMENT OF BRUCKNER'S 9TH, BARS 206 AND 207.

ROLF-ERIK'S EVERYDAY STATISTICS

15.des 2004-15.jan 2005

	DATA INPUT:			SAX:				SYNTH:
Date	**Wake-up time**	**Practise hours**	**Alcohole entities consumed**	**Number of beats**	**Length of section (sec)**	**Tempo**	**Starting pitch**	**Spectrum complexity**
15.dec	13.58	1	0	10	12,67	47,4	c4	0
16.dec	13.34	0	0	10	13	46,2	a+3	2
17.dec	15.34	1	2	12	13	55,4	a+4 (or max)	2
18.dec	08.45	1	19	29	9,33	186,5	e+1	21
19.dec	09.30	2	0	10	16	37,5	a1	2
20.dec	10.15	1	0	10	16	37,5	c#+2	4
21.dec	08.45	4,5	0	10	15,67	38,3	e+1	2
22.dec	11.00	no data	no data				f#2	9
23.dec	02.00	no data	no data					
24.dec	no data	4	no data					
25.dec	12.00 (f.ex)	3	3	13	14,67	53,2	c3 (f.ex)	11
26.dec	12.50	3	12	22	12	110	f3	20
27.dec	14.30	no data	0	10	16,33	36,7	d#4	6
28.dec	no data	no data	no data					
29.dec	09.50	no data	no data				h1	
30.dec	11.10	3	1	11	15,33	43,1	g2 (quot?)	7
31.dec	09.00	2	8	18	13	83,1	f#1	12
1.jan	12.20	2,5	6	16	14,17	67,7	d3	11
2.jan	08.17	1,5	5	15	13,83	65,1	d1	8
3.jan	12.30	2,5	1	11	15,83	41,7	d#3	6
4.jan	12.30	3	6	16	14	68,6	d#3	12
5.jan	08.50	2	5	15	13,67	65,3	h1	9
6.jan	08.58	2	0	10	15,33	39,1	c1	4
7.jan	11.35	4,5	2	12	14,83	48,6	a+2	11
8.jan	no data	no data	no data					
9.jan	no data	no data	no data					
10.jan	no data	no data	no data					
11.jan	no data	no data	no data					
12.jan	14.05	0	1,5	11,5	16,83	41	c+4	1,5
13.jan	11.35	2	4	14	15	56	a+2	8
14.jan	11.15	0	1	11	16,33	40,4	c#+2	1
15.jan	no data	no data	no data					

SAX PARTY AND BEYOND

I shall never forget the experience of going straight from an orchestra concert at the Oslo Concert Hall to Rolf-Erik Nystrøm's 30th birthday party. Every nook and cranny of his two-room apartment was packed with guests – not sitting, but swaying, cheering, and singing. At the centre of it all stood a happy Rolf-Erik and his brother-in-arms, accordionist Frode Haltli. Supplemented by various guest performers, the two were serving up a continuous concoction of hillbilly, evergreens, contemporary music, Klezmer, opera, Balkan music, or whatever happened to pop up in their brains. Everything happened at a tremendous pace, interspersed with gags and musical cross references. This was in turn reciprocated by cheering and multipart sing-along from an audience largely consisting of Rolf-Erik's musician friends – all genres and skin-colours represented – everyone sporting a happy, satisfied smile. While most classically trained musicians shy away from bringing out their instruments in good company, the saxophone is an indispensable item in all areas of Rolf-Erik's life – from the lonely, earnest battle fought in the practice room, with all the technical and artistic challenges of a complex score, to transforming a drop-in party into a collective vitamin boost of intelligent fun.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm makes an impression indeed. Not only does he impress his audience with extraordinary control and technique – as if the instrument were an extension of his own body – but he impresses them also with his absolute presence in what he does. And he makes an impression on those who work with him, whether they are involved in contemporary music, black metal, jazz or folk music. The reason we find his name on such a diversity of recordings is that he possesses an intuitive instinct for the style and inner logic of the various genres, and has the ability to perceive and pass on the subtleties and richness of great music in all its guises.
So when four of Norway's leading young composers write music for him, one should not expect conventional "contemporary music for saxophone ". All four are close friends of Rolf-Erik, and each of them has contributed a very personal portrait of him. Their various approaches to the task can be divided into two main categories: two of them have focused on Rolf-Erik's qualities as a unique saxophonist, while the other two have focused on him as a unique person. Sonic portraits and biographical portraits. And, as with all successful portraits, the result tells us as much about the portraitist as it does about its subject.

Concept of Sorrows and Dangers

Conceptualism has had an important place in the visual arts for many decades, but did not become a central element in contemporary music until more recently. In Norway, the younger generation of composers in particular has been responsible for introducing ideas of conceptualism to the national music scene. This has led to some expectedly harsh criticism from conservative reviewers, but it has also opened up contemporary music to new audience groups.

In *Concept of Sorrows and Dangers*, Lars Petter Hagen takes a musical deep-sea dive into Rolf-Erik's life. One example: In the second movement of this quite unusual saxophone concerto, Hagen transforms the super-objective music of Paul Hindemith's *Konzerstück für zwei Altsaxophone* (a piece no classical saxophone player can avoid) into a joyful, uncensored global encounter between Rolf-Erik and an ensemble of musicians who have all meant a lot to him.

One refreshing aspect of Hagen's approach is that his music functions as a catalyst for the listener's imagination, without providing a definitive interpretation. In the fourth movement the mature musician is confronted with a much younger version of himself together with his mother in the form of an old cassette recording. They're singing a popular children's song about goats. As the song progresses, the words of the song become increasingly unfamiliar and the young boy's voice grows less assured, until the stage is taken over by his mother's confident singing. When I pointed out my Freudian associations to Hagen, he said it wasn't intended in that way; but why not? This is art as an open invitation, not a definitive answer.

Ulysses in Oslo

Trond Reinholdtsen's conceptualism may appear more tongue-in-cheek than Hagen's, and it is easy to laugh at his ironic (especially self-ironic) and often slapstick ideas. Under the surface, however, we find a serious exploration of communication and isolation, prejudice and stereotypes, vanity and insecurity by letting the audience come to their own conclusions rather than by hammering home his point.

In his novel Ulysses, James Joyce lets us follow the everyday heroes Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus in a miniature version of the Odyssey, through the minor victories and defeats of a rather unspectacular day and night in Dublin. All this is recounted in a lavish style of language which alternates between high and low, archaic and modern, rife with references to our cultural history.

The backdrop to Trond Reinholdtsen's *Everyday* is the town of Oslo; the heroes are Trond (the Composer) and Rolf-Erik (the Performer). Their two separate journeys have been transformed into musical material by a variety of means. The first musical material is the sound of walking; a journey from the Composer's home to the Performer's. The other is a meticulous log of both heroes' lonely journey through a month at the darkest time of the year in a dark and cold country. The music is full of references, from a yearning for death in Bach's cantata *Ich habe genug* to Renaissance music, Norwegian folk music, Darmstadt modernism – all inevitably pointing to that heroic cymbal stroke.

The Doer and the Thinker

Trond Reinholdtsen, Maja Ratkje and Øyvind Torvund are all strong performers as well as composers. Each in their own way they allow these two areas to "cross-pollinate" one another by using their experience of performing in their compositions, and vice versa. Ratkje and Torvund draw inspiration from the rich sound world that improvisation offers, but which is more or less impossible to transcribe using conventional notation.

Øyvind Torvund has searched explicitly for alternatives to traditional forms of transmission and presentation of musical material. This has not been in order to develop new canonic concert forms, but to investigate what happens in the transmission of material from composer to performer (notated music/oral traditions) and from performer to audience (concert situation) when it is realised by other means than those we expect. The most compact concert form in the project *Bandrom I-III* with the Oslo Sinfonietta was conceived for a single musician and an audience consisting of one person at a time. The largest form used the entire town as a concert hall; the instruments were cars with powerful stereos and a caravan parked at Oslo's multi-cultural Grønland, where members of the Oslo Sinfonietta were taught newly-composed folk music.

Slideshow has also become an investigation of oral transmission, but the music passes many times back and forth between composer and performer; the whole process begins with the performer attempting to emulate a sound which is basically impossible to copy. In oral tradition, such as the transmission of folk music, something is always lost in the passing on of music from master to pupil, but often also something personal is added. What happens when the "master" is a CD of distorted electronic sounds, and the "pupil" is an alto saxophonist with a special talent for multiphonics?

Saxophone Vindaloo

Maja Ratkje divides her time between writing complex scores and performing – she is equally at home with noise and improv music as she is with contemporary music.

While Torvund's *Slideshow* modulates from electric to instrumental, Maja Ratkje goes the opposite way. Rolf-Erik's saxophone sounds undergo transformation in a labyrinthine hall of mirrors in which the reflected images display every degree of recognizability. This is a mode of expression which combines strong qualities of two worlds. On the one hand we have the detailed and complex inner musical discourse of composed electroacoustic music, and on the other we have the rough and spontaneous muscle of noise music (this is like eating hot Indian cuisine through your ears – I recommend the listener to find their preferred strength by adjusting the volume to somewhere between Mild and Vindaloo, preferably closer to the latter).

The World and the Performer

Norwegian music and Norwegian musicians do not live in a vacuum. To complement the image of Rolf-Erik and the Norwegian composers on this recording we have chosen to include music by the Greek composer Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) and the Italian composer Luca Francesconi (1956), both of them highly influential in their respective generations.

And last but not least: the performer himself. Post-war modernism in music has been criticised for having lost touch with its performers. In fact it was precisely the composers' collaboration with musicians that enabled the new music to develop, even if it was thanks to a limited circle of pioneering performers. But just as 'musica reservata' in the sixteenth century was intended for an exclusive group of initiated composers, performers and listeners – and was at the same time indispensable for the growth of baroque music in general and opera in particular – so it is today that we see a blossoming and further development of musical innovations of the 1950s and 60s, propagated by composers and performers in close collaboration.

A close and mutually beneficial relationship between composer and performer, such as this CD is an example of, is becoming more and more common in art music today. This tendency reaches back to a bygone age when it was taken for granted that a musician could improvise in the musical styles of his day. Rolf-Erik Nystrøm is right at the forefront of this development, where the rigid divide between composer and performer is gradually being eradicated. In order to complete this collection of portraits with a group of self-portraits, four of the tracks on the CD are improvisations by Rolf-Erik. Once again these pieces display a personality in which impulsiveness, diversity and openness combine with intensity, discipline and consistency, allowing us to understand just why Rolf-Erik Nystrøm is so much in demand by composers and fellow musicians, and, not least, by an attentive and curious audience.

Rolf Wallin, producer

ROLF-ERIK NYSTRØM

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm (1975) – saxophonist, composer and improviser – took a post-graduate diploma degree at the Norwegian Academy of Music where his teachers included John-Edward Kelly and Harald Bergersen. Nystrøm now teaches a course in improvisation-based contemporary music at the Academy. In 2005 Nystrøm was awarded "De Unges Lindemanpris", and that same year he was nominated for "Edvardprisen" (a prize awarded by the Norwegian performing rights society) together with Helge Lien for their music to the critically acclaimed television series about Alf Prøysen. Nystrøm received the Norwegian Concert Institute's grant for young musicians in 2001, and a two-year grant from the Ministry of Culture for 2004-05.

In 1994 Rolf-Erik Nystrøm was chosen to represent Norway in the Eurovision Competition for Young Musicians. He has subsequently given concerts in over twenty countries, including Japan, China, USA, Russia, Africa and all of Europe. He has performed solo with all the major Norwegian symphony orchestras, Basel Symphony Orchestra, and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Nystrøm performs regularly at festivals such as the Ultima Festival, the Roskilde Festival, Molde Jazz Festival, Bergen International Festival, Nordic Music Days and Gaudeamus.

Over the years Rolf-Erik Nystrøm has premiered and commissioned over eighty works, from orchestral concertos to solo pieces. Composers who have written for him include Richard Barrett, Helmut Oehring, Sachiyo Tsurumi, Jesper Nordin, Steingrimur Rohloff, Luca Francesconi, Michael Finnissy, Atli Ingolfsson, Rolf Wallin, Volker Heyn and Chan Hing-Yan.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm has made over fifty recordings to date, together with POING, HERO, DOZO, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Zanussi 5, Oslo Sinfonietta, No Spaghetti Edition, Lars Lillo-Stenberg, Jørn Simen Øverli, Prosessor Balthazar, Kåre & the Cavemen (Euroboys), Folk & Røvere, Didjexperience, Jokke and Backstreet Girls, Jono El Grande, Margrethe Førre, Dødsverk, and Ulver, among others.

As a composer, Nystrøm has had performances of several of his works, including *Atmosphere* which was performed by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. Nystrøm's output of works for the stage includes music to Saint-Exupéry's The Little Prince featuring Jo Strømgren and Stig Henrik Hoff, commissioned by the Norwegian Concert Institute (2000); Du var vinden featuring actress Juni Dahr, commissioned by the Rosendal Musikkfest (2003); and Jan Wiese's Kvinnen som kledte seg naken for sin elskede (1998) commissioned by Gamlebyen teater.

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CREDITS

All tracks recorded in Lommedalen Church, except track 8, which was recorded in a grotto at Bygdøy in Oslo, built by the German army during World War II.

Producer: Rolf Wallin · Engineer: Audun Strype · Assistant engineer: Ingar Hunskaar (tracks 2–4) · Mixed by Audun Strype (tracks 1, 5–13) and Ingar Hunskaar (tracks 2-4 and 14–67) · Mastered by Audun Strype · Cover design: Martin Kvamme · Photography: Observatoriet · Additional photos from the private files of the Nystrøm family · Liner notes written by Rolf Wallin, Rolf-Erik Nystrøm and the composers · English translation: Andrew Smith.

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A very special and respectful thank you to Rolf Wallin who has spent a great amount of time and energy putting together this record with me; to Audun Strype who for several years has given me time, space & healthy restrictions in the world of sound; to all the musicians who have contributed their unique talent on this album; to all the composers, both those on this recording and all the others I have had the pleasure of working with; to Ingar; and last but not least, to Aurora who initiated this project in the first place.

To my mother & father who have always been there, my sister who kicks ass in everything she does, & Petter Vangstein who is my greatest pal.

Rolf-Erik Nystrøm