



Rune Klakegg - *Fjon*

Rune's round

Pianist, composer, arranger. Leader of his own groups, essential as a co-leader and sideman in several others. Teacher, writer, once the editor of the Norwegian jazz magazine *Jazznytt* – Rune Klakegg's presence on the Norwegian (jazz) music scene has been diverse, distinct and not to forget important over a period of 40 years. Well documented as his extensive work may be, one result of it has been underrepresented on records: His music for large ensembles. *Fjon* will serve to fill this gap.

The short version of the *Fjon* story goes like this: In 2006, Rune Klakegg relocated to his city of birth, Skien (spelled Scheen until 1814) some 130 kilometres southwest of Oslo, after 30 years of having had the Norwegian capital as the home base for his activities in bands like Halle – Klakegg Quartet, Rune Klakegg Trio, Eim, Out To Lunch, Cutting Edge and Søyr. Three years on, he was one of the initiators of what is today *Scheen Jazzorkester*, a professional, regional large ensemble under the wings of the publicly funded South-Norwegian Jazz Centre. Klakegg is the ensemble's artistic director - or the closest thing to an artistic director, saying with a smile that "we have a pretty flat leadership structure" - and when he turned 60 last year, *Scheen Jazzorkester* marked the event in the shape of a concert program aptly named *Runes runde* (Rune's Round). A selection of his compositions were performed, arranged for a line-up of 14 musicians, and in January this year, the jubilant and the orchestra brought *Runes runde* to the renowned Rainbow Studio in Oslo. Here, with his well-known, impeccable sense of detail and totality, sound engineer Jan Erik Kongshaug recorded six Klakegg originals and Klakegg's exceptional arrangement of Henry Mancini's Breakfast at Tiffany's-classic, *Moon River*.

These recordings are now released under the title *Fjon*, an album where inspiration drawn from different sources, mainly jazz and classical music, melt together in various

orchestral expressions. Melody-based compositions, several of them written as pieces for piano, are arranged with a friendly nod (or two) to arrangers like Gil Evans and (Evans' intermittent student and assistant) Maria Schneider, more often than not meaning distinct melody lines played against and within a rich and often complex timbral, rhythmical and harmonic background. Quite a lot is going on in these arrangements, so much so that it will take an exceptionally well-trained listener's ear or repeated listening to catch the full stories that they tell.

With Klakegg at the piano and vibist Rob Waring, Klakegg's accomplice on innumerable occasions over many years, as guest, *Scheen Jazzorkester* handles these arrangements with a combination of improvising playfulness and skill-funded authority which is the most distinguished hallmark of true professionalism. They also receive a well-crafted contribution from another guest, singer Nina Gromstad. Her vocals on *Moon River*, a song known from a vast number of cover-versions which have in common that none of them sound like this one.

"I arranged *Moon River* for *Søyr* around 1990 when I was a member of that band. It is a pretty dark-sounding score, and rather different from the original one", recalls Klakegg. He also reveals that the first song on the album, *Achille*, with its touch of classical impressionism is named after the pioneering French impressionist Debussy, who carried the proud first name of Achille-Claude. Starting out as a piano piece, *Achille* was also recorded by Klakegg's piano trio for his 2012-album *Romantic Notions*. Another example of compositions having carried the transformation from trio to large ensemble well is *Det er noe muffens her* (*There's Something Fishy Here*), first released on the album *Anaerobics* in 1992 and now, with the pianist in the lead, jokingly described by its composer as «the pianist's revenge».



As pianist in bass player Tine Asmundsen's band Lonely Woman, Klakegg wrote *Slapback* and *Blub Club* for Lonely Woman's concert with the American saxophonist David Murray at the Kongsberg Jazzfestival in 2010. *Din meg (Your Me)* was composed around 2000 for Eidsvold Storband (Eidsvold Big Band), whereas *Fjon* is yet another example of a piano piece that made Klakegg sense a potential for expansion into a large-ensemble score, a potential he chanced to meet.

As a whole, this amounts to 55 minutes of music from a vital, Norwegian jazz veteran, finding his place in a relatively fresh, but still seasoned ensemble where alto and flute player Guttorm Guttormsen (66) is one of the musicians that the teenager Rune Klakegg played together with in Skien in the early 70-ies.

And that is how it should be. Some circles are closed while others start, and whenever those never-ending processes lead to music like the music we hear on *Fjon*, all that remains for us to do is receive it, with a bow and gratitude.

Terje Mosnes

Rune Klakegg is a Norwegian pianist and composer (born 1955) who has been active on the Norwegian music scene since the late 70s. Rooted in the modern, acoustic jazz tradition in the style of Bill Evans, Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett, he later moved on to more electric bands, exploring synthesizers, latin, rock and ethnic rhythms in the 80s and 90s. Having been trained in the classical piano tradition, he has later incorporated elements of classical music in his jazz writing, and collaborated with classical musicians. He has also composed music for non jazz ensembles: chamber orchestras, vocal groups and symphony orchestra. Among international artists he has been associated with are Van Morrison and David Murray. He has made dozens of recordings as a leader and sideman.

Some of the more important ones are:

Guttorm Guttormsen kvartett «Albufeira» - 1979

Cutting Edge «Cutting Edge» 1982, «Our Man in Paradise»

1984 and «Duesenberg» 1986 These three LPs were later

transferred to a double CD as «Alle tre» (All Three) 1995

Out to Lunch «Out to Lunch» 1988, «Kullboksrytter» 1995

Rune Klakegg Trio «Anaerobics» 1992

Fuzzy Logic – «Fuzzy Logic» 1996

Søyr «Vectors» 1987, «Bussene lengter hjem» 1994, «Med

kjøtt og kjærlighet» 1997,

«Alene hjemme» 2001

Elin Ødegaard and Rune Klakegg «I will wait for you»

2000

Lars Klevstrand «Sundslegen, herja og naken» (2006)

Lonely Woman «Devil's Diversions» 2006, «Radegund»

2008, «Lovely Luna» 2012

Rune Klakegg Trio «Romantic Notions» 2012

Scheen Jazzorkester «God tro, feil frakk» 2013, «Blåne»

2015, «Fjon» 2016

Lush Life «Ordinary things that everyone ought to do» 2015

Rune Klakegg & Jan Olav Renvåg «Jazz på norsk» 2015

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