

Hilde Louis says “Sound Your Horn”

by Skoot Larson

Hilde Louise Asbjørnsen is a rare and wonderful combination, equal parts musician, poet and storyteller. This enjoyable Scandinavian lady, hailed by Norwegian press as "three parts Monroe and one part Holiday," amply displays all these talents in her latest compact disc recording, "Sound Your Horn."

Hilde Louise's fourth album under her own name, "Sound Your Horn" is a curious mix of rhythms, colors, and unique improvisations by the Hilde Louise Orchestra, a collection of Norway and Sweden's best known musicians, led by keyboardist and musical director Anders Aarum. Soloists include reedman Atle Nymo, Kåre Nymark Jr. on trumpet, and trombonist Jørgen Gjerde, with the rock-solid time keeping of Jens Fossum's double bass. Leader Aarum is kept busy between Hammond B-3 organ, piano, clavichord and glockenspiel.

Hilde Louise's poetry is hypnotic, as is her happy 'little-girl' sounding voice. Her instrumental arrangements are like dark, expensive chocolate – rich, sweet-tasting, and very satisfying, while leaving you wanting more!

At the outset, purists might say "Sound Your Horn" is as much pop as jazz, and there is a definite pop feel to much of the music. But when you listen deeper, there is solid improvisation in old and new styles behind the tunes and their lyrics, not to mention that the lady's words would do any jazz or beat poet of the last three score years proud.

The title track serves as a finale to sum up this CD's many thoughts and moods. "Sound Your Horn" could easily be the signature song of a Broadway musical as it salutes jazz and all happy music. Atle Nymo's tenor saxophone and the trombone licks of Jørgen Gjerde sound like much more than a pair of horns as they fill behind the vocals and accentuate pauses. It is trumpeter Kåre Nymark Jr., however, who lights this number up, his horn growling and barking a solo incantation against depression and blues. Hilde Louise and orchestra together weave a most joyful noise into the fabric of this theme.

On the fast romp entitled "All You Are to Me," the horns shout a gorgeous response to the singers call, accenting the off beats with their cry. Nymo plays a grand batch of

tenor to pull the solo center along and, for the last chorus; the orchestra draws their brakes to a slow final lament.

Trombonist Gjerde has his chance to shine on the blue ballade “Sweet Morning,” as he steps forward from a line of funky horns and the harmonica of Finn Hauge.

Hilde Louise’s *chanson* “Prelude to the Stars,” presents a very Parisienne-style waltz, complete with lonely haunting accordion and bass accompaniment.

The first song on the disc is a strong favorite! “Let’s Stay In,” tells of the tedium of musicians constantly traveling on the road from gig to gig without seeing much of where they’ve been or where they’re going. With a strongly syncopated minor beat, Hilde Louise pleads with her man to just stay in, with the tag line, “Lets make a baby, for heaven’s sake!” The free form ending is a joyful batch of free jazz by Nymo and Nymark.

As they say a picture is worth a thousand words, please take a look at Hilde Louise’s “All He Needs To Know” video on You Tube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGtlU9bXLKI>. The song is from Hilde Louise’s second CD, “Birdie Blues,” and offers a very appealing look at the lady’s creativity. “All He Needs To Know” also has two nice cameo shots of Norway’s greatest living jazz vocal legend, Karin Krog, who has been a strong influence and mentor in Hilde Louise’s career.

Hilde Louis has also performed and toured extensively with the Swedish jazz and pop duo, Magnus Zingmark and Oscar Simonsson, also known as KOOP.

Hilde Louise’s compact disc are available on line from her website, www.hildelouise.com, and occasionally on Amazon.com. If you like thought-provoking lyrics with a twist, I also recommend her first two efforts, “Birdie Blues,” on Upnorth Discs, and “Eleven Nights,” released by Amigo Records. Her newest recording, “Sound Your Horn,” was released last month on Hilde Louise’s own label, Sweet Morning Records.