

Svante Thuresson's Box of Pearls

by Skoot Larson

Jazz singer, drummer, and Sweden's inveterate hipster **Svante Thuresson** has teamed up with Danish vocalist **Katrine Madsen** to create one of the nuttiest and most pleasantly entertaining recordings currently on the international scene. The disc is accurately titled a **Box of Pearls**, and swings marvelously to the accompaniment of pianist **Claes Crona's** trio with bassist **Jesper Bodilsen** and drummer **Pétur "Iceland" Östlund**.

To open this CD, the jauntily bouncing of Bodilsen's bass very coolly leads us into the first chorus of Katrine and Svante's happy, mid-tempo take on "Let's Fall In Love." With what seems like one heart and mind, these two seasoned tunesmiths improvise the *melody* while remaining true to Ted Koehler's lyrics. Crona's piano joins the mix at the second chorus, bringing the show to its full groove. Crona also delivers a very tasty, at times humorous solo using some interesting voicings, from octave spans to solid churchy funk.

While the majority of the songs on this disc are done as duets, there are a few very solid showcases for both of this **Box of Pearls'** stars. Katrine performs the haunting Bruno Martino gem "Estate" in duet with Claes Crona's piano. Later, she trades choruses with Svante on her own composition "*Kom Sæt Dig Her*" ("Come Sit Here"). On this tune's refrain, the two once again put their harmonies together.

Thuresson pours his own solo heart into Don Sebesky's bountiful tribute ballad for Bill Evans, "I Remember Bill." The feeling and emotion in Thuresson's delivery speak volumes about his admiration for Evan's piano styling.

The pair's very fast take on "My Shining Hour" proves one of the finest tracks of this high-power dozen. Katrine and Svante trade verses for the arrangement's head, followed by three choruses of very vouty scat song from Thuresson and a thorough sampling of Östlund's solo drumming skills. As with many of this fine album's tracks, the two principal voices trade words, phrases and ideas with aplomb and gusto. "Shining Hour" exemplifies this in its closing moments; the separate voices trading words right up to their harmonic joining on the last "again" of the lyric.

On Kahn and Styne's "I Fall in Love to Easily," Katrine and Svante trade the slow and easy verses of this melancholy ballad, but others, like Carl Fischer and Frankie Laine's "We'll Be Together Again," and the Gerswin brother's "How Long Has This Been Going On," are delivered at a surprising up-and-swinging pace.

It's rare that any artist puts out a disc with every cut of equal interest and excitement. **Box of Pearls** is such a disc, to the degree that disc jockeys would be hard pressed to select an obvious first choice for airplay. **You Tube** has, however, picked a winner. For a sample taste from **Box of Pearls**, just follow the link to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhoxVDYKtaE>. Here on the small screen, you can view Svante and Katrine as they stroll the environs of Stockholm performing the first "Pearl" from their musical box.

Box of Pearls is available in the U.S. from both www.amazon.com and from www.cduniverse.com. While you're there, you might also check out some of the other available discs from both Katrine Madsen and Svante Thuresson individually. You won't be disappointed!