

NILS LANDGREN

CHRISTMAS WITH MY FRIENDS

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Nils Landgren – trombone, vocals

The man with the red trombone is always on the look out for new challenges. This is what has made Nils Landgren one of the most creative, many-sided and also most successful artists to be currently found in the European jazz scene. With "Mr Redhorn" you don't only associate the frenetic celebrated concerts of his groovy Funk Unit, you also know him from his intimate duos with Esbjörn Svensson where they would rework Swedish folk songs, from his chamber concerts of religious music, from his collaborations with big bands or as a sensitive interpreter of ballads.

Since 1994 he has been under contract to the ACT Label from Munich, releasing over this period 15 albums in his own name. Eight have received the golden German Jazz Award, with two even going platinum! Meanwhile, his role as producer of Swedish singers Rigmor Gustafsson and Viktoria Tolstoy has brought him two further gold awards.

Viktoria Tolstoy – vocals

Her "crystal-clear voice, that is simply enchanting", as the Berlin-based "taz" once put it, has found Tolstoy a place in the hearts of audiences far from the habitat of the Elk. In 1997 the – then 22 year-old – recorded the phenomenal album *White Russian* under the guidance of Esbjörn Svensson. The melodious pop-jazz on this release made her a star and lifted her into the charts in Sweden, yet it was hardly available outside her homeland. The move to ACT in 2004 enabled her to break into the international scene. Her first two albums for ACT *Shining On You* (ACT 9701-2) and *My Swedish Heart* (ACT 9705-2) have both received a German Jazz Award; her third album *Pictures of Me* (ACT 9712-2) has been released in fall 2006.

Jeanette Köhn – vocals

Jeanette Köhn graduated from the Royal University College of Music in Stockholm in 1993 and is today one of Sweden's most versatile singers. Her repertoire ranges from Renaissance music through operas by W.A. Mozart (at the Drottningholm Court Theatre) to musicals such as Danish composer Sebastian's "Cyrano" and works by Duke Ellington, to name but a few. Jeanette Köhn has received several prestigious Swedish prizes and has appeared as soloist with e.g. the Stockholm Sinfonietta, the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra in Finland, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, the Munich Radio Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Choir.

Sharon Dyall – vocals

Sharon Dyall was raised in London and Barbados by a Swedish mother and her father, a South American jazz instrumentalist. The Swedish singer, dancer and actress has starred in a number of musicals such as "Westside Story", "Hair" or "Cabaret". Her large repertoire includes big band jazz as well as gospel, soul, rhythm & blues and rock music. Her voice can be heard on a couple of international best selling albums such as Eagle-Eye Cherry's first two albums or on Nils Landgren's last Funk Unit album: *Funky Abba* (ACT 9430-2)

Ida Sandlund – vocals, piano

Ida Sandlund was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1977. Her father is an opera singer and her mother a piano teacher. She gathered her first stage experience in churches in Stockholm and started out playing gospel music at first. She studied music at the Music Academy in Gothenburg for four years. At that time, she sang a lot of jazz, but she has become more and more influenced by soul over the years. Lately she has mainly been on tour with various Swedish artists and performed with artists like Christian Walz, Lisa Nilsson, Eric Gadd, Stephen Simmonds and Bo Sundstøm.

Bugge Wesseltoft – piano

Composer, arranger, pianist and producer Bugge Wesseltoft (born 1964 in Norway) is a central figure in the dynamic Scandinavian jazz scene. In 1994, he formed his own band with the exceptional singer Sidsel Endresen and recorded several albums with her over the next few years. In the 1990's, his revolutionary project "New Conception of Jazz" combined jazz, house, techno, ambient and free improvisation. In 1994, the project's first recording earned Wesseltoft the Norwegian equivalent of the Grammy. In 1996, he founded his label Jazzland Records. In 1997, he recorded his only solo piano album to date for the Munich label ACT: *It's Snowing On My Piano* (ACT 9260-2). The album has since sold more than 40.000 copies and the DVD *Christmas Concert With My Friends* presents him for the first time playing "In Dulce Jubilo" and "Det kimer nå til julefest" live on stage at the grand piano.

Lars Danielsson – bass, cello

Swedish bassist, cellist and composer Lars Danielsson is a musician with particularly broad interests. Born in 1958 and trained in classical cello at the conservatory of his hometown Gothenburg before he turned to the bass and jazz music, Danielsson is a musician who has developed a new quality of beauty in sound. He has cultivated an uncommonly tangible, mellow and soft tone that is at once round and gentle. Seldom have we heard a bass or cello in jazz played with such subtle strength and roundness. And as a composer, Danielsson has a great feel for elegant, soaring melodies. He has already released three albums on ACT as a leader, he is the producer of the last album of V. Tolstoy (*Pictures of Me*) and performed as sideman on a number of ACT productions.

Johan Norberg – guitar

Guitarist Johan Norberg is known as one of the best and most interesting acoustic guitarists currently on the Scandinavian folk and world music scenes. With star trombonist Nils Landgren he played in the incredibly popular Swedish duo "Chapter Two" for 17 years. Together with Jonas Knutsson he has released two albums on ACT: *Norrland* (ACT 9014-2) and *Cow Cow – Norrland II* (ACT 9425-2).

Ulf Wakenius – guitar

Ulf Wakenius has for the past nine years held what might be the most prestigious chair in jazz for a guitarist: as a member of the Oscar Peterson Quartet. Wakenius (born in 1958) found his love for jazz guitar through an admiration of the British blues rock. Today he has diversified into different styles: into funk, and into Brazilian samba such as on his solo album he recorded 1984 in Rio de Janeiro with musicians ranging from Elis Regina and Milton Nascimento. He has established himself as a man in great demand in the studio and on stage, as he played with the who's who of jazz. Besides Oscar Peterson there is Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, Michael Brecker, Ray Brown, Joe Henderson, Roy Hargrove, Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Max Roach, and Viktoria Tolstoy, also on ACT, to mention just a few. With his first ACT recording in 2005: *Notes from the Heart* (ACT 9435-2) Wakenius paid homage to the beauty of Keith Jarrett's compositions.

Jonas Knutsson – saxophone

Jonas Knutsson, with his 1997 ACT album "Flower In The Sky" (ACT9248-2), has shown himself to be a jazz musician with a strong affinity to the Swedish folk idiom and as a saxophonist with great lyrical qualities. He has worked, among others, with folk icon Lena Willemark, in the pioneering folk jazz group "Enteli" and later in the "Nordan" project, admired on both sides of the Atlantic alike. Together with Johan Norberg he has released two albums on ACT: *Norrland* (ACT 9014-2) and *Cow Cow – Norrland II* (ACT 9425-2).