



Iiro Rantala **lost heroes**

German Release Date: February 25, 2011
ACT 9504-2

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- 02 waltz for bill (for bill evans) 6:04
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- 06 jean and aino 7:22
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- 09 bluesette (for oscar peterson) 4:04
- 10 intermezzo (for luciano pavarotti) 5:50

total time: 54:23

iiro rantala / piano

all compositions by iiro rantala, except 7 by charlie parker and 9 by toots thielemans
produced by siggi loch

Liner Notes by Iiro Rantala:

Pekka Pohjola

My high school teacher introduced me to Pekka Pohjola's music. His great melodies and harmonies moved me deeply. Some elements of his music sound a little like Jean Sibelius but most of it is pure Pekka Pohjola. He would have some humoristic phrases here and there but at the same the music is deep and serious.

Waltz for Bill

I think Bill Evans is the most sophisticated jazz pianist ever. His time and taste are almost from a different world. The moment you think he's a cool impressionist, you'll hear him playing his ass off in Bill Evans trio at the Montreux Jazz Festival recording with Eddie Gomez and Jack de Johnette. Very wild stuff.

I wrote this tune a couple weeks after I had lost a great friend in Finland. He was a true jazz, food and Evans lover. Visa Nurmi is his name. So, this waltz is for Visa and Bill. Not for a visa bill.

Can't get up

Jaco Pastorius was one of the first jazz superstars I saw live. He played at Pori Jazz in 1983. I was 13 at the time. He played with his World of Mouth including Mike Stern on guitar. The gig was a total mind blower. There were also rumors about Jaco and Mike's wild dive into the nightlife of Pori. The festival staff tracked them down at a local gas station bar just before the gig on the main stage.

Jaco has Finnish roots. His grand mother Kaisa Erika Isojärvi is from Salla, West Lapland in Finland. She emigrated to Minnesota and married David Haapala who also had roots in Northern Finland. May be that's why I've always felt a special connection to his music. Especially to the tune of Liberty City, which created a whole new big band sound and Three Views of a Secret which is just so beautiful. Jaco's version of Donna Lee will always have a special place in my heart. This composition is happening in the bass keys only. That explains the title.

Tears for Esbjörn

I met Esbjörn Svensson for the first time at the Aalener-Jazzfest 2001. He came to hear Trio Tøykeät featuring Cornell Dupree. We talked afterwards and he gave me some really juicy comments about the music and playing. We clicked right away. Although we met only a few times we enjoyed each other's company a lot. There was no competition. I was deeply happy about the great success of e.s.t. I feel they fully deserved it after all that hard work and commitment they put to their band. Their success opened doors for other European bands. We saw each other at jazz festivals in Germany, Japan and the last time in Finland. I proposed for us to play the Mozart double piano concerto but he was too busy with the EST.

The message of his sudden death on the 14th of June 2008 reached me on a ferry from Tallinn to Helsinki. At first I refused to believe it. I felt that it was totally unfair and wrong that he had to go so early and so suddenly. Then I became deeply sad for a long, long time.

Esbjörn's death started a process. I discovered a whole new level of melancholia in myself and started composing music that was more simple, beautiful and calm. This mood goes through this entire album.

Thinking of Misty

There are few artists in the jazz world, who, just thinking of them puts a smile in my face. Erroll Garner is one of them. Dizzy Gillespie is another one, specially when he's playing the horn.

I think elegance is the right word when trying to describe Erroll's playing. Back in the days of Garner, jazz was mostly music for dancing and entertainment. Both elements are strongly present in his style. Although his right hand was going towards bebop. Erroll was a the gap between the happy days of swing and the paranoia of bebop.

Misty is a song loved by all narcissists. It opens with a blood striking line: Look at me!

Jean and Aino

I am a godfather to two little Aino girls. This composition is for them also. The musical inspiration comes from Jean Sibelius, the Finnish national composer. He created the sound of Finland, which is impossible to put into words. Listen to the beginning of the Violin Concerto or the Seventh Symphony and you get the idea.

Jean and Aino had an incredible strong relationship. They survived the poor years together, the civil war of Finland, losing a daughter to typhoid fever, Jean's drinking habit and both World Wars. Aino was Jean's muse. I'm sure that without Aino's tireless support Jean would have composed much less music.

After their daughters flew out from the nest Jean and Aino were just happy to be together for the rest of their lives. They lived almost isolated in the middle of the forest. The house is called Ainola, named after her. They were a real rocking couple, a true love story.

Donna Lee

I have always loved this tune. Charlie Parker claimed it's his composition but the melody line is way different than his other tunes. Donna Lee was actually written by Miles Davis. I want to dedicate this track to Art Tatum, one of the most remarkable talents throughout the history of jazz. Parker and Miles used to listen to Tatum when he played in the clubs of NY and they were both blown away of his sharp technique and fresh ideas. They both seemed to wonder how an almost blind guy can play the piano like that. Some things Art played were more difficult than Rachmaninoff but yet totally improvised. Art Tatum was a way ahead of his time.

One more waltz for Michel Petrucciani

10 years ago I composed a tune called Waltz for Michel Petrucciani. That can be found on Trio Tøykeät Kudos album. Petrucciani is a continuous inspiration for me. I love the fact that the French background can be heard on every note he ever played. Another thing is his time feel which is probably the tightest in the business. It's almost scary how he drops his phrases exactly on the beat.

Despite his difficult genetic illness he achieved everything in his jazz career before he had to leave this world just after his 36th birthday. He was a hero of all heroes.

Bluesette

This sophisticated waltz by Toots Thielemans I want to dedicate to Oscar Peterson. To me he's like a father figure of piano jazz. A real monster of the jazz piano trio too. His terrific technique and positive solo lines are always joyful to listen to. In my teenage years I saw a long jazz program on TV of the Montreal Jazz Festival. Oscar was the host and I'll never forget the way he presented people like Chick Corea, Gary Burton and Pat Metheny. Oscar complimented each artist so warmly I thought that this guy is solid gold.

Intermezzo

I love opera too. Not just because of all the great melodies but also because it's the highest art form of music theatre in Europe. It's a cultural heritage that should both be respected and cherished. This particular piece is played at weddings a lot. The melody is so beautiful it makes people cry with happiness.

Luciano Pavarotti's voice was one of a kind. So was his charisma. People who would never even go near the opera house would know Pavarotti. From amongst his tenor colleagues Pavarotti brought opera to the big stadiums. Pop and rock was becoming more popular in the 80's and 90's. Pavarotti did a great job reminding people that there is also a thing called opera and the stadium concerts should not be monopolized by the pop & rock stars. He received a great number of new fans from his mass appearances and Pavarotti was Modena's gift to the world. A genuine tenor hero.

Enjoy listening, Iiro Rantala

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