



## Rolf Kristensen - Timelines

The Norwegian guitarist and composer Rolf Kristensen is well established on the Norwegian music scene. As a guitarist he has contributed to approximately 100 albums within a wide range of genres. He has collaborated and played with a large number of artists and ensembles on recordings and in concerts, such as: Secret Garden, Ketil Bjørnstad, Ole Paus, Mungolian Jet Set, Annbjørg Lien, Anne Marie Almedal, Danny Thompson, Hilde Hefte, Egil Kapstad, Jan Bang, Hanne Boel etc.

Being a member of the ensemble Secret Garden has led to extensive touring with concerts in most of the world for more than 20 years. These concerts has also involved playing with orchestras like for example The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, The Irish National Symphony Orchestra (RTE), The Norwegian Radio Orchestra and Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra, etc.

Rolf Kristensen is also a renowned music educator, and has played an important role in pop and jazz education in Norway as a guitar teacher at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, where he has been employed since the early 90's, and has educated many of the most successful Norwegian guitarists in different areas of the music scene. He has also been employed as a

guitar and ensemble teacher by the prestigious Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and has given master classes for a lot of music schools, like for instance the Musicians Institute in Hollywood.

Kristensen released his first solo CD "Shimmering Minor" on Ponca Jazz Records in 2005 (PJRC1003) and received great reviews:

*Kristensen takes us to a number of melodic landscapes that one should have a cold heart not to like.*

*Rolf Kristensen is a highly sophisticated guitarist.*

- Tor Hammerø, Puls

*Well-composed melodies are the starting point for the songs and some melodies might as well be written by Terje Rypdal, others by Bugge Wesseltoft. Kristensen's classical background comes forth as he lets the notes roll out of the acoustic nylon string guitar, and on the electric guitar he weighs each note carefully (...) It seems like he is mastering all the musical styles equally well.*

- Audun Reithaug Rasmussen, Jazznytt

*Rolf Kristensen's CD shows a reflective jazz guitarist and composer who creates elegant and exciting music in a clear and cool style.*

- Emil Otto Syvertsen, Fædrelandsvennen

*He delivers an album that he can be proud of.*

- Roald Helgheim, Dagsavisen/Nye takter

### **About the making of Timelines**

"Finding time to produce a new solo album between all the engagements as a session musician has been a challenge, but being involved in all these great projects as a sideman has also created a lot of inspiration and ideas. Ideas that often lead to sketches, compositions and demo recordings. After a run through of recorded ideas over the past years I found a lot of material that I thought deserved a life outside the hard drive, and started cultivating the best ideas. Arrangements and demos were made and I invited some of my favourite musicians to join me in studio sessions. After some very inspiring live sessions where fundamental tracks and improvisations were recorded, it was exciting to go further with the arrangements and develop sonic landscapes that suited the character of the compositions by experimenting with extra layers of guitars, horns, strings, synth tracks and electronics. How could I best use my experience as a studio musician in various genres to explore textures, and develop my own sound and artistic voice?"

### **The Tracks**

#### **Stone Town**

The track got its title from the old part of Zanzibar City, called Stone Town. The title came up when I realized that the composition had a bit of an African feel, that reminded me of the music I learned to know (Taarab) when I was working on a Zanzibar – Norwegian recording project, and produced the album "Dhow Crossing – A Taarab Voyage". To emphasize the Zanzibar atmosphere I used the Saz to make a sound character with an Arabic flavour, combined with an orchestration with lots of dark colours. The energetic playing over the odd meters by Marius Trøan Hansen on drums and Per Elias Drabløs on bass provides a rough and solid base for the expressive sax and piano solos performed by Bendik Hofseth and Bernt Moen. And for me it was also a great kick to play the guitar solos over this "driving"

rhythm section.

#### **Timelines**

I view this composition as a sort of a combination of a Gregorian chant and a jazz ballad, going from the drones made of several guitars into a more traditional combo. A combination that suggests a timeline from medieval times to the twentieth century.

#### **Relief**

The tune opens with a baroque inspired arpeggio pattern followed by a melodic and simple theme. The classical character of the composition is emphasized by the string arrangement performed on violin and viola by Marin Stallemo Bakke. In section two the arrangement makes a stylistic jump to a Latin American inspired groove with eminent and playful solos from Bernt Moen and Bendik Hofseth.

#### **Cosmic Rain**

The sonic landscape created by layers of acoustic and electric guitars in combination with Alf Vaksdal's synths and electronics gives a significant texture to this piece. It was the sparkling sound of the acoustic guitar riff combined with the electronics that made associations leading to the title of the tune.

#### **Who Knows**

A simple groove with a complex texture of "cooking" rhythmical elements, slow atmospheric trumpet lines from Idar Eliassen Pedersen, and rough baritone saxophone fills from Niclas Pedersen. The track takes a little surprising turn at the end with some collective improvisation as a result of a spontaneous studio session.

#### **Departure**

This track opens with a classical inspired guitar intro. The composition develops further into a more Nordic sounding ECM-like landscape gradually building up in intensity with great dynamic playing from Jango Nilsen on drums under the electric guitar solo.

#### **Echoes**

A little piece that ends the album quietly in a dreamlike soundscape of guitars, zither and mellotron."

All the **musicians** on the album has a relation to the Music Department at the University of Agder, spanning from internationally renowned musicians like for instance Bendik Hofseth - the successor of Michael Brecker in the band Steps Ahead, and Bernt Moen - a former member of the band Shining, to master level students that are all part of the up-and-coming new generation of Norwegian jazz musicians.

The **artwork** on the cover, made by Ingrid Kristensen Bjørnaali, is made from woodcut. The lines, cut out in wood, traces the annual rings in the tree, cut vertically.

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