

FREDRIK LUNDIN OVERDRIVE PLAYS THE MUSIC OF LEADBELLY

“Belly-Up”

In 2001 tenor saxophonist, composer and arranger Fredrik Lundin (born 1963) released the cd “Choose Your Boots” with his 11-man band, Fredrik Lundin Overdrive. And a bomb of explosive energy and creativity was thrown onto the Danish jazz scene. “Choose Your Boots” was an original homage to American blues and roots music, and it was greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm by the press. It was called “a milestone” and “a triumph”, and in 2002 it won a Danish Music Award as best jazz recording of the year. Lundin Overdrive took audiences by storm all over Denmark, and the band played abroad on several occasions.

And now Lundin Overdrive is ready with yet another dynamic cd which explores the mental and cultural geography of the American South. This time the music consists of interpretations of songs by the unique American blues and folk singer Huddie Ledbetter (1885-1949), aka “Leadbelly”. He was a colourful and disreputable character, who did time for murder in Texas in 1918. Ledbetter travelled round the States where he built up a large repertoire of folk songs and also wrote songs himself, and alone with his guitar he recorded a large number of songs which today constitute an important part of the American musical heritage.

“Leadbelly’s music came into my life a long time ago, when a friend gave me a cassette copy of the jazz album “These Are my Roots” - Clifford Jordan Plays Leadbelly’. The songs, as well as the way they were treated by the musicians, made a profound impression on me. And Leadbelly’s music has stayed with me ever since.”

“On “Belly-Up” I’ve wanted to focus on Leadbelly’s own songs. To me they represent the original song, something so basic and true that anyone anywhere will be able to relate to them.”

On the cd we thus hear eight Ledbetter classics, e.g. *Goodnight Irene*, *Silver City Bound*, *Black Girl*, *Take This Hammer* and *Ella Speed*. Lundin has dedicated each tune to a distinguished American jazz musician such as Richard Davis, Clifford Jordan, Paul Bley, Dr. John, Gil Evans and Charles Mingus. “I’ve dedicated the tunes to these people because they have all contributed to my music and to the birth of the cd, for instance with details which have inspired my arrangements of the songs.”

Lundin’s band with its rich sound involves a sax, five horns and a dynamic rhythm section with no less than two drummers. Lundin plays tenor sax together with a line of Danish, Swedish and Norwegian top musicians: Krister Jonsson (guitar), Henrik Gunde (piano, fender rhodes), Jens Kristian Uhrenholdt (bass), Emil de Waal and Jonas Johansen (drums and percussion), Maj Berit Guassora (trumpet), Mia Engsager and Lis Wessberg (trombone), Ola Nordquist (bass trombone) and Klaus Löhrer (bass trombone and tuba). And as a special attraction Norwegian Per Jørgensen excels on trumpet and, on two tunes, as a singer.

The sound is full-bodied and varied, the atmosphere exudes solid, hot blues, and in his arrangements Lundin uses the entire range of the band, with both energy, beautiful tonal colours and fascinating solos. Once again Fredrik Lundin has created a great and ambitious cd which strengthens his place as one of today’s most important and creative Danish jazz musicians.

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