

NORTH.

Anders Hagberg – c-, alto- bass flutes, soprano sax, ambient sounds

Joona Toivanen – piano

Johannes Lundberg – double bass

Helge Andreas Norbakken – percussion

Presence and Process

The music for this album was recorded over two days in late February 2020. Using a handful of compositions as a starting point, we captured a flow of inspired, intuitive collaborative music. The word “improvisation” literally means “unforeseen,” and during the session we were able to be present, to be open to the unforeseen, and to come together in music. However, the process that led to the recording started long time before those magic days in the studio.

NORTH consists of nine pieces of music. Some are relatively more through-composed while others are more improvisatory, taking their point of departure in different modal sound worlds. Me and bass player Johannes Lundberg had worked with some of these songs in other settings without really getting the music to work the way we wanted. Our path of finding the right interpretations and sounds has been a “learning by doing” process where pieces have been rehearsed, performed (on stage, in studio) during various concerts and sessions. The music I compose is very much in dialogue with the musicians who play it and the musical parameters keep changing in a practice-based process of development. I would actually claim that this is my method of working, trying ideas back and forth until the music organically find its form.

To be able to improvise with openness to the present moment one need to be very well prepared both mentally, technically and musically and the work towards the creation of North confirms this.

The title of the album is a reference both to the musicians’ countries of origin—Sweden, Norway and Finland—and to the musical approach taken, in which communication, silence and melody are central.

The photographer Saul Leiter, too, relied on improvisation in his work, capturing the fleeting but decisive moments when beauty appears right in front of us. We are thus very happy to be able to use one of his iconic images for the cover of NORTH.

About the compositions:

Islands of the North –

The Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic, a place where since 1984, I have collaborated with musicians, composers and photographers, including Yggdrasil, John Tchicai, Eivør Palsdóttir, and more.

Inga –

Dedicated to the late Inga Juuso, a Sami performer of traditional jojk and a member of my band, Earthsongs.

Avenue Junot -

A street in the Montmartre quarter of Paris.

North –

Roots and space

Four Three -

Melodic Modes -

Two compositions both inspired by my collaboration with musicians from the Middle East. “Four Three” is built on a polyrhythmic idea and “Melodic Modes” on the use of different variants of the melodic and harmonic minor.

Gíðða - (Spring)

After Inga Juuso.

Silent Ways – Based on an idea dedicated to Joe Zawinul, with inspiration from Indian raga and contemporary ambient music.

Children – For three special children, and for the child in all of us.

Music composed by Anders Hagberg, except Gíðða, (trad. arr Hagberg).

Produced by Anders Hagberg and Johannes Lundberg.