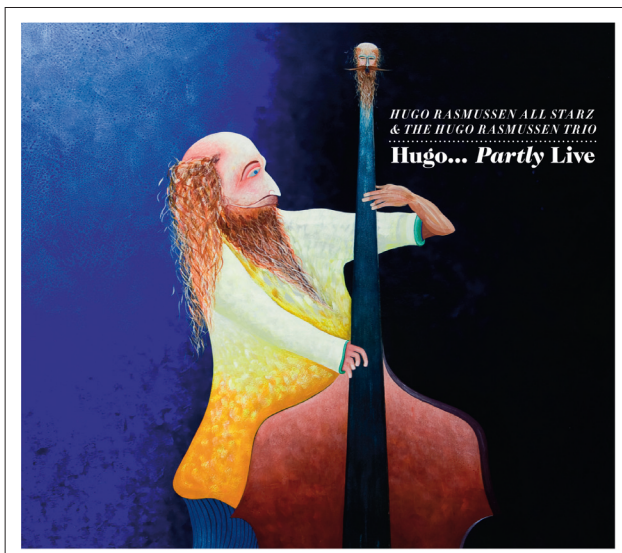


# HUGO RASMUSSEN ALL STARZ & THE HUGO RASMUSSEN TRIO

## Hugo... Partly Live



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There are many flattering clichés used to describe great musicians with a lifetime in service of jazz. Danish bassist Hugo Rasmussen is such a musician. Ben Webster said, "Where U go, I go!" He is my bass-man number one!" Dexter Gordon said, "This is Copenheaven for bass players. With Hugo I feel safe – for hours!"

The young drummer from New York, R.J. Miller, is equally enthusiastic. "To play with Hugo has confirmed in me the way of playing lightly and hip. He is incredible."

"Well" says Hugo, "Keep in mind that back in the 1960's, even when I was at my best, I was never more than number two. Niels-Henning [Ørsted Pedersen] had been around since he was fifteen, and he was incredible. But the first time I played with "Sweets" [Harry Edison] and Benny Carter, "Sweets" walked over to me and kissed me on the forehead. I felt like I had been knighted."

Hugo has played with everyone, so let's just throw some names around and get it over with: Teddy Wilson, Horace Parlan, Ralph Sutton, Kenny Drew, Oliver Nelson, J.C. Higginbotham, Charlie Shavers, "Sweets", Roy Eldridge, Wild Bill Davison, Benny Carter, Svend Asmussen, Jesper Thilo, Al Grey, Betty Carter, Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, Coleman Hawkins, New Jungle Orchestra – and most recently Lionel Loueke and Marc Ducret. The list is enormous, and these were just some of the JAZZ musicians!

Years ago many American jazz musicians visited Denmark to play with Arvid Meyer's then-famous swing band. There were Danish, Swedish and Norwegian tours, living together under simple conditions. Would it be a cliché to assume that Hugo learned from these great musicians? "No, it's not a cliché at all. I learned everything, especially their timing, their humor, their approach to audiences – and to life. Often they had lived with discrimination and humiliation that we could never fully understand – pain that had to be laughed away. In part this shaped their musical personalities. To survive, they had to create their own personal sound." And sound is what it's all about for Hugo.

The musicians in Hugo's All Starz and in his trio are all young lions, but they have been with him several years. They could easily be his children – he was born in 1941 – and obviously he is their musical father. But is it possible to

bring his experience into this circle of musical talent? "Perhaps. I'd like to think so, but they have their own strong profiles. I have my suggestions, and perhaps they make an impression. We play... in my head I have the memory of one night in a happy, noisy club, where "Sweets" took out his mute and played the softest version of "Lover Man". The audience went dead quiet, there was magic in the air. You felt the music. Of course the same thing happened when Ben Webster played his ballads. His eyes filled with tears, and so did ours. When he yelled, "Stroll!" we knew what to do."

In this band, everybody also knows what to do. Hugo would prefer to praise each of them individually, but that's not necessary – listen for yourself! Let it suffice to say that he's happy with the symbiosis they have found together.

The repertoire consists mainly of classic swing tunes: Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust", "Dickie's Dream" by Count Basie and Lester Young, Harold Arlen's "Somewhere Over The Rainbow", Mathew Gee's "Hey Lock" – a tribute to saxophonist Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis – and Frederick Loewe's "Almost Like Being In Love". Tenor saxophonist Jakob Dinesen brought along Jimmy McHugh's "Where Are You?" as a Ben Webster tribute, trumpeter Kasper Tranberg suggested "Basin Street Blues", trombonist Mads Hyhne brought the Strayhorn tune "Something To Live For", and pianist Heine Hansen contributed the sole original tune, "Low Profile".

The All Starz tunes were recorded in front of a small audience, and the trio selections were recorded in front of the fireplace in Hugo's living room.

Hugo Rasmussen has been a sideman on more than 800 recordings but has released only a small handful of albums as a bandleader, so it is indeed with great pleasure that Stunt Records releases this new, rare recording with one of Denmark's most beloved and important musicians.

P.S.

When Stig Weye – the artist who painted the picture on the cover – was very young, he took bass lessons from Hugo. He is now a renowned artist, and in his work one can still feel the strong pulse of jazz. He also happens to be the father of the trumpeter on this recording.

*Somewhere Over The Rainbow / Hey Lock / Stardust / I'll See You In Dreams / Basin Street Blues / Something To Live For / Where Are You? / Dickie's Dream / Almost Like Being In Love / Low Profile.*

**Hugo Rasmussen (b), Kasper Tranberg (tp), Jakob Dinesen (ts), Mads Hyhne (tb), Heine Hansen (p), Kresten Osgood (d).**

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STUNT RECORDS

Sundance Music ApS Gothersgade 107 1123 Copenhagen K Denmark  
T: +45 3333 8720 www.sundance.dk sundance@sundance.dk